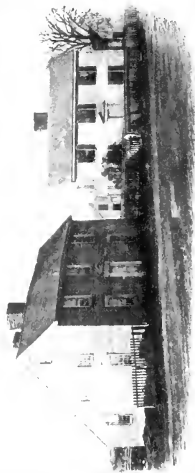


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John Adams

1785.

March.

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1840.



T H E

O D Y S S E Y

O F

H O M E R.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK,

B Y

A L E X A N D E R P O P E, Esq;

VOLUME THE SECOND.

L O N D O N,

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T H E  
O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K VII.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The court of Alcinous.

*The princess Nausicaa returns to the city, and Ulysses soon after follows thither. He is met by Pallas in the form of a young virgin, who guides him to the palace, and directs him in what manner to address the queen Arete. She then involves him in a mist, which causes him to pass invisible. The palace and gardens of Alcinous described. Ulysses falling at the feet of the queen, the mist disperses, the Phæacians admire, and receive him with respect. The queen enquiring by what means he had the garments he then wore, he relates to her and Alcinous his departure from Calypso, and his arrival on their dominions.*

*The same day continues, and the book ends with the night.*

**T**HE patient, heav'nly man thus suppliant pray'd ;  
While the slow mules draw on the imperial maid :  
Through the proud street she moves, the public gaze :  
The turning wheel before the palace stays.

This book opens with the introduction of Ulysses to Alcinous ; every step the poet takes carries on the main design of the poem, with a progress so natural, that each incident seems really to have happened, and not to be invention. Thus Nausicaa accidentally meets Ulysses, and introduces him to Alcinous her father, who lands him in Ithaca : it is possible this might be true history ; the poet might build upon a real foundation, and only adorn the

With ready love her brothers gath'ring round, 5  
 Receiv'd the vestures, and the mules unbound.

truth with the ornaments of poetry. It is to be wished, that a faithful history of the Trojan war, and the voyages of Ulysses had been transmitted to posterity; it would have been the best comment upon the Iliad and Odyssey. We are not to look upon the poems of Homer as mere romances, but as true stories, heightened and beautified by poetry: thus the Iliad is built upon a real dissention, that happened in a real war between Greece and Troy; and the Odyssey upon the real voyages of Ulysses, and the disorders that happened through his absence in his country. Nay, it is not impossible but that many of those incidents, that seem most extravagant in Homer, might have an appearing truth, and be justified by the opinions, and mistaken credulity of those ages. What is there in all Homer more seemingly extravagant, than the story of the race of the Cyclops, with one broad eye in their foreheads? and yet, as Sir Walter Raleigh very judiciously conjectures, this may be built upon a seeming truth: they were a people of Sicily remarkable for savageness and cruelty, and perhaps might in their wars make use of a head-piece, or vizor, which had but one sight in it, and this might give occasion to sailors who coasted those shores to mistake this single sight of the vizor, for a broad eye in the forehead, especially when they before looked upon them as monsters for their barbarity. I doubt not but we lose many beauties in Homer for want of a real history, and think him extravagant, when he only complies with the opinions of former ages. I thought it necessary to make this observation, as a general vindication of Homer; especially in this place, immediately before he enters upon the relation of those stories which have been thought most to outrage credibility; if then we look upon the Odyssey as all fiction, we consider it unworthily; it ought to be read as a story founded upon truth, but adorned with the embellish-

She seeks the bridal bow'r: a matron there  
 The rising fire supplies with busy care,  
 Whose charms in youth her father's heart inflam'd,  
 Now worn with age, Eurymedusa nam'd: 10  
 The captive dame Phæacian rovers bore,  
 Snatch'd from Epirus, her sweet native shore,  
 (A grateful prize) and in her bloom bestow'd  
 On good Alcinous, honour'd as a God:  
 Nurse of Nausicaa from her infant years, 15  
 And tender second to a mother's cares.

Now from the sacred thicket where he lay,  
 To town Ulysses took the winding way.  
 Propitious Pallas, to secure her care,  
 Around him spread a veil of thicken'd air; 20

ments of poetry, to convey instruction with pleasure the more effectually.

v. 10. *Eurymedusa nam'd.*] Eustathius remarks, that the Phæacians were a people of great commerce, and that it was customary in those ages to exchange slaves in traffic; or perhaps Eurymedusa might be a captive, piracy then being honourable, and such seizures of cattle or slaves frequent. The passage concerning the brothers of Nausicaa has not escaped the censure of the critics; Homer in the original calls them like gods, and yet in the same breath gives them the employment of slaves, they unyoke the mules, and carry into the palace the burdens they brought. A twofold answer may be given to this objection, and this conduct might proceed from the general custom of the age, which made such actions reputable; or from the particular love the brothers bore their sister, which might induce them to act thus, as an instance of it.

v. 20. *Around him spread a veil of thicken'd air.*] It

To shun th' encounter of the vulgar croud,  
 Insulting still, inquisitive and loud.

may be asked what occasion there is to make Ulysses invisible? Eustathius answers, not only to preserve him from insults as he was a stranger, but that he might raise a greater surprize in Alcinous by his sudden appearance. But, adds he, the whole is an allegory; and Ulysses wisely chusing the evening to enter unobserved, gave occasion to the poet to bring in the goddess of wisdom to make him invisible.

Virgil has borrowed this passage from Homer, and Venus renders Æneas invisible in the same manner as Minerva Ulysses. Scaliger compares the two authors, and prefers Virgil infinitely before Homer, in the fifth book of his poetics.

*At Venus obscuro gradientes aere sepsit,  
 Et multo nebulæ circum Dea fudit amictu;  
 Cernere ne quis eos, neu quis contingere posset,  
 Molirive moram, aut veniendi poscere causas.*

Scaliger says the verses are more sonorous than Homer's, and that it was more necessary to make Æneas invisible than Ulysses, he being amongst a perfidious nation. But was not the danger as great from the rudeness of the Phæacians, as from the perfidiousness of the Carthaginians? Besides, Virgil does not mention the perfidiousness of the Carthaginians; so that it is the reason of Scaliger, not Virgil: and whether the verses be more sonorous, is submitted to the ear of the reader. He is chiefly delighted with

*Et multo nebule circum Dea fudit amictu.*

*Qui solus versus, says he, deterreat Græcos ab ea sententia, qua suum contendunt præferendum.* He allows *Κερατοῦσι τ' ἐπίεσσι*, etc. to be a tolerable smooth verse, *commodus et rasilis*, but yet far inferior to this of Virgil,

When near the fam'd Phæacian walls he drew,  
 The beauteous city opening to his view,  
 His step a virgin met, and stood before : 25

A polish'd urn the seeming virgin bore,  
 And youthful smil'd ; but in the low disguise  
 Lay hid the goddess with the azure eyes.

Show me, fair daughter, (thus the chief demands)  
 The house of him who rules these happy lands. 30  
 Thro' many woes and wand'rings, lo ! I come  
 To good Alcinous' hospitable dome.

*Molirive moram, et veniendi pascere causas.*

It is but justice to lay the verses of Homer before the reader.

Καὶ τοτ' Οδυσσεὺς ᾤρτο πολιν δ' ἴμεν', ἀμφὶ δ' Αθήνη,  
 Πολλὴν ἤερα χεῦε φιλαφρονέεσ' Οδυσῆϊ,  
 Μή τις Φαιήκων μεγαθύμων ἀντιβολήσας,  
 Κερτομέοι τ' ἐπέεσσι, καὶ ἐξερεοῖθ' ὅτις εἴη.

I determine not which author has the greater beauty, but undoubtedly Homer is more happy in the occasion of the fiction than Virgil. Homer drew his description from the wisdom of Ulysses in entering the town in the evening, he was really invisible to the Phæacians, and Homer only heightened the truth by poetry ; but Virgil is more bold, and has no such circumstance to justify his relation ; for Æneas went into Carthage in the open day.

v. 26. ——— [*The seeming virgin, etc.*] It may be asked why Minerva does not appear as a goddess, but in a borrowed form ? The poet has already told us that she dreaded the wrath of Neptune ; one deity could not openly oppose another deity, and therefore she acts thus invisibly.

Far from my native coast, I rove alone,

A wretched stranger, and of all unknown !

The goddess answer'd. Father, I obey, 35

And point the wand'ring traveller his way :

Well known to me the palace you enquire,

For fast beside it dwells my honour'd fire,

But silent march, nor greet the common train

With question needless, or enquiry vain. 40

A race of rugged mariners are these ;

Unpolish'd men, and boistrous as their seas :

The native islanders alone their care,

And hateful he that breathes a foreign air.

'These did the ruler of the deep ordain 45

To build proud navies, and command the main ;

On canvas wings to cut the wat'ry way ;

No bird so light, no thought so swift as they.

Thus having spoke, th' unknown celestial leads :

The footsteps of the deity he treads, 50

And secret moves along the croud'd space,

Unseen of all the rude Phæacian race.

(So Pallas order'd, Pallas to their eyes'

The mist object'd, and condens'd the skies.)

v. 47. *On canvas wings to cut the wat'ry way.*] This circumstance is not inserted without a good effect: it could not but greatly encourage Ulysses to understand that he was arrived among a people that excelled in navigation; this gave him a prospect of being speedily conveyed to his own country, by the assistance of a nation so expert in maritime affairs. Eustathius.

v. 53. — *Pallas to their eyes the mist condenses.*] Scaliger in his Poetics calls this an impertinent repetition,



The chief with wonder fees th' extended streets, 55

The spreading harbours, and the riding fleets ;

He next their princes lofty domes admires,

In sep'rate islands crown'd with rising spires ;

And deep intrenchments, and high walls of stone,

That gird the city like a marble zone. 60

At length the kingly palace gates he view'd :

There stopp'd the goddess, and her speech renew'd.

and commends Virgil for not imitating it, for Homer dwells upon it no less than three times ; and indeed one would almost imagine that Virgil was of the same opinion, for he has followed the turn of this whole passage, and omitted this repetition : yet he treads almost step by step in the path of Homer, and Æneas and Ulysses are drawn in the same colours ;

*Miratur molem Æneas, magalia quondam :*

*Miratur portas, strepitumque et strata viarum.*

Θαύμαζεν δ' Ὀδυσσεὺς λιμένας καὶ νῆας ἑίσας,  
 Αὐτῶνδ' Ἑρώων ἀγορὰς, καὶ τείχιστα μακρὰ,  
 Ὑψηλὰ, σκολοπεσσιν ἀρηροτα.

Homer poetically inserts the topography of this city of the Phæacians : though they were an unwarlike nation, yet they understand the art of fortification ; their city is surrounded with a strong wall, and that wall guarded with palisades. But whence this caution, since Homer tells us in the preceding book, that they were in no danger of an enemy ? It might arise from the very fears, which naturally suggest to cowards, that they cannot be too safe ; this would make them practise the art of fortification more assiduously than a more brave people, who usually put more confidence in valour than in walls, as was the practice of the Spartans.

My task is done; the mansion you enquire  
 Appears before you: enter, and admire.  
 High thron'd, and feasting, there thou shalt behold 65  
 The scepter'd Rulers. Fear not, but be bold:  
 A decent boldness ever meets with friends,  
 Succeeds, and ev'n a stranger recommends.  
 First to the queen prefer a suppliant's claim,  
 Alcinous' queen, Arete is her name, 70  
 The same her parents, and her pow'r the same.  
 For know, from Ocean's God Naufithous sprung;  
 And Peribæa, beautiful and young:  
 (Eurymedon's last hope, who rul'd of old  
 The race of giants, impious, proud and bold; 75

v. 63. *My task is done, etc.*] As deities ought not to be introduced without a necessity, so, when introduced, they ought to be employed in acts of importance, and worthy of their divinity: it may be asked if Homer observes this rule in this episode, where a goddess seems to appear only to direct Ulysses to the palace of Alcinous, which, as he himself tells us, a child could have done? But the chief design of Minerva was to advise Ulysses in his present exigencies: and (as Eustathius remarks) she opens her speech to him with great and noble sentiments. She informs him how to win the favour of Alcinous, upon which depends the whole happiness of her hero? and by which she brings about his re-establishment in his kingdom, the aim of the whole Odyssey. Virgil makes use of the same method in his *Æneis*, and Venus there executes the same office for her son, as Minerva for her favourite, in some degree as a guide, but chiefly as a counsellor.

v. 74. *Eurymedon, etc.*] This passage is worthy observation, as it discovers to us the time when the race of

Perish'd the nation in unrighteous war,  
 Perish'd the prince, and left this only heir.)  
 Who now, by Neptune's am'rous pow'r compress'd,  
 Produc'd a monarch that his people blest,  
 Father and prince of the Phæacian name; 80  
 From him Rhexenor and Alcinous came.  
 The first by Phœbus' burning arrows fired,  
 New from his nuptials, hapless youth! expir'd.  
 No son surviv'd: Arete heir'd his state,  
 And her, Alcinous chose his royal mate. 85

the antient giants perished; this Eurymedon was grandfather to Naufithous, the father of Alcinous; so that the giants were extirpated forty or fifty years before the war of Troy. This exactly agrees with antient story, which informs us, that Hercules and Theseus purged the earth from those monsters. Plutarch in his life of Theseus tells us, that they were men of great strength, and public robbers, one of whom was called the Bender of Pines. Now Theseus stole away Helen in her infancy, and consequently these giants were destroyed some years before the Trojan expedition. Dacier. Plutarch.

v. 84, *etc. Arete.*] It is observable that this Arete was both wife and niece to Alcinous, an instance that the Grecians married with such near relations: the same appears from Demosthenes and other Greek orators. But what then is the notion of incest among the ancients? The collateral branch was not thought incestuous, for Juno was the wife and sister of Jupiter. Brothers likewise married their brothers' wives, as Deiphobus Helen, after the death of Paris: the same was practised amongst the Jews, and consequently being permitted by Moses was not incestuous. So that the only incest was in the ascending, not collateral, or descending branch; as when parents and children married; thus when Myrrha lay with

With honours yet to womankind unknown,  
 This queen he graces, and divides the throne :  
 In equal tenderneſs her ſons conſpire,  
 And all the children emulate their fire.

When thro' the ſtreet ſhe gracious deigns to move, 99  
 (The public wonder, and the public love)

The tongues of all with tranſport ſound her praiſe,  
 The eyes of all, as on a goddeſs, gaze.

She feels the triumph of a gen'rous breaſt

To heal diviſions, to relieve th' oppreſt ;

In virtue rich ; in bleſſing others, bleſt.

95

her father, and Lot with his daughters, this was accounted inceſt. The reaſon is very evident, a child cannot pay the duty of a child to a parent, and at the ſame time of a wife or huſband ; nor can a father act with the authority of a father towards a perſon who is at once his wife and daughter. The relations interfere, and introduce confuſion, where the law of nature and reaſon requires regularity.

v. 95. *To heal diviſions, etc.*] This office of Arete has been looked upon as ſomewhat extraordinary, that ſhe ſhould decide the quarrels of the ſubjects, a province more proper for Alcinous ; and therefore the ancients endeavoured to ſoften it by different readings ; and inſtead of οἰσιν τ' ἐνφρονέησι, they inſerted ἡσιν τ' ἐνφρονέοισι, or *ſhe decides amongſt women*. Eufthathius in the text reads it in a third way, ἡσιν τ' ἐνφροσυνῆσι, or *by her wiſdom*. Spondanus believes, that the queen had a ſhare in the government of the Phæacians ; but Eufthathius thinks the poet intended to ſet the character of Arete in a fair point of light, ſhe bearing the chief part in this book, and a great ſhare in the ſequel of the *Odyssey* ; by this method he introduces her to the beſt advantage, and makes her a perſon of importance, and worthy to have a place

Go then secure, thy humble suit prefer,  
And owe thy country and thy friends to her.

With that the goddess deign'd no longer stay,  
But o'er the world of waters wing'd her way: 100  
Forfaking Scheria's ever pleasing shore,  
The winds to Marathon the virgin bore;  
Thence, where proud Athens rears her tow'ry head,  
With opening streets and shining structures spread,  
She pass'd, delighted with the well-known seats; 105  
And to Erechtheus' sacred dome retreats.

Mean-while Ulysses at the palace waits,  
There stops, and anxious with his soul debates,  
Fix'd in amaze before the royal gates.

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in heroic poetry; and indeed he has given her a very amiable character.

v. 109. *Fix'd in amaze before the royal gates.*] The poet here opens a very agreeable scene, and describes the beauty of the palace and gardens of Alcinous. Diodorus Siculus adapts this passage to the island Taprobane, Justin Martyr to paradise; Τῆ Παράδεισος δὲ εἰκόνα τὸν Ἀλκινόου κῆπον σάζειν πεποίηκε. He transcribes this whole passage into his apology, but with some variation from the common editions, for instead of

————— ἀλλὰ μάλ' αἰεὶ  
Ζεφυρίη πνέουσα, ————— he reads,

ἀλλ' αἰεὶ ἄνεμος Ζηφυρίη, etc. perhaps more elegantly. Eustathius observes that Homer suits his poetry to the things he relates, for in the whole Iliad there is not a description of this nature, nor an opportunity to introduce it in a poem that represents nothing but objects of terror and blood. The poet himself seems to go a little out of the way to bring it into the Odyssey; for it has no necessary connection with the poem, nor would it be less per-

The front appear'd with radiant splendors gay, 110  
 Bright as the lamp of night, or orb of day,  
 The walls were massy brass : the cornice high  
 Blue metals crown'd, in colours of the sky :  
 Rich plates of gold the folding doors incase ;  
 The pillars silver, on a brazen base ; 115  
 Silver the lintels deep-projecting o'er,  
 And gold, the ringlets that command the door.

fect if it had been omitted : but as Mercury, when he surveyed the bower of Calypso, ravished with the beauty of it, stood a while in a still admiration ; so Homer, delighted with the scenes he draws, stands still a few moments, and suspends the story of the poem, to enjoy the beauties of these gardens of Alcinous. But even here he shews his judgment, in not letting his fancy run out into a long description: he concludes the whole in the compass of twenty verses, and resumes the thread of his story. Rapin, I confess, censures this description of the gardens: he calls it puerile and too light for eloquence, that it is spun out to too great a length, and is somewhat affected, has no due coherence with, nor bears a just proportion to the whole, by reason of its being too glittering. This is spoken with too great severity: it is necessary to relieve the mind of the reader sometimes with gayer scenes, that it may proceed with a fresh appetite to the succeeding entertainment. In short, if it be a fault, it is a beautiful fault; and Homer may be said here, as he was upon another occasion by St. Augustin, to be *dulcissime vanus*. The admiration of the gold and silver is no blemish to Ulysses: for, as Eustathius remarks, it proceeds not out of avarice, but from the beauty of the work, and usefulness and magnificence of the buildings. The whole description, continues he, suits the character of the Phæacians, a proud, luxurious people, delighted with shew and ostentation.

Two rows of stately dogs, on either hand,  
 In sculptur'd gold and labour'd silver stand.  
 These Vulcan form'd with art divine, to wait 120  
 Immortal guardians at Alcinous' gate ;  
 Alive each animated frame appears,  
 And still to live, beyond the pow'r of years.  
 Fair thrones within from space to space were rais'd,  
 Where various carpets with embroid'ry blaz'd, 125

v. 118. *Two rows of stately dogs, etc.*] We have already seen that dogs were kept as a piece of state, from the instance of those that attended Telemachus: here Alcinous has images of dogs in gold, for the ornament of his palace; Homer animates them in his poetry; but to soften the description, he introduces Vulcan, and ascribes the wonder to the power of a god. If we take the poetical dress away, the truth is, that these dogs were formed with such excellent art, that they seemed to be alive, and Homer by a liberty allowable to poetry describes them as really having that life, which they only have in appearance. In the Iliad he speaks of living tripods with greater boldness. Eustathius recites another opinion of some of the ancients, who thought these *Κόυες* not to be animals, but a kind of large nails (*ἄλυσες*) or iron pins, made use of in buildings, and to this day the name is retained by builders, as dogs of iron, *etc.* It is certain the words will bear this interpretation, but the former is more after the spirit of Homer, and more noble in poetry. Besides, if the latter were intended, it would be absurd to ascribe a work of so little importance to a deity.

v. 124. *Fair thrones within, etc.*] The poet does not say of what materials these thrones were made, whether of gold or silver, to avoid the imputation of being thought fabulous in his description; it being almost incredible, remarks Eustathius, that such quantities of gold and silver could be in the possession of such a king as Al-

The work of matrons : these the princes press,  
Day following day, a long continu'd feast.

Refulgent pedestals the walls surround,

Which boys of gold with flaming torches crown'd ;

The polish'd ore, reflecting ev'ry ray,

130

Blaz'd on the banquets with a double day.

Full fifty handmaids from the household train ;

Some turn the mill, or sift the golden grain,

cinous ; though, if we consider that his people were greatly given to navigation, the relation may come within the bounds of credibility.

v. 128. *Refulgent pedestals the walls surround,*

*Which boys of gold with flaming torches crown'd.]*

This is a remarkable piece of grandeur : lamps, as appears from the 18th of the *Odyssey*, were not at this time known to the Grecians, but only torches : these were held by images in the shape of beautiful youths, and those images were of gold. Lucretius has translated these verses.

— *Aurea sunt juvenum simulacra per ædeis,*

*Lampades igniferas manibus retinentia dextris,*

*Lumina nocturnis epulis ut suppeditentur.*

It is admirable to observe with what propriety Homer adapts his poetry to the characters of his persons : Nestor is a wise man ; when he is first seen in the *Odyssey*, it is at sacrifice, and there is not the least appearance of pomp or luxury in his palace or entertainments. The Phæacians are of an opposite character, and the poet describes them consistently with it ; they are all along a proud, idle, effeminate people ; though such a pompous description would have ill suited the wise Nestor, it excellently agrees with the vain Alcinous.



Some ply the loom; their busy fingers move  
 Like poplar-leaves when Zephyr fans the grove. 135  
 Not more renown'd the men of Scheria's isle,  
 For sailing arts and all the naval toil,  
 Than works of female skill their womens pride,  
 The flying shuttle through the threads to guide;

v. 135. *Like poplar-leaves when Zephyr fans the grove.*] There is some obscurity in this short allusion, and some refer it to the work, others to the damsels employed in work: Eustathius is of the opinion that it alludes to the damsels, and expresses the quick and continued motion of their hands: I have followed this interpretation, and think that Homer intended to illustrate that quick and intermingled motion, by comparing them to the branches of a poplar agitated by winds, all at once in motion, some bending this, some that way. The other interpretations are more forced, and less intelligible.

v. 107. [*of the original.*]

Καιροσέων δ' ὀθονεων ἀπολέσεται ὑγρὸν ἔλαιον.]

This passage is not without difficulty; some of the ancients understood it to signify the thickness and closeness of the texture, which was so compactly wrought that oil could not penetrate it; others thought it expressed the smoothness and softness of it, as if oil seemed to flow from it; or lastly, that it shone with such a glossy colour as looked like oil. Dacier renders the verse according to the opinion first recited.

*So close the work, that oil diffus'd in vain,  
 Glides off innoxious and without a stain.*

Any of these interpretations make the passage intelligible, though I think the description does better without it. It is left to the judgment of the reader which to prefer; they are all to be found in Eustathius.

v. 138. — *Works of female skill their womens pride.*]

Pallas to these her double gifts imparts, 140  
 Inventive genius, and industrious arts.

Close to the gates a spacious garden lies,  
 From storms defended, and inclement skies :  
 Four acres was th' allotted space of ground,  
 Fenc'd with a green inclosure all around. 145  
 Tall thriving trees confess'd the fruitful mold ;  
 The red'ning apple ripens here to gold :  
 Here the blue fig with luscious juice o'erflows,  
 With deeper red the full pomegranate glows :  
 The branch here bends beneath the weighty pear, 150  
 And verdant olives flourish round the year.

We may gather from what Homer here relates concerning the *skill* of these Phæacian damsels, that they were famed for these works of curiosity : the Corcyrians were much given to traffic, and perhaps they might bring slaves from the Sidonians, who instructed them in these manufactures. Dacier.

v. 142. *Close to the gates a spacious garden lies.*] This famous garden of Alcinous contains no more than four acres of ground, which in those times of simplicity was thought a large one even for a prince. It is laid out as Eustathius observes, into three parts : a grove for fruits and shade, a vineyard, and an allotment for olives and herbs. It is watered with two fountains, the one supplies the palace and town, the other the garden and the flowers. But it may be asked what reality there is in the relation, and whether any trees bear fruit all the year in this island? Eustathius observes, that experience teaches the contrary, and that it is only true of the greatest part of the year : Homer, adds he, disguises the true situation of the Phæacians, and here describes it as one of the happy islands ; at once to enrich his poetry, and to avoid a disco-

The balmy spirit of the western gale  
 Eternal breathes on fruits untaught to fail :  
 Each dropping pear a following pear supplies,  
 On apples apples, figs on figs arise ; 155  
 The same mild season gives the blooms to blow,  
 The buds to harden, and the fruits to grow.  
 Here order'd vines in equal ranks appear,  
 With all th' united labours of the year.  
 Some to unload the fertile branches run, 160  
 Some dry the black'ning clusters in the sun.  
 Others to tread the liquid harvest join,  
 The groning presses foam with floods of wine.

very of his poetical exaggeration. The relation is true of other places, if Pliny and Theophrastus deserve credit, as Dacier observes ; thus the citron bears during the whole year fruits and flowers. *Arbor ipsa omnibus horis pomifera, aliis cadentibus, aliis maturescentibus, aliis vero subnascentibus.* The same is related of other trees by Pliny: *Novusque fructus in his cum Annotino pendet ;* he affirms the like of the pine, *habet fructum maturescentem, habet proximo anno ad maturitatem venturum, ac deinde tertio, etc.* So that what Homer relates is in itself true, though not entirely of Phæacia. Or perhaps it might be only intended for a more beautiful and poetical manner of describing the constant succession of one fruit after another in a fertile climate.

———*Figs on figs arise.*

Aristotle applied this hemistic scoffingly to the sycophants of Athens: he was about to leave that city upon its rejoicing at the death of Socrates ; and quoting this verse, he said that he would not live in a place where

———*Γηράσκει σύκον δ' ἐπὶ σύκῳ.*

Here are the vines in early flow'r descry'd,  
 Here grapes discolour'd on the sunny side,  
 And there in autumn's richest purple dy'd.

165

Beds of all various herbs, for ever green,  
 In beauteous order terminate the scene.

Two plenteous fountains the whole prospect crown'd.

This through the gardens leads its streams around, 170

Visits each plant, and waters all the ground ;

While that in pipes beneath the palace flows,

And thence its current on the town bestows :

To various use their various streams they bring,

The people one, and one supplies the king.

175

alluding to the derivation of the word sycophant. Eustatius.

*Some dry the black'ning clusters in the sun.*

To understand this passage aright, it is necessary to know the manner of ordering the vintage amongst the Greeks : First, they carried all the grapes they gathered into an house for a season ; afterwards they exposed them ten days to the sun, and let them lie abroad as many nights in the freshness of the air ; then they kept them five days in cool shades, and on the sixth they trod them, and put the wine into vessels : this we learn from Hesiod : *ἔρσαν*, verse 229.

———— Πάντας ἀπόδρεπε δικάδε βότρυς

Δεῖξαι δ' ἠελίῳ δέκα τ' ἡμέατα κ' δέκα νύκτας

Πέντε δὲ συσκίασαι, ἕκτω δ' εἰς ἄγρῆ ἀφύσαι

Δῶρα Διωνύσῃ πολυμήθεος————

Homer distinguishes the whole into three orders : First, the grapes that have already been exposed to the sun are trod ; the second order is of the grapes that are exposed,

Such were the glories which the gods ordain'd  
 To grace Alcinous, and his happy land.  
 Ev'n from the chief, who men and nations knew,  
 Th' unwonted scene surprize and rapture drew ;  
 In pleasing thought he ran the prospect o'er, 180  
 Then hasty enter'd at the lofty door.  
 Night now approaching, in the palace stand,  
 With goblets crown'd, the rulers of the land ;  
 Prepar'd for rest, and off'ring to the \* god  
 Who bears the virtue of the sleepy rod. 185  
 Unseen he glided through the joyous croud,  
 With darkness circled, and an ambient cloud.

while the others are treading ; and the third, of those that are ripe to be gathered, while the others are thus ordering. Homer himself thus explains it, by saying, that while some vines were loaded with black and mature grapes, others were green, or but just turning to blackness. Homer undoubtedly founds this poetical relation upon observing some vines that bore fruit thrice annually Pliny affirms this to be true, lib. 16. cap. 27. *Vites quidem et triferæ sunt, quas ob id insanas vocant, quoniam in iis aliæ maturescunt, aliæ turgescunt, aliæ florent.* Dacier.

v. 184. *Prepar'd for rest, and offering to the god  
 Who bears the virtue of the sleepy rod.]*

I have already explained from Athenæus this custom of offering to Mercury at the conclusion of entertainments : he was thought by the ancients to preside over sleep : *dat somnos adimitque*, according to Horace, as Dacier observes : in following ages this practice was altered, and they offered not to Mercury, but to Jove the perfecter, or to Ζεῦς τέλειος.

\* Mercury.

Direct to great Alcinous' throne he came,  
And prostrate fell before th' imperial dame.

Then from around him drop'd the veil of night; 190  
Sudden he shines, and manifest to sight.

The nobles gaze, with awful fear oppress'd;  
Silent they gaze, and eye the god-like guest;

Daughter of great Rhexenor! (thus began  
Low at her knees, the much-induring man) 195

To thee, thy consort, and this royal train,  
To all that share the blessings of your reign,

v. 190. *Then from around him drop'd the veil of night.*] If this whole story of the veil of air had been told simply and nakedly, it would imply no more than that Ulysses arrived without being discovered; and the breaking of the veil denotes his first coming into sight, in the presence of the queen. But Homer steps out of the vulgar road of an historian, and clothes it with a sublimity worthy of heroic poetry. In the same manner Virgil discovers his Æneas to Dido;

—————*Cum circumfusa repente*

*Scindit se nubes, et in aera purgat opertum.*

Scaliger prefers these verses to those of Homer, and perhaps with good reason; he calls the last part of the second verse a divine addition; and indeed it is far more beautiful than the *θεσφαιτος ἀνε* of Homer.

v. 196. *To thee, thy consort, and this royal train.*] Minerva commanded Ulysses to supplicate the queen: why then does he exceed the directions of the goddess, and not only address himself to Alcinous, but to the rest of the assembly? Spondanus answers, that Ulysses adapts himself to the present circumstances, and seeing the king and other peers in the same assembly, he thought it improper not to take notice of them: he therefore addresses himself to all, that he may make all his friends. But

A suppliant bends: oh pity human woe!  
 'Tis what the happy to th' unhappy owe.  
 A wretched exile to his country fend, 200  
 Long worn with griefs, and long without a friend.  
 So may the gods your better days increafe,  
 And all your joys descend on all your race,  
 So reign for ever on your country's breast,  
 Your people blessing, by your people blest! 205  
 Then to the genial hearth he bow'd his face,  
 And humbled in the ashes took his place.

then does not Minerva give improper directions? and is not Ulysses more wise than the goddesses of wisdom? The true reason therefore may perhaps be, that Ulysses really complies with the injunctions of the goddesses; she commands him to address himself to the queen; and he does so: this I take to mean chiefly or primarily, but not exclusively of the king: if the passage be thus understood, it solves the objection.

v. 200. *A wretched exile to his country fend.*] Ulysses here speaks very concisely: and he may seem to break abruptly into the subject of his petition, without letting the audience either into the knowledge of his condition or person. Was this a proper method to prevail over an assembly of strangers? But his gesture spoke for him, he threw himself into the posture of a suppliant, and the persons of all suppliants were esteemed to be sacred: he declared himself to be a man in calamity, and reserves his story to be told more at large, when the surprize of the Phæacians at the sudden appearance of a stranger was over; this conciseness therefore is not blameable, but rather an instance of Homer's judgment, who knows when to be short and when to be copious.

v. 207. *And humbled in the ashes took his place.*] This was the custom of suppliants: they betook themselves to

Silence enfu'd. The eldest first began,

Echeneus sage, a venerable man!

Whose well taught mind the present age surpass, 210

And join'd to that th' experience of the last.

the hearth as sacred, and a place of refuge. It was particularly in the protection of Vesta: thus Tully, lib. 2. *de Natura Deorum; Nomen Vestæ sumptum est a Græcis, ea est enim quæ illis Æsia dicitur, jusque ejus ad aras et focos pertinet.* Apollonius likewise, as Spondanus observes, takes notice of this custom of suppliants.

Τῷ δ' ἄνεω, καὶ ἀναυδοὶ ἐφ' ἔσεια αἰζανίης

Ἰζανον, ἥτε δικῆ λυργοῦς ἰκέτησι τέτυκται.

That is, they betook themselves to the hearth, and there sat mute, which is the custom of all unhappy suppliants. If it was a custom, as Apollonius observes, to sit mute, this gives another reason why Ulysses used but few words in his supplication: he had greatly outraged a practice that was established as sacred among the Greeks, and had not acted in the character of a suppliant, if he had launched out into a long oration.

This was the most sure and effectual way of supplication; thus when Themistocles fled to Admetus king of the Molossians, he placed himself before the hearth, and was received, though that king had formerly vowed his destruction. Plutarch indeed calls it an unusual way of supplication, but that proceeded from his carrying a child in his arms to move the greater compassion, not from his throwing himself into the protection of the household gods.

v. 209. *Echeneus sage, etc.*] The expression in the original, as Dacier observes, is remarkable: *Echeneus an old man, who knew many antient, and great variety of things; he was wise by long experience, and by being conversant in antient story: the author of the book of Wisdom speaks almost in the same expressions: Scit præterita et de futuris æstimat.*



Fit words attended on his weighty sense,  
And mild persuasion flow'd in eloquence.

Oh fight (he cry'd) dishonest and unjust!  
A guest, a stranger, seated in the dust! 215

To raise the lowly suppliant from the ground  
Befits a monarch. Lo! the peers around

But wait thy word, the gentle guest to grace  
And seat him fair in some distinguish'd place.

Let first the herald due libation pay 220

To Jove, who guides the wand'rer on his way;

Then set the genial banquet in his view,

And give the stranger-guest a stranger's due.

His sage advice the list'ning king obeys,  
He stretch'd his hand the prudent chief to raise, 225

And from his seat Laodamas remov'd,

(The monarch's offspring, and his best belov'd)

There next his side the god-like hero sat;

With stars of silver shone the bed of state.

The golden ew'r a beauteous handmaid brings, 230

Replenish'd from the cool translucent springs,

Whose polish'd vase with copious streams supplies

A silver laver, of capacious size.

v. 226. *And from his seat Laodamas remov'd.*] Plutarch in his *Symposiacs* discusses a question, whether the master of a feast should place his guests, or let them seat themselves promiscuously: he there commends this conduct of Alcinous, as an instance of a courteous disposition and great humanity, who gave a place of dignity to a stranger and suppliant.

The table next in regal order spread,  
 The glitt'ring canisters are heap'd with bread: 235  
 Viands of various kinds invite the taste,  
 Of choicest sort and flavour, rich repast!  
 Thus feasting high, Alcinous gave the sign  
 And bade the herald pour the rosy wine.  
 Let all around the due libation pay 240  
 To Jove, who guides the wand'rer on his way.

He said. Pontonous heard the king's command;  
 The circling goblet moves from hand to hand;  
 Each drinks the juice that glads the heart of man.  
 Alcinous then, with aspect mild, began 245

Princes and peers, attend! while we impart  
 To you, the thoughts of no inhuman heart.  
 Now pleas'd and satiate from the social rite  
 Repair we to the blessings of the night:  
 But with the rising day, assembled here, 250  
 Let all the elders of the land appear,  
 Pious observe our hospitable laws,  
 And heav'n propitiate in the stranger's cause:  
 Then join'd in council, proper means explore  
 Safe to transport him to the wish'd for shore: 255  
 (How distant that, imports not us to know,  
 Nor weigh the labour, but relieve the woe)

v. 240.—*The due libation pay to Jove.*] We have already seen that the whole assembly was about to pour libations to Mercury; whence is it then that they now offer to Jupiter? Eustathius observes, it was because of the arrival of this stranger, and Jupiter presides over all strangers, and is frequently stiled Ζεὺς ξένιος and Ζεὺς ἐστράγγος.

Mean time, nor harm nor anguish let him bear ;  
 This interval, heav'n trusts him to our care,  
 But to his native land our charge resign'd, 260  
 Heav'n is his life to come, and all the woes behind.

There must he suffer what the fates ordain ;  
 For fate has wove the thread of life with pain,  
 And twins ev'n from the birth, are misery and man !

But if descended from th' Olympian bow'r, 265  
 Gracious approach us some immortal pow'r ;  
 If in that form thou com'st a guest divine :  
 Some high event the conscious gods design.  
 As yet, unbid they never grac'd our feast,  
 The solemn sacrifice call'd down the guest ; 270

Then manifest of heav'n the vision stood,  
 And to our eyes familiar was the god.  
 Oft with some favour'd traveller they stray,  
 And shine before him all the desert way :  
 With social intercourse, and face to face, 275  
 The friends and guardians of our pious race.  
 So near approach we their celestial kind,  
 By justice, truth, and probity of mind ;

v. 277. *So near approach we their celestial kind, etc.*]

There is some intricacy in this passage, and much labour has been used to explain it. Some would have it to imply, that ' we are as nearly allied to the gods, as the Cyclops and giants, who are descended from them ; and if ' the gods frequently appear to those giants who defy ' them ; how much more may it be expected by the Phæacians to enjoy that favour, who reverence and adore ' them ?' But Eustathius explains it after another method ; Alcinous had conceived a fixed hatred against the

As our dire neighbours of Cyclopean birth  
Match in fierce wrong, the giant-sons of earth. 280

Let no such thought (with modest grace rejoin'd  
The prudent Greek) possess the royal mind.

Alas! a mortal, like thyself, am I;

No glorious native of yon azure sky:

In form, ah how unlike their heav'nly kind! 285

How more inferior in the gifts of mind!

race of the Cyclops, who had expelled the Phæacians from their country, and forced them to seek a new habitation; he here expresses that hatred, and says that the Phæacians resemble the gods as much in goodness, as the Cyclops and giants, one the other in impiety: he illustrates it, by shewing that the expression has the very same import as if we should say that Socrates comes as near to Plato in virtue, as Anytus and Melitus to one another in wickedness; and indeed the construction will be easy, by understanding Ἀλλήλοισι in the second verse.

————— Σφίσιον ἐργύθεν ἐμὲν,

<sup>α</sup> Ὡσπερ κύκλωπές τε καὶ ἄγρια φῦλα γιγάντων.

*Subaudi, ἐργύθεν ἀλλήλοισι εἰσίν.*

I have already spoken of the presence of the gods at the sacrifices, in a former note upon the *Odyssey*: this frequent intercourse of the gods was agreeable to the theology of the ancients; but why then is Alcinous surprized at the appearance of Ulysses, whom he looks upon as a god, if such favours were frequent? Spondanus replies, that it is the unusualness of the time, not the appearance, that surprizes Alcinous; the gods appeared either at their sacrifices, or in their journies, and therefore he looks upon this visit as a thing extraordinary.

Alas, a mortal ! most oppress'd of those  
 Whom fate has loaded with a weight of woes ;  
 By a sad train of miseries alone  
 Distinguish'd long, and second now to none ! 290  
 By heav'n's high will compell'd from shore to shore ;  
 With heav'n's high will prepar'd to suffer more.  
 What histories of toil could I declare ?  
 But still long-weary'd nature wants repair ;  
 Spent with fatigue, and shrunk with pining fast, 295  
 My craving bowels still require repast.  
 Howe'er the noble, suff'ring mind may grieve  
 Its load of anguish, and disdain to live ;  
 Necessity demands our daily bread ;  
 Hunger is insolent, and will be fed. 300  
 But finish, oh ye peers ! what ye propose,  
 And let the morrow's dawn conclude my woes.  
 Pleas'd will I suffer all the gods ordain,  
 To see my foil, my son, my friends, again.  
 That view vouchsaf'd, let instant death surprize 305  
 With ever during shade these happy eyes !

v. 305. *That view vouchsafed, let instant death, etc.*]  
 It is very necessary to recall frequently to the reader's mind the desire Ulysses has to reach his own country ; and to shew that he is not absent by choice, but necessity ; all the disorders in his kingdoms happen by reason of his absence : it is therefore necessary to set the desire of his return in the strongest point of light, that he may not seem accessory to these disorders, by being absent when it was in his power to return. It is observable that Ulysses does not here make any mention of Penelope, whom he scarce ever omits in other places, as one of the chief inducements to wish for his country ; the reason of his silence,

Th' assembled peers with gen'ral praise approv'd  
His pleaded reason, and the suit he mov'd.

Each drinks a full oblivion of his cares,

And to the gifts of balmy sleep repairs.

310

Ulysses in the regal walks alone

Remain'd: beside him, on a splendid throne,

Divine Arete and Alcinous shone.

}

The queen, on nearer view the guest survey'd

Rob'd in the garments her own hands had made; 315

Not without wonder seen. Then thus began,

Her words addressing to the godlike man.

Can'st thou not hither, wond'rous stranger! say,

From lands remote, and o'er a length of sea?

Tell then whence art thou? whence that princely air?

And robes like these, so recent and so fair?

321

Hard is the task, oh princess! you impose:

(Thus sighing spoke the man of many woes)

! says Eustathius, is, because he is unwilling to abate the favour of Alcinous, by a discovery that would shew it was impossible for him to marry his daughter; such a discovery might make the king proceed more coolly towards his transportation; whereas it would afterwards be less dangerous, when he has had an opportunity fully to engage him in his favour.

v. 322. *Hard is the task, oh princess!]* Æneas in Virgil speaks to Venus after the same manner, as Ulysses to Arete.

*O Dea, si prima repetens ab origine pergami,*

*Et vacet annales nostrorum audire laborum,*

*Ante diem clauso componet vesper Olympo.*

Scaliger observes that Virgil so far exceeds the verses of

The long, the mournful series to relate  
 Of all my sorrows, sent by heav'n and fate! 325  
 Yet what ye ask, attend. An island lies  
 Beyond these tracts, and under other skies,

Homer, that they will not even bear a comparison: he is superior almost in every word; for instance, he renders *δινεκέως*, by *prima ab origine*, and adds the word *vacet* beautifully; and still more beautifully he translates *πολλὰ κήδεα*, *annales nostrorum audire laborum*; and lastly, he paraphrases the word *ἀεγυαλεον* by a most harmonious line,

*Ante diem clauso componet vesper Olympo.*

Which excellently describes the multitude of the sufferings of Æneas, which could not be comprehended in the relation of a whole day.

I will not deny but that Virgil excels Homer in this and many other passages which he borrows from him: but then is it a just conclusion, to infer after the manner of Scaliger, that Virgil is a better poet than Homer? To conclude from particulars to generals is a false way of arguing. It is as if in a comparison of two persons, a man should from single features give a superiority of beauty, which is only to be gathered from the symmetry of the whole body.

v. 326. *Yet what you ask attend*—] Homer here gives a summary of the subject of the two preceding books: this recapitulation cannot indeed be avoided, because it is necessary to let Alcinous into his story, and this cannot be done without a repetition; but generally all repetitions are tedious: the reader is offended when that is related which he knows already, he receives no new instruction to entertain his judgment, nor any new descriptions to excite his curiosity, and by these means the very soul of poetry is extinguished, and it becomes unspirited and lifeless. When therefore repetitions are absolutely necessary, they ought always to be short; and I may ap-

Ogygia nam'd. in Ocean's wat'ry arms :  
 Where dwells Calypso, dreadful in her charms !  
 Remote from gods or men she holds her reign, 330  
 Amid the terrors of the rowling main.

peal to the reader if he is not tired with many in Homer, especially when made in the very same words ? Here indeed Ulysses tells his story but in part ; the queen asked him who he was, but he passes over this without any reply, and reserves the greatest part of his story to a time of more leisure, that he may discover himself to a better advantage before the whole peerage of the Phæacians. I do not always condemn even the verbal repetitions of Homer ; sometimes, as in embassies, they may be necessary, because every word is stamped with authority, and perhaps they might be customary in Homer's time ; if they were not, he had too fruitful an invention not to have varied his thoughts and expressions. Bossu observes, that with respect to repetitions Virgil is more exact than Homer ; for instance, in the first book of the *Ænies*, when *Æneas* is repeating his sufferings to *Venus*, she interrupts him to give him comfort ;

—————*Nec plura querentem*

*Passa Venus, medio sic interfata dolore est.*

and in the third book, where good manners obliged this hero to relate his story at the request of *Andromache*, the poet prevents it by introducing *Helenus*, who hinders the repetition.

v, 330. *Remote from gods or men she holds her reign.*] Homer has the secret art of introducing the best instructions, in the midst of the plainest narrations. He has described the unworthy passion of the goddess *Calypso*, and the indecent advances she made to detain him from his country. It is possible this relation might make some impressions upon the mind of the reader, inconsistent with exact morality : what antidote then does Homer admini-



Me, only me, the hand of fortune bore  
 Unblest! to tread that interdicted shore:  
 When Jove tremendous in the sable deeps  
 Launch'd his red lightning at our scatter'd ships: 333  
 Then, all my fleet, and all my foll'wers lost,  
 Sole on a plank, on boiling surges tost,  
 Heav'n drove my wreck th' Ogygian isle to find,  
 Full nine days floating to the wave and wind.  
 Met by the goddesses there with open arms, 340  
 She brib'd my stay with more than human charms;  
 Nay promis'd, vainly promis'd, to bestow  
 Immortal life, exempt from age and woe.  
 But all her blandishments successless prove,  
 To banish from my breast my country's love. 345

ster to expell this poison? He does not content himself with setting the chastity of Penelope in opposition to the loose desires of Calypso, and shewing the great advantage the mortal has over the goddesses; but he here discovers the fountain from whence this weakness rises, by saying, that neither man nor gods frequented this island; on one hand the absence of the gods, and on the other the infrequency of objects made her yield at the sight of the first that appears. Every object is dangerous in solitude, especially, as Homer expresses it, if we have no commerce with the gods. Dacier.

v. 344. *But all her blandishments successless prove.*]  
 Dacier from Eustathius assigns the reason of the refusal of Ulysses to comply with the proffers of Calypso, to forsake his wife and country: it was, because he knew that women in love promise more than they either can, or intend to perform. An insinuation, that he would have complied if he had thought the goddesses would, or could have performed her promises. But this is contrary to the character

I stay reluctant sev'n continu'd years,  
 And water her ambrosial couch with tears.  
 'The eighth, she voluntary moves to part,  
 Or urg'd by Jove, or her own changeful heart.  
 A raft was form'd to cross the surging sea ;  
 Herself supply'd the stores and rich array ;  
 And gave the gales to waft me on the way. } 350  
 In sev'nteen days appear'd your pleasing coast  
 And woody mountains half in vapours lost.  
 Joy touch'd my soul: my soul was joy'd in vain, } 355  
 For angry Neptune rous'd the raging main ;  
 The wild winds whistle, and the billows roar;  
 The splitting raft the furious tempest tore ;  
 And storms vindictive intercept the shore. }  
 Soon as their rage subsides, the seas I brave } 360  
 With naked force, and shoot along the wave,  
 To reach this isle: but there my hopes were lost,  
 The surge impell'd me on a craggy coast.  
 I chose the safer sea, and chanc'd to find  
 A river's mouth impervious to the wind, } 365  
 And clear of rocks. I fainted by the flood ;  
 Then took the shelter of the neighb'ring wood.  
 'Twas night; and cover'd in the foliage deep,  
 Jove plung'd my senses in the death of sleep.  
 All night I slept, oblivious of my pain : } 370  
 Aurora dawn'd, and Phœbus shin'd in vain,

of Ulysses, whose greatest glory it is not to have listened even to a goddess. In this view he ceases to be an hero, and his return is no longer a virtue, but he returns only because he found not a temptation sufficient to keep him from his country.

Nor 'till oblique he slopt his evening ray,  
 Had Somnus dry'd the balmy dew's away.  
 Then female voices from the shore I heard :  
 A maid amidst them, goddess-like, appear'd : 375  
 To her I su'd, she pity'd my distress ;  
 Like thee in beauty, nor in virtue less.  
 Who from such youth cou'd hope confid'rate care ?  
 In youth and beauty wisdom is but rare !  
 She gave me life, reliev'd with just supplies 380  
 My wants, and lent these robes that strike your eyes.  
 This is the truth : and oh ye Pow'rs on high !  
 Forbid that want shou'd sink me to a lye.

v. 379. *In youth and beauty wisdom is but rare.*] In the preceding line Ulysses speaks of Nausicaa, yet immediately changes the words into the masculine gender, for grammatically it ought to be νεωτέρην ἀνδραγαθάν. Homer makes this alteration to pay the greater compliment to Nausicaa, and he intends to express by it, that neither woman nor man of her years could be expected to have such remarkable discretion. Eustathius.

Such sentences being very frequent in the Odyssæy ; it may not be improper to observe, of what beauty a sentence is in epic poetry. A sentence may be defined, a moral instruction couched in a few words. Rapin asserts, that sentences are more proper in dramatic than heroic poetry : for narration is the essential character of it, and it ought to be one continued thread of discourse, simple and natural, without any affectation of figures, or moral reflexions : that energy which some pretend to collect and enclose within a small compass of words, is wont extremely to weaken the rest of the discourse, and give it a forced air : it seems to jut out of the structure of the poem, and to be independent of it : he blames Homer for scattering his sentences too plentifully through his poetry, and calls it an

To this the king. Our daughter but express  
 Her cares imperfect to our god-like guest. 385  
 Suppliant to her, since first he chose to pray,  
 Why not herself did she conduct the way,  
 And with her handmaids to our court convey?  
 Hero and king! (Ulysses thus reply'd)  
 Nor blame her faultless, nor suspect of pride: 390  
 She bad me follow in th' attendant train;  
 But fear and rev'rence did my steps detain,

affectation and imperfection. These objections would undoubtedly be of weight, if the sentences were so introduced as to break the thread of the narration. as Rapsin rightly observes. But is this the case with relation to Homer? He puts them into the mouth of the actors themselves, and the narration goes on without the least interruption: it is not the poet who speaks, nor does he suspend the narration to make a refined reflection, or give us a sentence of morality. Is his poetry the worse, because he makes his agents speak weightily and sententiously? It is true, sentences used without moderation are absurd in epic poetry; they give it a seriousness that is more becoming the gravity of philosophers, than the spirit and majesty of poetry. Bossu judiciously observes, that such thoughts have in their very nature a certain kind of calm wisdom that is contrary to the passions; but, says he, sentences make a poem useful, and it seems natural to imagine, that the more a work is embellished with them, the more it deserves that general approbation which Horace promises to those who have the art to mix the profitable with the pleasant. In short, sentences are not only allowable but beautiful in heroic poetry, if they are introduced with propriety, and without affectation.

v. 391. *She bad me follow*——

*But fear and reverence, etc.*

Left rash suspicion might alarm thy mind :  
 Man's of a jealous and mistaking kind.

Far from my soul (he cry'd) the gods efface 395  
 All wrath ill grounded, and suspicion base !  
 Whate'er is honest, stranger, I approve,  
 And would to Phœbus, Pallas, and to Jove,  
 Such as thou art, thy thought and mine were one,  
 Nor thou unwilling to be call'd my son, 400

This is directly contrary to what is before asserted in the preceding book, where Nausicaa forbids Ulysses to attend her, to avoid suspicion and slander. Is not Ulysses then guilty of falshood, and is not falshood beneath the character of a hero ? Eustathius confesses that Ulysses is guilty φανερώς ψεύδεται, and he adds, that a wise man may do so sometimes opportunely. Οπερ αν ποιηται εν καιρῳ ὁ σοφός. I fear this concession of the bishop's would not pass for good casuistry in these ages. Spondanus is of the same opinion as Eustathius ; *Vir prudens certo loco et tempore mendaciis officiosissimis uti novit*. Dacier confesses that he somewhat disguises the truth. It will be difficult to vindicate Ulysses from the imputation, if the notions of truth and falshood were as strict in former, as in these ages ; but we must not measure by this standard : it is certain that antiently lying was reckoned no crime by a whole nation ; and it still bears a dispute, *an omne falsi-loquium sit mendacium ?* Some casuists allow of the *officiosum mendacium*, and such is this of Ulysses, intirely complemental and officious.

v. 400. *Nor thou unwilling to be call'd my son*—] The ancients observe, that Alcinous very artfully inserts this proposition to Ulysses, to prove his veracity. If he had imbraced it without hesitation, he would have concluded him an impostor : for it is not conceivable that he should reject all the temptations to marriage made him by Calypso a goddess, and yet immediately embrace this of-

In such alliance could'st thou wish to join,  
 A palace stor'd with treasures shou'd be thine.  
 But if reluctant, who shall force thy stay?  
 Jove bids to set the stranger on his way,  
 And ships shall wait thee with the morning ray. } 405  
 'Till then let slumber close thy careful eyes;  
 The wakeful mariners shall watch the skies,  
 And seize the moment when the breezes rise: }  
 Then gently waft thee to the pleasing shore,  
 Where thy soul rests, and labour is no more. } 410  
 Far as Eubæa though thy country lay,  
 Our ships with ease transport thee in a day.

fer of Alcinous to marry his daughter. But if we take the passage in another sense, and believe that Alcinous spoke sincerely without any secret suspicions, yet his conduct is justifiable. It has I confess appeared shocking, that Alcinous, a king, should at the very first interview offer his daughter to a stranger, who might be a vagrant and impostor: but examples are frequent in antiquity of marriages thus concluded between strangers, and with as little hesitation: thus Bellerophon, Tydeus, and Polynices were married. Great personages regarded not riches, but were only solicitous to procure worthy husbands for their daughters, and birth and virtue were the best recommendations.

It is observable that in the original there is a chasm, an infinitive mood without any thing to govern it; we must therefore supply the word *ἔθειλες* to make it right construction. Eustathius.

v. 411. *Far as Eubæa tho' thy country lay.*] Eubæa, as Eustathius observes, is really far distant from Corcyra the country of the Phœaciens: but Alcinous still makes it more distant, by placing it in another part of the world.

Thither of old, earth's \* giant-son to view,  
 On wings of winds with Rhadamanth they flew :  
 This land, from whence their morning course begun, 415  
 Saw them returning with the setting sun.  
 Your eyes shall witness and confirm my tale,  
 Our youth how dext'rous, and how fleet our sail;

\* Tityus.

and describing it as one of the fortunate islands : for in the fourth book Rhadamanthus is said to inhabit the Elysian fields. Alcinous therefore endeavours to have it believed that his isle is near those fields, by asserting that Rhadamanthus made use of Phæacian vessels in his voyage to Tityus. Eustathius further adds, that Rhadamanthus was a prince of great justice, and Tityus a person of great impiety, and that he made this voyage to bring him over to more virtuous dispositions.

v. 415. *This land, from whence their morning course begun,*

*Saw them returning with the setting sun.]*

If Homer had given the true situation of Corcyra as it really lies opposite to Epirus, yet the hyperbole of sailing thence to Eubæa and returning in the same day, had been utterly an impossibility ; for in sailing thither they must pass the Ionian and Icarian seas, and double the Peloponnesus. But the fiction is yet more extravagant, by the poet's placing it still more distant near the Fortunate islands. But what is impossible for vessels to effect, that are as swift as birds, and can sail with the rapidity of a thought ? Eustathius.

But then is the poet justifiable for relating such incredible amplifications ? It may be answered, if he had put these extravagancies into the mouth of Ulysses, he had been unpardonable, but they suit well with the character of Alcinous : they let Ulysses into his disposition, and he appears to be ignorant, credulous, and ostentatious. This

When justly tim'd with equal sweep they row,  
And ocean whitens in long tracks below. 420

Thus he. No word th' experienc'd man replies,  
But thus to heav'n (and heav'nward lifts his eyes)

O Jove! oh father! what the king accords

Do thou make perfect! sacred be his words!

Wide o'er the world Alcinous' glory shine! 425

Let fame be his, and ah! my country mine!

Mean time Arete, for the hour of rest

Ordains the fleecy couch, and cov'ring vest:

was necessary, that Ulysses might know how to adapt himself to his humour, and engage his assistance; and this he actually brings about by raising his wonder and esteem by stories, that could not fail to please such an ignorant and credulous person as Alcinous.

Dacier adds, that the Phæacians were so puffed up with their constant felicity and the protection of the gods, that they thought nothing impossible; upon this opinion all these hyperboles are founded: and this agrees too well with human nature; the more happy men are, the more high and extravagantly they talk, and are too apt to entertain themselves with wild chimæra's which have no existence but in the imagination.

The moral then of these fables of Alcinous is, that a constant series of happiness intoxicates the mind, and that moderation is often learned in the school of adversity.

v. 423. *The prayer of Ulysses* ] It is observable, that Ulysses makes no reply directly to the obliging proposition which the king made concerning his daughter. A refusal might have been disadvantageous to his present circumstances, yet an answer is implied in this prayer, which shews the impatience he has to return to his country, and the gratitude he feels for his promises to effect it: and consequently it discovers that he has no intentions of settling with his daughter amongst the Phæacians. Dacier.



Bids her fair train the purple quilts prepare,  
 And the thick carpets spread with busy care. 430  
 With torches blazing in their hands they pass,  
 And finish'd all their queen's command with haste:  
 Then gave the signal to the willing guest:  
 He rose with pleasure, and retir'd to rest.  
 There, soft extended, to the murm'ring sound, 435  
 Of the high porch, Ulysses sleeps profound!  
 Within, releas'd from cares Alcinous lies;  
 And fast beside, were clos'd Arete's eyes.

v. 437, 438. *The last lines.*] It may seem somewhat extraordinary, that Alcinous and his queen who have been described as patterns of conjugal happiness should sleep in distinct beds. Jupiter and Juno, as Dacier observes from the first of the Iliad, have the same bed. Perhaps the poet designed to shew the luxury and false delicacy of those too happy Phæacians, who lived in such softness that they shunned every thing that might prove troublesome or incommodious.

This book takes up no longer time than the evening of the thirty-second day.



T H E  
O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K V I I I.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

*Alcinous calls a council, in which it is resolved to transport Ulysses into his country. After which splendid entertainments are made, where the celebrated musician and poet Demodocus plays and sings to the guests. They next proceed to the games, the race, the wrestling, discus, etc. where Ulysses casts a prodigious length, to the admiration of all the spectators. They return again to the banquet, and Demodocus sings the loves of Mars and Venus. Ulysses, after a compliment to the poet, desires him to sing the introduction of the wooden horse into Troy; which subject provoking his tears, Alcinous inquires of his guest, his name, parentage and fortunes.*

**N**OW fair Aurora lifts her golden ray,  
And all the ruddy orient flames with day :

This book has been more severely censured by the critics than any in the whole *Odyssy*: it may therefore be thought necessary to lay before the reader what may be offered in the poet's vindication.

Scaliger in his *Poetics* is very warm against it. Demodocus, observes that critic, sings the lust of the gods (*foeditates*) at the feast of Alcinous. And Bossu, though he vindicates the poet, remarks that we meet some offensive passages in Homer, and instances in the adultery of Mars and Venus.

To know (says Aristotle in his *Art of Poetry*) whether a thing be well or ill spoken, we must not only examine the thing whether it be good or ill, but we must also have

Alcinous, and the chief, with dawning light,  
Rose instant from the slumbers of the night :

regard to him that speaks or acts, and to the person to whom the poet addresses ; for the character of the person who speaks, and of him to whom he speaks, makes that to be good, which would not come well from the mouth of any other person. It is on this account we vindicate Homer with respect to the immorality that is found in the fable of the adultery of Mars and Venus : we must consider that it is neither the poet, nor his hero, that recites that story : but a Phæacian sings it to Phæacians, a soft effeminate people, at a festival. Besides, it is allowable even in grave and moral writings to introduce vicious persons, who despise the gods : and is not the poet obliged to adapt his poetry to the characters of such persons ? And had it not been an absurdity in him to have given us a philosophical or moral song before a people who would be pleased with nothing but gaiety and effeminacy ? The moral that we are to draw from this story is, that an idle and soft course of life is the source of all criminal pleasures ; and that those persons who lead such lives, are generally pleased to hear such stories, as make their betters partakers in the same vices. This relation of Homer is a useful lesson to them who desire to live virtuously ; and it teaches, that if we would not be guilty of such vices, we must avoid such a method of life as inevitably leads to the practice of them.

Rapin attacks this book on another side, and blames it not for its immorality, but lowness. Homer, says he, puts off that air of grandeur and majesty which so properly belongs to his character, he debases himself into a droll, and sinks into a familiar way of talking : he turns things into ridicule, by endeavouring to entertain his reader with something pleasant and diverting : for instance, in the eighth book of the *Odyssy*, he entertains the gods with a comedy, some of whom he makes buffoons ; Mars and

Then to the council feat they bend their way, 5  
 And fill the shining thrones along the bay.

Mean-while Minerva in her guardian care  
 Shoots from the starry vault thro' fields of air ;  
 In form a herald of the king she flies  
 From peer to peer, and thus incessant cries. 10

Venus are introduced upon the stage, taken in a net laid by Vulcan, contrary to the gravity which is so essential to epic poetry.

It must be granted, that the gods are here painted in colours unworthy of deities, yet still with propriety, if we respect the spectators, who are ignorant, debauched Phæacians. Homer was obliged to draw them not according to his own idea of the gods, but according to the wild fancies of the Phæacians. The poet is not at liberty to ascribe the wisdom of a Socrates to Alcinous : he must follow nature, and like a painter he may draw deities or monsters, and introduce as he pleases either vicious or virtuous characters, provided he always makes them of a piece, consistent with their first representation.

This rule of Aristotle in general vindicates Homer, and it is necessary to carry it in our minds, because it ought to be applied to all incidents that relate to the Phæacians, in the sequel of the *Odyssey*.

v. 6. *And fill the shining thrones along the bay.*] This place of council was between the two ports, where the temple of Neptune stood ; probably, like that in the second book, open to the air.

v. 9. *In form a herald.*—] It may be asked what occasion there is to introduce a goddess, to perform an action that might have been as well executed by a real herald? Eustathius observes, that this Minerva is either Fame, which informs the Phæacians that a stranger of uncommon figure is arrived, and upon this report they assemble ; or it implies, that this assembly was made by the wisdom

Nobles and chiefs who rule Phæacia's states,  
 The king in council your attendance waits :  
 A prince of grace divine your aid implores,  
 O'er unknown seas arriv'd from unknown shores.

She spoke, and sudden with tumultuous sounds 15  
 Of thronging multitudes the shore rebounds :  
 At once the seats they fill : and every eye  
 Gaz'd, as before some brother of the sky.  
 Pallas with grace divine his form improves.  
 More high he treads, and more enlarg'd he moves : 20

of the peers, and consequently a poet may ascribe it to the goddess of wisdom, it being the effect of her inspiration.

The poet by the introduction of a deity warns us, that something of importance is to succeed ; this is to be ushered in with solemnity, and consequently the appearance of Minerva in this place is not unnecessary : the action of importance to be described is no less than the change of the fortunes of Ulysses ; it is from this assembly that his affairs take a new turn, and hasten to a happy re-establishment.

v. 13. *A prince of form divine*——] Minerva speaks thus in favour of Ulysses, to excite the curiosity of the Phæacians : and indeed the short speech is excellently adapted to this purpose. They were fond of strangers : the goddess therefore tells them, that a stranger is arrived of a god-like appearance. They admired outward show, he is therefore described as a man of extraordinary beauty, and Minerva for this reason immediately improves it. Eusta thus.

v. 19. *Pallas with grace divine his form improves.*] This circumstance has been repeated several times almost in the same words, since the beginning of the *Odyssey*. I cannot be of opinion that such repetitions are beauties. In any other poet, they might have been thought to proceed from a poverty of invention, though certainly not in

She sheds celestial bloom, regard to draw,  
 And gives a dignity of mien, to awe;  
 With strength the future prize of fame to play,  
 And gather all the honours of the day.

Then from his glitt'ring throne Alcinous rose : 25  
 Attend, he cry'd, while we our will disclose,

Homer, in whom there is rather a superfluity than barrenness. Perhaps having once said a thing well, he despaired of improving it, and so repeated it; or perhaps he intended to inculcate this truth, that all our accomplishments, as beauty, strength, *etc.* are the gifts of the gods: and being willing to fix it upon the mind, he dwells upon it, and inserts it in many places. Here indeed it has a particular propriety, as it is a circumstance that first engages the Phæacians in the favour of Ulysses: his beauty was his first commendation, and consequently the poet with great judgment sets his hero off to the best advantage, it being an incident from which he dates all his future happiness; and therefore to be insisted upon with a particular solemnity. Plato in his *Theætetus* applies the latter part of this description to Parmenides. Ἄιδούδης τε μοι φαίνεται εἶναι ἀμα δεινός τε.

v. 25. *From his glitt'ring throne Alcinous rose.*] It might be expected that Ulysses, upon whose account alone Alcinous calls this assembly, should have made his condition known, and spoken himself to the Phæacians; whereas he appears upon the stage as a mute person, and the multitude departs intirely ignorant of his name and fortunes. It may be answered, that this was not a proper time for a fuller discovery, the poet defers it till Ulysses had distinguished himself in the games, and fully raised their curiosity. It is for the same reason that Ulysses is silent; if he had spoken, he could not have avoided to let them into the knowledge of his condition, but the contrary

Your present aid this god-like stranger craves,  
 Tost by rude tempest thro' a war of waves :  
 Perhaps from realms that view the rising day,  
 Or nations subject to the western ray.

30

Then grant, what here all sons of woe obtain,  
 (For here affliction never pleads in vain ;)

Be chosen youths prepar'd, expert to try  
 The vast profound, and bid the vessel fly :  
 Launch the tall bark, and order ev'ry oar,  
 Then in our court indulge the genial hour :

35

method is greatly for his advantage, and assures him of success from the recommendation of a king.

But there is another, and perhaps a better reason, to be given for this silence of Ulysses : the poet reserves the whole story of his sufferings for an intire and uninterrupted narration ; if he had now made any discovery he must afterwards either have fallen into tautology, or broken the thread of the relation, so that it would not have been of a piece, but wanted continuity. Besides, it comes with more weight at once, than if it had been made at several times, and consequently makes a deeper impression upon the memory and passion of the auditors. Virgil has taken a different method in the discovery of Æneas ; there was a necessity for it ; his companions, to ingage Dido in their protection, tell her they belong to no less a hero than Æneas, so that he is in a manner known before he appears ; but Virgil after the example of Homer reserves his story for an intire narration.

v. 35. *Launch the tall bark* ———] The word in the original is *πρωτοπλοος* ; which signifies not only a ship that makes its first voyage, but a ship that out-fails other ships, as Eustathius observes. It is not possible for a translator to retain such singularities with any



Instant you sailors to this task attend ?

Swift to the palace, all ye peers ascend :

Let none to strangers honours due disclaim ;

Be there Demodocus, the bard of fame,

40

Taught by the gods to please, when high he sings

The vocal lay reponsive to the strings.

Thus spoke the prince : th' attending peers obey,

In state they move ; Alcinous leads the way :

Swift to Demodocus the herald flies,

45

At once the sailors to their charge arise :

They launch the vessel, and unfurl the sails,

And stretch the swelling canvas to the gales ;

35

Then to the palace move : a gath'ring throng,

200

Youth, and white age, tumultuous pour along :

50

Now all access to the dome are fill'd :

Eight boars, the choicest of the herd, are kill'd ;

beauty ; it would seem pedantry and affectation, and not poetry.

v. 41. *Taught by the gods to please*—] Homer here insinuates that all good and great qualities are the gifts of God. He shews us likewise, that music was constantly made use of in the courts of all the oriental princes ; we have seen Phemius in Ithaca, a second in Lacedæmon with Menelaus, and Demodocus here with Alcinous. The Hebrews were likewise of remarkable skill in music ; every one knows what effect the harp of David had upon the spirit of Saul. Solomon tells us, that he sought out singing men and singing women to entertain him, like these in Homer, at the time of feasting : thus another oriental writer compares music at feasts to an emerald inclosed in gold ; *as a signet of an emerald set in a work of gold, so is the melody of music with pleasant wine.* Ecc! . xxxii.

6. Dacier.

Two beeves, twelve fatlings from the flock they bring  
To crown the feast; so wills the bounteous king.

The herald now arrives and guides along 55

The sacred master of celestial song:

Dear to the muse! who gave his days to flow

With mighty blessings, mix'd with mighty woe:

v. 57. *Dear to the muse! who gave his days to flow  
With mighty blessings, mix'd with mighty woe.*

It has been generally thought that Homer represents himself in the person of Demodocus: and Dacier imagines that this passage gave occasion to the ancients to believe that Homer was blind. But that he really was blind is testified by himself in his hymn to Apollo, which Thucydides asserts to be the genuine production of Homer, and quotes it as such in his history.

Ἦ κἄραί τις δ' ὑμῖν ἀνὴρ ἠδίστος ἀοιδῶν

Ἐνθάδε πωλεῖται καὶ τῷ τεραπεσθε μάλιτα;

Ἦμεῖς δ' εὐ μάλα πασαι ὑποκρίνασθε ἄφ' ὑμεῶν

Τυφλὸς ἀνὴρ——

That is, 'O virgins, if any person asks you who is he, the most pleasing of all poets, who frequents this place, and who is he who most delights you? reply, he is a blind man, *etc.*' It is true, as Eustathius observes, that there are many features in the two poets that bear a great resemblance; Demodocus sings divinely, the same is true of Homer; Demodocus sings the adventures of the Greeks before Troy, so does Homer in his Iliads.

If this be true, it must be allowed that Homer has found out a way of commending himself very artfully: had he spoken plainly, he had been extravagantly vain; but by this indirect way of praise, the reader is at liberty to apply it either solely to Demodocus, or obliquely to Homer.

It is remarkable, that Homer takes a very extraordinary care of Demodocus his brother poet; and introduces

With clouds of darkness quench'd his visual ray,  
But gave him skill to raise the lofty lay. 60

High on a radiant throne sublime in state,  
Encircled by huge multitudes, he sat :  
With silver shone the throne ; his lyre well strung  
To rapturous sounds, at hand Pontonous hung :  
Before his seat a polish'd table shines, 65

And a full goblet foams with gen'rous wines :  
His food a herald bore : and now they fed ;  
And now the rage of craving hunger fled.

Then fir'd by all the muse, aloud he sings  
The mighty deeds of demigods and kings : 70

From that fierce wrath the noble song arose,  
That made Ulysses and Achilles foes :  
How o'er the feast they doom the fall of Troy ;  
The stern debate Atrides hears with joy :

him as a person of great distinction. He calls him in this book the hero Demodocus : he places him on a throne studded with silver, and gives him an herald for his attendant ; nor is he less careful to provide for his entertainment, he has a particular table, and a capacious bowl set before him to drink as often as he had a mind, as the original expresses it. Some merry wits have turned the last circumstance into raillery, and insinuate that Homer in this place as well as in the former means himself in the person of Demodocus, an intimation that he would not be displeas'd to meet with the like hospitality

v. 74. *The stern debate Atrides heard with joy.*] This passage is not without obscurity, but Eustathius thus explains it from Athenæus. In the Iliads the generals sup with Agamemnon with sobriety and moderation ; and if in the Odyssy we see Achilles and Ulysses in contention

For heav'n foretold the contest, when he trod 73  
 The marble threshold of the Delphic god,  
 Curious to learn the counsels of the sky,  
 Ere yet he loos'd the rage of war on Troy.

Touch'd at the song, Ulysses strait resign'd  
 To soft affliction all his manly mind: 80

to the great satisfaction of Agamemnon, it is because these contentions are of use to his affairs; they contend whether force or stratagem is to be employed to take Troy; Achilles after the death of Hector, persuaded to assault it by storm, Ulysses by stratagem. There is a further reason given for the satisfaction which Agamemnon expresses at the contest of these two heroes: before the opening of the war of Troy he consulted the oracle concerning the issue of it; Apollo answered, that Troy should be taken when two princes most renowned for wisdom and valour should contend at a sacrifice of the gods; Agamemnon rejoices to see the prediction fulfilled, knowing that the destruction of Troy was at hand, the oracle being accomplished by the contest of Ulysses and Achilles.

v. 79. *Touch'd at the song*—] Many objections may be made against this relation; it may seem to offend against probability, and appears somewhat incredible, that Demodocus should thus luckily pitch upon the war of Troy for the subject of his song, and still more happily upon the deeds of Ulysses; for instance, a man may die of an apoplexy, this is probable; but that this should happen just when the poet has occasion for it, is in some degree incredible. But this objection will cease, if we will consider not only that the war of Troy was the greatest event of those ages, and consequently might be the common subject of entertainment; but also that it is not Homer or Demodocus who relates the story, but the muse who inspires it: Homer several times in this book ascribes the song to immediate inspiration; and this supernatural

Before his eyes the purple vest he drew,  
 Industrious to conceal the falling dew :  
 But when the music paus'd, he ceas'd to shed  
 The flowing tear, and rais'd his drooping head :  
 And lifting to the gods a goblet crown'd, 85  
 He pour'd a pure libation to the ground.

Transported with the song, the list'ning train  
 Again with loud applause demand the strain :

assistance reconciles it to human probability, and the story becomes credible when it is supposed to be related by a deity. Aristotle in his Poetics commends this conduct as artful and judicious ; Alcinous, says he, invites Ulysses to an entertainment to divert him, where Demodocus sings his actions, at which he cannot refrain from tears, which Alcinous perceives, and this brings about the discovery of Ulysses.

It may further be objected, that a sufficient cause for this violence of tears is not apparent : for why should Ulysses weep to hear his own brave achievements, especially when nothing calamitous is recited ? This indeed would be improbable, if that were the whole of what the poet sung : but Homer only gives us the heads of the song, a few sketches of a larger draught, and leaves something to be filled up by the imagination of the reader. Thus for instance, the words of Demodocus recalled to the mind of Ulysses all the hardships he had undergone during a ten years war, all the scenes of horror he had beheld, and the loss and sufferings of all his friends. And no doubt he might weep even for the calamities he brought upon Troy ; an ingenuous nature cannot be insensible when any of its own species suffers ; the Trojans were his enemies, but still they were men, and compassion is due even to unfortunate enemies. I doubt not but it will be allowed, that there is here sufficient cause to draw tears from a hero, unless a hero must be supposed to be divested of humanity.

Again Ulysses veil'd his pensivè head,  
 Again unmann'd a show'r of sorrow shed : 90  
 Conceal'd he wept : the king observ'd alone  
 The silent tear, and heard the secret groan :  
 Then to the bard aloud : O cease to sing,  
 Dumb be thy voice, and mute th' harmonious string ;  
 Enough the feast has pleas'd, enough the pow'r 95  
 Of heav'nly song has crown'd the genial hour !  
 Incessant in the games your strength display,  
 Contest, ye brave, the honours of the day !  
 That pleas'd th' admiring stranger may proclaim  
 In distant regions the Phœacian fame : 100  
 None wield the gauntlet with so dire a sway,  
 Or swifter in the race devour the way :  
 None in the leap spring with so strong a bound,  
 Or firmer, in the wrestling, press the ground.

Thus spoke th' king ; the attending peers obey : 105  
 In state they move, Alcinous leads the way :  
 His golden lyre Demodocus unstrung,  
 High on a column in the palace hung :

v. 101. *None wield the gauntlet with so dire a sway.*] Eustathius asks how Alcinous could make such an assertion, and give the preference to his people before all nations, when he neither knew, nor was known to, any heroes out of his own island ? He answers that he speaks like a Phœacian, with ostentation and vanity ; besides, it is natural for all people to form, not illaudibly, too favourable a judgment of their own country : and this agrees with the character of the Phœacians in a more particular manner, who called themselves ἀρχιθεοὶ, and the favourites of the gods.

And guided by a herald's guardian cares  
Majestic to the lifts of fame repairs. 110

Now swarms the populace ; a countless throng,  
Youth and hoar age ; and man drives man along :  
The games begin ; ambitious of the prize,  
Acroncus, Thoon, and Eretmeus arise ;  
The prize Ocyalus and Prynneus claim : 115  
Anchialus and Ponteus, chiefs of fame :  
There Proreus, Nautes, Eratreus appear,  
And fam'd Amphialus, Poinyneus' heir :  
Euryalus, like Mars terrific, rose,  
When clad in wrath he withers hosts of foes : 120

v. 113. *The games*——] Eustathius remarks, that Homer very judiciously passes over these games in a few lines, having in the Iliad exhausted that subject ; he there enlarged upon them, because they were essential ornaments, it being necessary that Patroclus should be honoured by his friend with the utmost solemnity. Here they are only introduced occasionally, and therefore the poet hastens to things more requisite, and carries on the thread of his story. But then it may be asked why are they mentioned at all, and what do they contribute to the re-establishment of Ulysses ? It is evident that they are not without an happy effect ; they give Ulysses an opportunity to signalize his character, to engage the king and the peers in his favour, and this induces them to convey him to his own country, which is one of the most material incidents in the whole Odyssey.

v. 119. *Euryalus, like Mars terrific, rose.*] I was at a loss for a reason why this figure of terror was introduced amongst an unwarlike nation, upon an occasion contrary to the general description in the midst of games and diversions. Eustathius takes notice, that the poet distinguishes the character of Euryalus, to force it upon our observa-

Naubolides with grace unequal'd shone,  
Or equal'd by Laodamas alone.

With these came forth Ambasineus the strong;  
And three brave sons, from great Alcinous sprung.

Rang'd in a line the ready racers stand, 125  
Start from the goal, and vanish o'er the strand:  
Swift as on wings of wind upborn they fly,  
And drifts of rising dust involve the sky:  
Before the rest what space the hinds allow  
Between the mule and ox, from plow to plow; 130

tion; he being the person who uses Ulysses with roughness and inhumanity, and is the only peer that is described with a sword, which he gives to Ulysses to repair his injury.

He further remarks, that almost all the names of the persons who are mentioned as candidates in these games are borrowed from the sea, Phæacia being an island, and the people greatly addicted to navigation. I have taken the liberty to vary from the order observed by Homer in the catalogue of the names, to avoid the affinity of sound in many of them, as Euryalus, Ocyalus, etc. and too many names being tedious, at least in English poetry, I passed over the three sons of Alcinous, Laodamas, Halius, and Clytoneus, and only mentioned them in general as the sons of Alcinous.

I was surprized to see Dacier render

——υἱὸς Πολυνῆς Τεκτονίδαο

The son of Polyneus the carpenter; it looks like burlesque: it ought to be rendered, the son of Polyneus Tectonides, a Patronymic, and it is so understood by all commentators.

v. 129.—*What space the hinds allow*

*Between the mule and ox, from plow to plow.*

This image drawn from rural affairs is now become obsolete, and gives us no distinct idea of the distance between



Clytoneus sprung : he wing'd the rapid way,  
 And bore th' unrival'd honours of the day.  
 With fierce embrace the brawny wrestlers join ;  
 The conquest, great Euryalus, is thine.  
 Amphialus sprung forward with a bound, 135  
 Superior in the leap, a length of ground :  
 From Elatreus' strong arm the discus flies,  
 And sings with unmatch'd force along the skies.  
 And Laodame whirls high, with dreadful sway, 140  
 The gloves of death, victorious in the fray.

While thus the peerage in the games contends,  
 In act to speak, Laodamas ascends. :

Clytoneus and the other racers ; but this obscurity arises not from Homer's want of perspicuity, but from the change which has happened in the method of tillage, and from a length of time which has effaced the distinct image which was originally stamped upon it ; so that what was understood universally in the days of Homer is grown almost unintelligible to posterity. Eustathius only observes, that the teams of mules were placed at some distance from the teams of oxen : the mule being more swift in his labour than the ox, and consequently more ground was allowed to the mule than the ox by the husbandman. This gives us an idea that Clytoneus was the foremost of the racers, but how much is not to be discovered with any certainty. Aristarchus, as Didymus informs us, thus interprets Homer. ' As much as a yoke of mules set to work at the same time with a yoke of oxen, outgoes the oxen, (for mules are swifter than oxen,) so much Clytoneus outwent his competitors.' The same description occurs in the tenth book of the Iliads, verse 419, to which passage I refer the reader for a more large and different explication.

O friends, he cries, the stranger seems well skill'd  
 To try th' illustrious labours of the field :  
 I deem him brave ; then grant the brave man's claim, 145  
 Invite the hero to his share of fame.

What nervous arms he boasts ! how firm his tread !  
 His limbs how turn'd ! how broad his shoulders spread !  
 By age unbroke !——but all-consuming care  
 Destroys perhaps the strength that time wou'd spare : 150  
 Dire is the ocean, dread in all its forms !  
 Man must decay, when man contends with storms.

Well hast thou spoke, (Euryalus replies)  
 Thine is the guest, invite him thou to rise.  
 Swift as the word advancing from the croud 155  
 He made obeysance, and thus spoke aloud.

Vouchsafes the rev'rend stranger to display  
 His manly worth, and share the glorious day ?  
 Father, arise ! for thee thy port proclaims  
 Expert to conquer in the solemn games. 160

v. 149. *By age unbroke !* | It is in the original literally, *he wants not youth* ; this is spoken according to appearance only, for Ulysses must be supposed to be above forty. having spent twenty years in the wars of Troy, and in his return to his country. It is true Hesiod calls a person a youth, *αιζήδον*, who was forty years of age, but this must be understood with some allowance, unless we suppose that the life of man was longer in the times of Hesiod, than in these later ages ; the contrary of which appears from many places in Homer, where the shortness of man's life is compared to the leaves of trees, *etc.* But what the poet here relates is very justifiable. for the youth which Ulysses appears to have, proceeds from Minerva ;

To fame arise! for what more fame can yield  
 Than the swift race, or conflict of the field?  
 Steal from corroding care one transient day,  
 To glory give the space thou hast to stay;  
 Short is the time, and lo! ev'n now the gales 165  
 Call thee aboard, and stretch the swelling sails;

To whom with sighs Ulysses gave reply:  
 Ah why th' ill-suiting pastime must I try?  
 To gloomy care my thoughts alone are free;  
 Ill the gay sports with troubled hearts agree: 170  
 Sad from my natal hour my days have ran,  
 A much-afflicted, much-induring man!  
 Who suppliant to the king and peers, implores  
 A speedy voyage to his native shores.

it is not a natural quality, but conferred by the immediate operation of a goddess.

This speech concludes with an address of great beauty; Laodamas invites Ulysses to act in the games, yet at the same time furnishes him with a decent excuse, to decline the invitation if it be against his inclinations; should he refuse, he imputes the refusal to his calamities, not to any want of skill, or personal inability.

v. 167. — [*Ulysses gave reply.*] These are the first words spoken by Ulysses before the Phæacians; and we cannot but be curious to know how he makes his address to engage a people, in whom he has no personal interest, in his favour. His speech is excellently adapted to this purpose: he represents himself as a suppliant to the king and all the assembly; and all suppliants being esteemed sacred, he at once makes it a duty in all the assembly to protect him; if they refuse to assist him, they become guilty of no less a crime, than a violation of the laws of hospitality.

Wide wanders, Laodame, thy erring tongue, 175  
 The sports of glory to the brave belong,  
 (Retorts Euryalus :) he boasts no claim  
 Among the great, unlike the sons of Fame.  
 A wand'ring merchant he frequents the main,  
 Some mean sea-farer in pursuit of gain ; 180  
 Studious of freight, in naval trade well skill'd,  
 But dreads th' athletic labours of the field.  
 Incens'd Ulysses with a frown replies,  
 O forward to proclaim thy foul unwise !  
 With partial hands the gods their gifts dispense ; 185  
 Some greatly think, some speak with manly sense ;  
 Here heav'n an elegance of form denies,  
 But wisdom the defect of form supplies :  
 This man with energy of thought controuls,  
 And steals with modest violence our souls, 190  
 He speaks reserv'dly, but he speaks with force,  
 Nor can one word be chang'd, but for a worse ;

v. 190. *And steals with modest violence our souls,*

*He speaks reserv'dly, but he speaks with force.]*

There is a difficulty in the Greek expression, ἀσφαλέως ἀγορεύει, αἰδοῖ μαιλιχίη; that is, 'he speaks securely with a winning modesty.' Dionysius Halicarnassus interprets it, in his Examination of Oratory, to signify that the orator argues *per concessa*, and so proceeds with certainty, or ἀσφαλέως; without danger of refutation. The word properly signifies without stumbling, ἀπροσκόπως, as in the proverb cited by Eustathius, φορητότερον ποσὶν ἢ πρὸς γλῶττι προσκοπιεῖν; that is, 'it is better to stumble with the feet than with the tongue.' The words are concise, but of a very extensive comprehension, and take in every thing, both in sentiments and diction, that enters

In public more than mortal he appears,  
 And as he moves the gazing croud revires.  
 While others, beauteous as th' ætherial kind, 195  
 The nobler portion want, a knowing mind.  
 In outward show heav'n gives thee to excell,  
 But heav'n denies the praise of thinking well.  
 Ill bear the brave a rude ungvorn'd tongue,  
 And, youth, my gen'rous soul repents the wrong; 200  
 Skill'd in heroic exercise, I claim  
 A post of honour with the sons of Fame;

into the character of a complete orator. Dacier concurs in the same interpretation; 'He speaks reservedly, or 'with caution; he hazards nothing that he would afterwards with (*repentir*) to alter. And all his words are 'full of sweetness and modesty.' These two lines are found almost literally in Hesiod's Theogony, ver. 92.

Ἐρχομένον δ' ἀπὸ ἄστου, θεὸν ὡς ἰλάσκειν  
 Αἰδοῖ μελιχίῃ. Μετα δὲ πρέπει ἀγρομένοισιν.

Whether Homer borrowed these verses from Hesiod, or Hesiod from Homer, is not evident. Tully, in his book *de Senectute*, is of opinion, that Homer preceded Hesiod many ages, and consequently in his judgment the verses are Homer's. I question not but he had this very passage in view in his third book of his Orator. *Quem stupefacti dicentem intuentur, quem Deum, ut ita dicam, inter homines putant*; which is almost a translation of Homer.

v. 201. *Skill'd in heroic exercise, I claim  
 A post of honour with the sons of Fame.*]

It may be thought that Ulysses, both here and in his subsequent speech, is too ostentatious, and that he dwells more than modesty allows upon his own accomplishments:

Such was my boast, while vigour crown'd my days,  
 Now care furrounds me, and my force decays ;  
 Inur'd a melancholy part to bear, 205  
 In scenes of death, by tempest and by war.  
 Yet thus by woes impair'd, no more I wave  
 To prove the hero——Slander flings the brave.

Then striding forward with a furious bound,  
 He wrench'd a rocky fragment from the ground : 210  
 By far more pond'rous and more huge by far,  
 Than what Phæacia's sons discharg'd in air.  
 Fierce from his arm th' enormous load he flings ;  
 Sonorous thro' the shaded air it sings ;

but self-praise is sometimes no fault. Plutarch has wrote a dissertation, how a man may praise himself without envy: what Ulysses here speaks is not a boast but a justification. Persons in distress, says Plutarch, may speak of themselves with dignity: it shews a greatness of soul and that they bear up against the storms of fortune with bravery: they have too much courage to fly to pity and commiseration, which betray despair and an hopeless condition: such a man struggling with ill fortune shews himself a champion, and if by bravery of speech he transforms himself from miserable and abject, into bold and noble, he is not to be censured as vain and obstinate, but great and invincible.

This is a full justification of Ulysses, he opposes virtue to calumny; and what Horace applies to himself we apply to this hero.

*Quæsitam meritis, sume superbiam.*

Besides, it was necessary to shew himself a person of figure and distinction, to recommend his condition to the Phæacians: he was a stranger to the whole nation, and he therefore takes a probable method to engage their affi-

Couch'd to the earth, tempestuous as it flies, 215

The croud gaze upward while it cleaves the skies.

Beyond all marks, with many a giddy round

Down rushing, it up-turns a hill of ground.

That instant Pallas, bursting from a cloud,  
Fix'd a distinguish'd mark, and cry'd aloud. 220

stance by acquainting them with his worth ; he describes himself as unfortunate. but yet as a hero in adversity.

v. 219. *That instant Pallas, bursting from a cloud.*] There is not a passage in the whole *Odyssey*, where a deity is introduced with less apparent necessity : the goddess of wisdom is brought down from heaven to act what might have been done as well by any of the spectators, namely to proclaim what was self-evident, the victory of Ulysses. When a deity appears, our expectations are awakened for the introduction of something important, but what action of importance succeeds ? It is true, her appearance encourages Ulysses, and immediately upon it he challenges the whole Phæacian assembly. But he was already victor, and no further action is performed. If indeed she had appeared openly in favour of Ulysses, this would have been greatly advantageous to him, and the Phæacians must have highly revered a person who was so remarkably honoured by a goddess : but it is not evident that the Phæacians, or even Ulysses knew the deity, but took her for a man as she appeared to be ; and Ulysses himself immediately rejoices that he had found a friend in the assembly. If this be true, the descent of Pallas will prove very unnecessary ; for if she was esteemed to be merely human, she acts nothing in the character of a deity, and performs no more than might have been performed by a man, and consequently gave no greater courage to Ulysses than a friend actually gave, for such only he believed her to be. Eustathius appears to be of the same opinion, for he says the place is to be understood allego-

Ev'n he who fightless wants his visual ray,  
 May by his touch alone award the day :  
 Thy signal throw transcends the utmost bound  
 Of ev'ry champion, by a length of ground :  
 Securely bid the strongest of the train 225  
 Arise to throw, the strongest throws in vain.

She spoke, and momentary mounts the sky :  
 The friendly voice Ulysses hears with joy ;  
 Then thus aloud, (elate with decent pride).  
 Rise ye Phæacians, try your force, he cry'd ; 230  
 If with this throw the strongest cast'er vye,  
 Still, further still, I bid the discus fly.  
 Stand forth, ye champions, who the gauntlet wield,  
 Or you, the swiftest racers of the field !  
 Stand forth, ye wrestlers, who these pastimes grace ! 235  
 I wield the gauntlet, and I run the race.  
 In such heroic games I yield to none,  
 Or yield to brave Laodamas alone :  
 Shall I with brave Laodamas contend ?  
 A friend is sacred, and I stile him friend. 240

ically, and what is thus spoken by a Phæacian with wisdom, is by the poet applied to the goddess of it.

v. 239. *Shall I with brave Laodamas contend ?*

*A friend is sacred, and I stile him friend.*

Nothing can be more artful than this address of Ulysses ; he finds a way, in the middle of a bold challenge, to secure himself of a powerful advocate, by paying an ingenious and laudable deference to his friend. But it may be asked if decency be observed, and ought Ulysses to challenge the father Alcinous (for he speaks universally) and yet except his son Laodamas, especially when Alci-



Ungen'rous were the man, and base of heart,  
 Who takes the kind, and pays th' ungrateful part :  
 Chiefly the man, in foreign realms confin'd,  
 Base to his friend, to his own interest blind :  
 All, all your heroes I this day defy, 245  
 Give me a man that we our might may try !  
 Expert in ev'ry art, I boast the skill  
 To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill ;  
 Should a whole host at once discharge the bow,  
 My well-aim'd shaft with death prevents the foe : 250

nous was more properly his friend than Laodamas ? and why should he be excepted rather than the other brothers ? Spondanus answers, that the two brothers are included in the person of Laodamas, they have all the same relation to Ulysses, as being equally a suppliant to them all, and consequently claim the same exemption from this challenge as Laodamas ; and Alcinous is not concerned in it : he is the judge and arbitrator of the games, not a candidate, like Achilles in the Iliad. But why is Laodamas named in particular ? He was the elder brother, and Ulysses might therefore be consigned to his care in particular, by the right due to his seniority ; besides, he might be the noblest personage, having conquered his antagonist at the gauntlet, which was the most dangerous, and consequently the most honourable exercise, and therefore Ulysses might pay him peculiar honours. Spondanus.

v. 249. *Should a whole host at once discharge the bow,  
 My well-aim'd shaft with death prevents the  
 foe.]*

There is an ambiguity in the original, and it may imply either, that if Ulysses and his friends were at the same time to aim their arrows against an enemy, his arrow would fly with more certainty and expedition than that of his companions : or that if his enemies had bent all

Alone superior in the field of Troy,  
 Great Philoctetes taught the shaft to fly.  
 From all the sons of earth unrival'd praise  
 I justly claim; but yield to better days,  
 To those fam'd days when great Alcides rose, 255  
 And Eurytus, who bad the gods be foes :  
 (Vain Eurytus, whose art became his crime,  
 Swept from the earth he perish'd in his prime ;  
 Sudden th' irremeable way he trod,  
 Who boldly durst defy the Bowyer God.) 260

their bows at once against him, yet his shaft would reach his adversary before they could discharge their arrows. Eustathius follows the former, Dacier the latter interpretation. And certainly the latter argues the greater intrepidity and presence of mind: it shews Ulysses in the extremity of danger capable of acting with calmness and serenity, and shooting with the same certainty, and steadiness, though multitudes of enemies indanger his life. I have followed this explication, as it is nobler, and shews Ulysses to be a consummate hero.

v. 257. *Vain Eurytus.*—] This Eurytus was king of OEchalia, famous for his skill in archery; he proposed his daughter Iole in marriage to any person that could conquer him at the exercise of the bow. Later writers differ from Homer, as Eustathius observes, concerning Eurytus. They write that Hercules overcame him, and he denying his daughter, was slain, and his daughter made captive by Hercules: whereas Homer writes that he was killed by Apollo, that is, died a sudden death, according to the import of that expression. The ancients differ much about OEchalia; some place it in Eubæa, and some in Messenia, of which opinion is Pausanias. But Homer in the Iliad places it in Thessaly: for he mentions with it

In fighting fields as far the spear I throw,  
 As flies an arrow from the well-drawn bow.  
 Sole in the race the contest I decline,  
 Stiff are my weary joints, and I resign  
 By storms and hunger worn : age well may fail,      265  
 When storms and hunger both at once assail.

Tricca and Ithome, which as Dacier observes were cities of Thessaly.

v. 263. *Sole in the race the contest I decline.*] This is directly contrary to his challenge in the beginning of the speech, where he mentions the race amongst the other games. How then is this difference to be reconciled? Very naturally. Ulysses speaks with a generous warmth, and is transported with anger in the beginning of his oration : here the heat of it is cooled, and consequently reason takes place, and he has time to reflect, that a man so disabled by calamities is not an equal match for a younger and less fatigued antagonist. This is an exact representation of human nature ; when our passions remit, the vehemence of our speech remits ; at first he speaks like a man in anger, here like the wise Ulysses.

It is observable that Ulysses all along maintains a decency and reverence towards the gods, even while his anger seems to be master over his reason ; he gives Eurytus as an example of the just vengeance of heaven, and shews himself in a very opposite light : he is so far from contending with the gods, that he allows himself to be inferior to some other heroes : an instance of modesty.

v. 265.      ————— *Age well may fail,*

*When storms and hunger—————*]

This passage appears to me to refer to the late storms and shipwreck, and the long abstinence Ulysses suffered in sailing from Calypso to the Phæacian island ; for when Nausicaa found him, he was almost dead with hunger, as appears from the sixth of the *Odyssey*. Dacier is of a different opinion, and thinks it relates to his abstinence and

Abash'd, the numbers hear the god-like man,  
'Till great Alcinous mildly thus began.

Well hast thou spoke, and well thy gen'rous tongue  
With decent pride refutes a public wrong 270  
Warm are thy words, but warm without offence;  
Fear only fools, secure in men of sense:  
Thy worth is known. Then hear our country's claim,  
And bear to heroes our heroic fame;

shipwreck upon his leaving Circe, before he came to Calypso. This seems very improbable; for Ulysses had lived seven years with that goddess in great affluence, and consequently must be supposed to have recruited his loss of strength in so long a time, and with the particular care of a goddess: besides, Alcinous was acquainted with his late shipwreck, and his daughter Nausicaa was in some degree witness to it: is it not therefore more probable that he should refer to this latter incident, than speak of a calamity that happened seven years past, to which they were entirely strangers?

Dacier likewise asserts that Eustathius is guilty of a mistake, in making *κομιδή* or *provision*, to signify the ship itself; but in reality he makes an evident distinction: *Οὐ γὰρ διὰ τὸ μὴ κομιδὴν ἐν βράμασιν ἔχειν ἔδαμύσθη Ὀδυσσεὺς τοῖς κύμασιν, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐθραύσθη κύμασιν ἢ κομιδὴν ἔχεσα ναῦς;* 'Ulysses suffered not in the storm because he had no provisions to eat, but because the ship that bore the provisions was broken by the storm;' which shews a wide difference between the vessel and the provisions: so that the expression really implies that the vessel was broken; but Eustathius is far from affirming that *κομιδὴ* and *ναῦς* (except in such an improper sense) have the same signification.

Book VIII. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 69

In distant realms our glorious deeds display, 275

Repeat them frequent in the genial day;

When blest with ease thy woes and wand'rings end,

Teach them thy comfort, bid thy sons attend;

How lov'd of Jove he crown'd our fires with praise,

How we their offspring dignify our race. 280

Let other realms the deathful gauntlet wield,

Or boast the glories of th' athletic field;

We in the course unrival'd speed display,

Or thro' cærulean billows plow the way,

To dress, to dance, to sing our sole delight, 285

The feast or bath by day, and love by night:

Rise then ye skill'd in measures; let him bear

Your fame to men that breathe a distant air;

And faithful say, to you the pow'rs belong

To race, to sail, to dance, to chaunt the song. 290

v. 275. *In distant realms our glorious deeds display.*] From this extravagant preface, it might be imagined that Alcinous was king of a nation of heroes: whereas when he comes to explain the excellence of his subjects, he has scarce any thing to boast of that is manly; they spend an idle life in singing, dancing, and feasting. Thus the poet all along writes consistently; we may know the Phæacians by their character, which is always to be voluptuous, or as Horace expresses it,

—*Alcinoique*

*In cute curanda plus æquo operata juventus.*

And Eustathius rightly observes that the poet does not teach that we ought to live such lives, but only relates historically what lives were led by the Phæacians: he describes them as a contemptible people, and consequently proposes them as objects of our scorn, not imitation.

But, herald, to the palace swift repair,  
And the soft lyre to grace our pastimes bear.

Swift at the word, obedient to the king  
The herald flies the tuneful lyre to bring.

Up rose nine seniors, chosen to survey

295

The future games, the judges of the day :

With instant care they mark a spacious round,

And level for the dance th' allotted ground ;

The herald bears the lyre : intent to play,

The bard advancing meditates the lay,

300

Skill'd in the dance, tall youths, a blooming band,

Graceful before the heav'nly minstrel stand :

v. 301. *Skill'd in the dance*——] I beg leave to translate Dacier's annotation upon this passage, and to offer a remark upon it. This description, says that lady, is remarkable, not because the dancers moved to the sound of the harp and the song: for in this there is nothing extraordinary; but in that they danced, if I may so express it, an history; that is, by their gestures and movements they expressed what the music of the harp and voice described, and the dance was a representation of what was the subject of the poet's song. Homer only says they danced divinely, according to the obvious meaning of the words. I fancy madam Dacier would have forborn her observation, if she had reflected upon the nature of the song to which the Phæacians danced: it was an intrigue between Mars and Venus; and they being taken in some very odd postures, she must allow that these dancers represented some very odd gestures, (or movements as she expresses it) if they were now dancing an history, that is, acting in their motions what was the subject of the song. But I submit to the judgment of the ladies, and shall only add, that this is an instance how a critical eye can see some things in an author, that were never intended by

Light-bounding from the earth, at once they rise,  
 Their feet half-viewless quiver in the skies :  
 Ulysses gaz'd, astonish'd to survey  
 The glancing splendors as their sandals play.  
 Mean-time the bard alternate to the strings  
 The loves of Mars and Cytherea sings :

305

him ; though to do her justice, she borrowed the general remark from Eustathius.

The words *μαρμαρυγὰς θηέτο ποδῶν* are very expressive, they represent the quick glancings of their feet in the dance, *motus pedum coruscans* ; or

*The glancing splendors as their sandals play.*

v. 307.— *The bard alternate to the strings  
 The loves of Mars and Cytherea sings.*

The reader may be pleas'd to look back to the beginning of the book for a general vindication of this story. Scaliger in his poetics prefers the song of Iopas in Virgil, to this of Demodocus in Homer ; *Demodocus Deorum canit fœditates, noster Iopas res rege dignas* Monsieur Dacier in his annotations upon Aristotle's Poetics refutes the objection. The song of Demodocus, says he, is as well adapted to the inclinations and relish of the Phæacians, as the song of Iopas is to queen Dido. It may indeed be questioned whether the subject of Virgil's song be well chosen, and whether the deepest points of philosophy were intirely proper to be sung to a queen and her female attendants.

*The various labours of the wand'ring moon,  
 And whence proceed th' eclipses of the sun,  
 Th' original of men and beasts, and whence  
 The rains arise, and fires their warmth dispense, etc.*  
 Dryden.

Nor is Virgil more reserv'd than Homer : in the fourth

How the stern god enamour'd with her charms

Clasp'd the gay panting goddess in his arms, 310

Georgic he introduces a nymph, who in the court of the goddess Cyrene with her nymphs about her, sings this very song of Demodocus.

*To these Clymene the sweet thest declares  
Of Mars; and Vulcan's unavailing cares;  
And all the rapes of gods, and every love  
From antient Chaos down to youthful Jove.*

Dryden.

So that if either of the poets are to be blamed, it is certainly Virgil: but neither of them, adds that critic, are culpable: Virgil understood what a chaste queen ought to hear before strangers, and what women might say when alone among themselves: thus to the queen he sings a philosophical song, the intrigues of Mars and Venus amongst nymphs when they are alone.

Plutarch vindicates this story of Homer: there is a way of teaching by mute actions, and those very fables that have given most offence, furnish us with useful contemplations: thus in the story of Mars and Venus, some have by an unnecessary violence endeavoured to reduce it into allegory: when Venus is in conjunction with the star called Mars, they have an adulterous influence, but time, or the sun, reveals it. But the poet himself far better explains the meaning of his fable, for he teaches that light music and wanton songs debauch the manners, and incline men to an unmanly way of living in luxury and wantonness.

In short, Virgil mentions this story, Ovid translates it, Plutarch commends it, and Scaliger censures it. I will add the judgment of a late writer, Monsieur Boileau, concerning Scaliger, in his notes upon Longinus. 'That proud scholar, says he, intending to erect altars to Virgil, as he expresses it, speaks of Homer too prophane-



By bribes seduc'd : and hōw the sun, whose eye  
Views the broad heav'ns, disclosed the lawless joy.

Stung to the soul, indignant thro' the skies

To his black forge vindictive Vulcan flies ;

Arriv'd, his sinewy arms incessant place 315

Th' eternal anvil on the massy base.

A wond'rous net he labours, to betray

The wanton lovers, as entwin'd they lay,

Indissolubly strong, then instant bears

To his immortal dome the finish'd snares, 320

Above, below, around, with art dispread,

The sure enclosure folds the genial bed ;

Whose texture ev'n the search of gods deceives.

Thin, as the filmy thread the spider weaves.

Then as withdrawing from the starry bow'rs, 325

He feigns a journey to the Lemnian shores :

His fav'rite isle ! Observant Mars descries

His wish'd recess, and to the goddess flies ;

He glows, he burns : the fair-hair'd queen of love

Descends smooth-gliding from the courts of Jove, 330

Gay blooming in full charms : her hand he prest

With eager joy, and with a sigh address'd.

Come, my belov'd ! and taste the soft delights :

Come, to repose the genial bed invites :

' ly ; but it is a book which he calls in part hypercritical,  
' to shew that he transgressed the bounds of true criti-  
' cism : that piece was a dishonour to Scaliger, and he  
' fell into such gross errors, that he drew upon him the  
' ridicule of all men of letters, and even of his own son.'

Thy absent spouse neglectful of thy charms      335

Prefers his barb'rous Sintians to thy arms !

Then, nothing loth, th' enamour'd fair he led,

And sunk transported on the conscious bed.

Down rush'd the toils, inwrapping as they lay

The careless lovers in their wanton play :      340

In vain they strive, th'intangling snares deny

(Inextricably firm) the pow'r to fly :

Warn'd by the god who sheds the golden day,

Stern Vulcan homeward treads the starry way :

Arriv'd, he sees, he grieves, with rage he burns ;      345

Full horribly he roars, his voice all heav'n returns.

O Jove, he cry'd, oh all ye pow'rs above,

See the lewd dalliance of the queen of love !

v. 336. *Prefers his barb'rous Sintians to thy arms.*] The Sintians were the inhabitants of Lemnos, by origin Thracians : Homer calls them barbarous of speech, because their language was a corruption of the Greek, Asiatic, and Thracian. But there is a concealed raillery in the expression, and Mars ridicules the ill taste of Vulcan for leaving so beautiful a goddess to visit his rude and barbarous Sintians. The poet calls Lemnos the favourite isle of Vulcan; this alludes to the subterraneous fires frequent in that island, and he is feign'd to have his forge there as the god of fire. This is likewise the reason why he is said to fall into the island Lemnos when Jupiter throw him from heaven. Dacier.

v. 348. *See the lewd dalliance of the queen of love.*] The original seems to be corrupted; were it to be translated according to the present editions, it must be, *See the ridiculous deeds of Venus.* I conceive, that few husbands who should take their spouses in such circumstances wou'd have any great appetite to laugh; neither is such

Me, awkward me she scorns, and yields her charms  
 To that fair lecher, the strong god of arms. 350  
 If I am lame, that stain my natal hour  
 By fate impos'd ; such me my parent bore :  
 Why was I born ? see how the wanton lies !  
 O fight tormenting to an husband's eyes !  
 But yet I trust, this once ev'n Mars would fly 355  
 His fair one's arms——he thinks her, once, too nigh.  
 But there remain, ye guilty, in my pow'r,  
 'Till Jove refunds his shameless daughter's dow'r.

an interpretation consonant to the words immediately following *ἐκ ἐπιεικιά*. It is therefore very probable that the verse was originally,

*Δεῦθ' ἵνα ἔργ' ἀγελαστὰ καὶ ἐκ ἐπιεικιά ἰδῆσθε.*

*Come ye gods, behold the sad and unsufferable deeds of Venus ;* and this agrees with the tenor of Vulcan's behaviour in this comedy, who has not the least disposition to be merry with his brother deities.

v. 358. *'Till Jove refund his shameless daughter's dow'r.*] I doubt not but this was the usage of antiquity : it has been observed that the bridegroom made presents to the father of the bride, which were called *ἐνδο* ; and if she was afterwards false to his bed, this dower was restored by the father to the husband. Besides this restitution, there seems a pecuniary mulct to have been paid, as appears evident from what follows.

—————*The god of arms,*

*Must pay the penalty for lawless charms.*

Homer in this, as in many other places, seems to allude to the laws of Athens, where death was the punishment of adultery. Pausanias relates, that Draco the Athenian lawgiver granted impunity to any person that took re-

Too dear I priz'd a fair enchanting face :

Beauty unchaste is beauty in disgrace. 360

Mean-while the gods the dome of Vulcan throng,

Apollo comes, and Neptune comes along,

With these gay Hermes trod the starry plain ;

But modesty with-held the goddess-train.

All heav'n beholds, imprison'd as they lye, 365

And unextinguish'd laughter shakes the sky.

Then mutual, thus they spoke : Behold on wrong

Swift vengeance waits ; and art subdues the strong !

venge upon an adulterer. Such also was the institution of Solon ; ‘ If any one seize an adulterer, let him use him as he pleases, εἰς τὴν μοιχὸν λάσση, ὅτι ἂν βέληται χρῆσθαι. And thus Eratosthenes answered a person who begged his life after he had injured his bed, ἐκ ἐγὼ σε ἀποκτενῶ, ἀλλ' ὁ τῆς πόλεως νόμος, ‘ It is not I who slay thee, but the law of thy country.’ But still it was in the power of the injured person to take a pecuniary mulct by way of atonement : for thus the same Eratosthenes speaks in Lyfias, ἠλιθιόλοι κ' ἰκέτενε μὴ αὐτὸν κτείνειν, ἀλλ' ἀργύριον πράξασθαι, ‘ he entreated me not to take his life, ‘ but exact a sum of money’. Nay, such penalties were allowed by way of commutation for greater crimes than adultery, as in the case of murder : Iliad 9.

—If a brother bleed,

*On just atonement, we remit the deed :*

*A sire the slaughter of his son forgives ;*

*The price of blood discharg'd, the murd'rer lives.*

v. 367. —Behold on wrong

*Swift vengeance waits — ]*

Plutarch in his dissertation upon reading the poets, quotes this as an instance of Homer's judgment, in closing a ludi-

Dwells there a god on all th' Olympian brow  
 More swift than Mars, and more than Vulcan slow? 370  
 Yet Vulcan conquers, and the god of arms  
 Must pay the penalty for lawless charms.

Thus serious they: but he who gilds the skies,  
 The gay Apollo thus to Hermes cries.  
 Wou'dst thou enchain'd like Mars, oh Hermes, lie, 375  
 And bear the shame like Mars, to share the joy?

O envy'd shame! (the smiling youth rejoin'd,)  
 Add thrice the chains, and thrice more firmly bind;  
 Gaze all ye gods, and ev'ry goddess gaze,  
 Yet eager would I bless the sweet disgrace. 380

Loud laugh the rest, ev'n Neptune laughs aloud,  
 Yet sues importunate to loose the god:

crous scene with decency and instruction. He artfully inserts a sentence by which he discovers his own judgment, and lets the reader into the moral of his fables: by this conduct he makes even the representation of evil actions useful, by shewing the shame and detriment they draw upon those who are guilty of them.

v. 382. *Neptune sues to loose the god.*] It may be asked why Neptune in particular interests himself in the deliverance of Mars, rather than the other gods? Dacier confesses she can find no reason for it; but Eustathius is of opinion, that Homer ascribes it to that god out of decency, and deference to his superior majesty and eminence amongst the other deities: it is suitable to the character of that most ancient, and consequently honourable god, to interrupt such an indecent scene of mirth, which is not so becoming his personage, as those more youthful deities Apollo and Mercury. Besides, it agrees well with Neptune's gravity to be the first who is mindful of friendship; so

And free, he cries, oh Vulcan ! free from shame  
Thy captives ; I ensure the penal claim.

Will Neptune (Vulcan then) the faithless trust ? 385  
He suffers who gives surety for th' unjust :  
But say, if that lewd scandal of the sky  
To liberty restor'd, perfidious fly,  
Say wilt thou bear the mulct ? He instant cries,  
The mulct I bear, if Mars perfidious flies. 390

that what is here said of Neptune is not accidental, but spoken judiciously by the poet in honour of that deity.

v. 386. *He suffers who gives surety for th' unjust.*] This verse is very obscure, and made still more obscure by explanations of critics. Some think it implies, that it is wicked to be surety for a wicked person ; and therefore Neptune should not give his promise for Mars thus taken in adultery. Some take it generally ; suretyship is detrimental, and it is the lot of unhappy men to be sureties ; the words then are to be construed in the following order, *δειλοί τοι ἐγυῖαι, καὶ δειλῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐγυῖασθαι. Sponsiones sunt infelices, et hominum est infelicitium sponsiones dare.* Others understand it very differently, *viz.* to imply that the sureties of men of inferior condition should be to men of inferior condition, then the sentence will bear this import : if Mars, says Vulcan, refuses to discharge the penalty, how shall I compel Neptune to pay it, who is so greatly my superior ? and therefore adds by way of sentence, that the sponsor ought to be of the same station with the person to whom he becomes surety ; or in Latin *simplicium hominum simplices esse debent sponsores.* I have followed Plutarch, who in his banquet of the seven wise men, explains it to signify that it is dangerous to be surety for a wicked person, according to the antient sentence, *ἐγυῖα παρὰ δ' ἄρα. Loss follows suretyship.* Agreeably to the opinion of a much wiser person, *He that is surety*

To whom appeas'd : no more I urge delay ;  
 When Neptune sues, my part is to obey  
 Then to the snares his force the god applies ;  
 They burst ; and Mars to Thrace indignant flies :  
 To the soft Cyprian shores the goddess moves, 395  
 To visit Paphos and her blooming groves,  
 Where to the Pow'r an hundred altars rise,  
 And breathing odours scent the balmy skies,  
 Conceal'd she bathes in consecrated bow'rs,  
 The Graces unguents shed, ambrosial show'rs, 400  
 Unguents that charm the gods ! she last assumes  
 Her wond'rous robes : and full the goddess blooms.

Thus sung the bard : Ulysses hears with joy,  
 And loud applauses rend the vaulted sky.

Then to the sports his sons the king commands, 405  
 Each blooming youth before the monarch stands :  
 In dance unmatch'd ! a wond'rous ball is brought,  
 (The work of Polybus, divinely wrought)

*for a stranger shall smart for it ; and he that hateth  
 suretyship is sure, Prov. xi. 15.*

v. 394.——Mars to Thrace indignant flies :

*To the soft Cyprian shores the goddess moves.]*

There is a reason for this particularity : the Thracians were a warlike people : the poet therefore sends the god of war thither ; and the people of Cyprus being effeminate, and addicted to love and pleasures, he feigns the recess of the *goddess of love* to have been in that island. It is further observable, that he barely mentions the retreat of Mars, but dwells more largely upon the story of Venus. The reason is, the Phæacians had no delight in the god of war, but the soft description of Venus better suited with their inclinations. Eustathius.

This youth with strength enormous bids it fly,  
 And bending backward whirls it to the sky ; 410  
 His brother springing with an active bound,  
 At distance intercepts it from the ground :  
 The ball finish'd, in dance they skim the strand,  
 Turn and return, and scarce imprint the sand.  
 Th' assembly gazes with astonish'd eyes, 415  
 And sends in shouts applauses to the skies.

Then thus Ulysses ; happy king, whose name  
 The brightest shines in all the rolls of fame :  
 In subjects happy ! with surprize I gaze ;  
 Thy praise was just ; their skill transcends thy praise. 420

v. 410. *And bending backward whirls it to the sky.*] This is a literal translation of *ιδνωδεις ὀπίσω* ; and it gives us a lively image of a person in the act of throwing towards the skies. Eustathius is much learnedly trifling about this exercise of the ball, which was called *οὐρανία*, or *aerial* ; it was a kind of dance, and while they sprung from the ground to catch the ball, they played with their feet in the air after the manner of dancers. He reckons up several other exercises at the ball, *αποὐράξις*, *φαινίοντα*, *ἐπισκυρος*, and *θρημαῦσις* ; and explains them all largely. Homer seems to oppose this aerial dance to the common one, *ποτὶ χθονί*, or *on the ground*, which appears to be added to make an evident distinction between the sports ; otherwise it is unnecessary ; and to dance upon the ground is implied in *ἀρχέισθον*, for how should a dance be performed but upon the ground ?

v. 420. *Thy praise was just*——] The original says, You promised that your subjects were excellent dancers, *ἀπέλησας* ; that is, threatened : *Minans* is used in the same sense by the Latins, as Dacier observes ; thus Horace,

*Multa et præclara minantem.*



Pleas'd with his people's fame the monarch hears,  
 And thus benevolent accosts the peers.  
 Since wisdom's sacred guidance he pursues,  
 Give to the stranger-guest a stranger's dues :  
 Twelve princes in our realm dominion share, 425  
 O'er whom supreme, imperial pow'r I bear :  
 Bring gold, a pledge of love, a talent bring,  
 A vest, a robe, and imitate your king :  
 Be swift to give ; that he this night may share  
 The social feast of joy, with joy sincere. 430  
 And thou, Euryalus, redeem thy wrong :  
 A gen'rous heart repairs a stand'rous tongue.  
 Th' assenting peers, obedient to the king,  
 In haste their heralds send the gifts to bring.  
 Then thus Euryalus: O prince, whose sway 435  
 Rules this blest realm, repentant I obey !  
 Be his this sword, whose blade of brass displays  
 A ruddy gleam ; whose hilt, a silver blaze ;  
 Whose ivory sheath, inwrought with curious pride,  
 Adds graceful terror to the wearer's side. 440  
 He said, and to his hand the sword consign'd ;  
 And if, he cry'd, my words affect thy mind,  
 Far from thy mind those words, ye whirlwinds bear,  
 And scatter them, ye storms in empty air !

Eustathius remarks, that the address of Ulysses is very artful, he calls it a seasonable flattery : in reality to excel in dancing, is but to excel in trifles, but in the opinion of Alcinous it was a most noble qualification : Ulysses therefore pleases his vanity by adapting his praise to his notions ; and that which would have been an affront in some nations, is esteemed as the highest compliment by Alcinous.

Crown, oh ye heav'ns, with joy his peaceful hours, 445  
 And grant him to his spouse and native shores !

And blest be thou, my friend, Ulysses cries,  
 Crown him with ev'ry joy, ye fav'ring skies ;  
 To thy calm hours continu'd peace afford,  
 And never, never may'st thou want this sword ! 450

He said, and o'er his shoulder flung the blade.  
 Now o'er the earth ascends the evening shade :  
 The precious gifts th' illustrious heralds bear,  
 And to the court th' embody'd peers repair.  
 Before the queen Alcinous' sons unfold 455  
 The vests, the robes, and heaps of shining gold :  
 Then to the radiant thrones they move in state :  
 Aloft, the king in pomp imperial fate.

Thence to the queen. O partner of our reign,  
 O sole belov'd ! command thy menial train 460  
 A polish'd chest and stately robes to bear,  
 And healing waters for the bath prepare ;

v. 450. *And never, never may'st thou want this sword.*] It can scarce be imagined how greatly this beautiful passage is misrepresented by Eustathius. He would have it to imply, *May I never want this sword*, taking τοι adverbially: the presents of enemies were reckoned fatal; Ulysses therefore to avert the omen, prays that he may never have occasion to have recourse to this sword of Euryalus, but keep it amongst his treasures as a testimony of this reconciliation. This appears to be a very forced interpretation, and disagreeable to the general import of the rest of the sentence: he addresses to Euryalus, to whom then can this compliment be naturally paid but to Euryalus? *Thou hast given me a sword*, says he, *may thy days be so peaceable as never to want it!* This is an instance of the polite address, and the forgiving temper, of Ulysses.

That bath'd, our guest may bid his sorrows cease,  
 Hear the sweet song, and taste the feast in peace.  
 A bowl that flames with gold, of wond'rous frame, 465  
 Our self we give, memorial of our name :  
 To raise in off'rings to almighty Jove,  
 And every god that treads the courts above.

Instant the queen, observant of the king,  
 Commands her train a spacious vase to bring, 470  
 The spacious vase with ample streams suffice,  
 Heap high the wood, and bid the flames arise.  
 The flames climb round it with a fierce embrace,  
 The fuming waters bubble o'er the blaze.

Herself the chest prepares : in order roll'd 475  
 The robes, the vests are rang'd, and heaps of gold :  
 And adding a rich dress inwrought with art,  
 A gift expressive of her bounteous heart,  
 Thus spoke to Ithacus : To guard with bands  
 Insolvable these gifts, thy care demands : 480  
 Lest, in thy slumbers on the watry main,  
 The hand of Rapine make our bounty vain.

Then bending with full force, around he roll'd  
 A labyrinth of bands in fold on fold,  
 Clos'd with Circean art. A train attends 480  
 Around the bath : the bath the king ascends :

v. 485. *Clos'd with Circean art*—] Such passages as these have more of nature than art, and are too narrative, and different from modern ways of speaking, to be capable of much ornament in poetry. Eusebius observes that keys were not in use in these ages, but were afterwards invented by the Lacedæmonians ; but they used to bind their carriages with intricate knots. Thus the Gor-

(Untasted joy, since that disastrous hour,  
 He sail'd ill-fated from Calypso's bow'r)  
 Where, happy as the gods that range the sky,  
 He feasted ev'ry sense, with ev'ry joy. 490

He bathes : the damsels, with officious toil,  
 Shed sweets, shed unguents in a show'r of oil :  
 Then o'er his limbs a gorgeous robe he spreads,  
 And to the feast magnificently treads,  
 Full where the dome its shining valves expands, 495  
 Nausicaa blooming as a goddess stands,  
 With wond'ring eyes the hero she survey'd,  
 And graceful thus began the royal maid.

Hail god-like stranger ! and when heav'n restores  
 To thy fond wish thy long-expected shores, 500  
 This ever grateful in remembrance bear,  
 To me thou ow'lt, to me, the vital air.

dian knot was famous in antiquity. And this knot of Ulysses became a proverb, to express any insolvable difficulty, ὁ τῆς Οὐδυσσεύς δεσμός: this is the reason why he is said to have learned it from Circe ; it was of great esteem amongst the ancients, and not being capable to be untied by human art, the invention of it is ascribed, not to a man, but to a goddess.

A poet would now appear ridiculous if he should introduce a goddess only to teach his hero such an art. as to tie a knot with intricacy : but we must not judge of what has been, from what now is ; customs and arts are never at a stay, and consequently the ideas of customs and arts are as changeable as those arts and customs : this knot in all probability was in as high estimation formerly, as the finest watch-work or machines are at this day ; and were a person famed for an uncommon skill in such works, it would be no absurdity in the language of poetry, to

O royal maid, Ulyffes ftrait returns,  
 Whose worth the fplendors of thy race adorns,  
 So may dread Jove (whose arm in vengeance forms 505  
 The writen bolt, and blackens heav'n with fstorms,)  
 Restore me fafe, thro' weary wand'rings toft,  
 To my dear country's ever-pleafing coaft,  
 As while the fpirit in this bofom glows,  
 To thee, my goddeffs, I addrefs my vows ; 510  
 My life, thy gift I boaft ! He faid, and fate  
 Faft by Alcinous on a throne of ftate.  
 Now each partakes the feaft, the wine prepares,  
 Portions the food and each his portion fhares.  
 The bard an herald guides : the gazing throng 515  
 Pay low obeifance as he moves along :

afcribe his knowledge in them to the affiftance of a deity.

v. 510. *To thee, my goddeffs, I addrefs my vows.*] This may feem an extravagant compliment, efppecially in the mouth of the wife Ulyffes, and rather prophane than polite. Dacier commends it as the higheft piece of addrefs and gallantry ; but perhaps it may want explication to reconcile it to decency. Ulyffes only fpeaks comparatively, and with relation to that one action of her faving his life : ' as therefore, fays he, I owe my thanks to the heavens ' for giving me life originally, fo I ought to pay my thanks ' to thee for preferving it; thou haft been to me as a deity. ' To preferve a life, is in one fenfe to give it.' If this appears not to foften the expreffion fufficiently, it may be afcribed to an overflow of gratitude in the generous difpofition of Ulyffes ; he is fo touched with the memory of her benevolence and protection, that his foul labours for an expreffion great enough to represent it, and no wonder if in this ftruggle of thought, his words fly out into an exceffive but laudable boldnefs.

Beneath a sculptur'd arch he sits enthron'd,

The peers encircling form an awful round.

Then from the chine, Ulysses carves with art

Delicious food, an honorary part :

520

This, let the master of the lyre receive,

A pledge of love ! 'tis all a wretch can give.

Lives there a man beneath the spacious skies,

Who sacred honours to the bard denies ?

The muse the bard inspires, exalts his mind ;

525

The muse indulgent loves th' harmonious kind.

The herald to his hand the charge conveys,

Not fond of flatt'ry, nor unpleas'd with praise.

When now the rage of hunger was allay'd,

Thus to the lyrist wife Ulysses said.

530

O more than man ! thy soul the muse inspires,

Or Phœbus animates with all his fires :

v. 519.—*From the chine Ulysses carves with art.*] Were this literally to be translated, it would be, that Ulysses cut a piece from the chine of the white-toothed boar, round which there was much fat. This looks like burlesque to a person unacquainted with the usages of antiquity : but it was the highest honour that could be paid to Demodocus. The greatest heroes in the Iliad are thus rewarded after victory, and it was esteemed an equivalent for all dangers. So that what Ulysses here offers to the poet, is offered out of a particular regard and honour to his poetry.

v. 531. ... *Thy soul the muse inspires,*

*Or Phœbus animates with all his fires.*]

Ulysses here ascribes the songs of Demodocus to immediate inspiration ; and Apollo is made the patron of the poets, as Eustathius observes, because he is the god of prophecy. He adds, that Homer here again represents

For who by Phœbus uninform'd, could know  
 The woe of Greece, and sing so well the woe ?  
 Just to the tale, as present at the fray, 535  
 Or taught the labours of the dreadful day :  
 The song recalls past horrors to my eyes,  
 And bids proud Ilium from her ashes rise.  
 Once more harmonious strike the sounding string,  
 Th' Epæan fabric, fram'd by Pallas, sing : 540  
 How stern Ulysses, furious to destroy,  
 With latent heroes sack'd imperial Troy,  
 If faithful thou record the tale of fame,  
 The god himself inspires thy breast with flame :  
 And mine shall be the task, henceforth to raise 545  
 In ev'ry land, thy monument of praise.

himself in the person of Demodocus : it is he who wrote the war of Troy with as much faithfulness, as if he had been present at it ; it is he who had little or no assistance from former relations of that story, and consequently receives it from Apollo and the muses. This is a secret but artful insinuation that we are not to look upon the Iliad as all fiction and fable, but in general as a real history, related with as much certainty as if the poet had been present at those memorable actions.

Plutarch in his chapter of reading poems admires the conduct of Homer, with relation to Ulysses; he diverts Demodocus from idle fables, and gives him a noble theme, the destruction of Troy. Such subjects suit well with the sage character of Ulysses. It is for the same reason that he here passes over in silence the amour of Mars and Venus, and commends the song at the beginning of this book, concerning the contention of the worthies before Troy ; an instruction, what songs a wise man ought to hear, and that poets should recite nothing but what may be heard by a wise man.

Full of the god he rais'd his lofty strain,  
 How the Greeks rush'd tumultuous to the main :  
 How blazing tents illumin'd half the skies,  
 While from the shores the winged navy flies : 550  
 How ev'n in Ilion's walls, in deathful bands,  
 Came the stern Greeks by Troy's assisting hands :  
 All Troy up-heav'd the steed ; of diff'ring mind,  
 Various the Trojans counsell'd ; part consign'd

v. 554. *Various the Trojans counsell'd*—] It is observable that the poet gives us only the heads of this song, and though he had an opportunity to expatiate and introduce a variety of noble images, by painting the fall of Troy, yet this being foreign to his story, he judiciously restrains his fancy : and passes on to the more immediate actions of the *Odyssey*. Virgil, lib. 2. of his *Æneis*, has translated these verses.

*Scinditur incertum studia in contraria vulgus,  
 At Capys, et quorum melior sententia menti,  
 Aut Pelago Danaum insidias suspectaque dona  
 Præcipitare jubent, subjectisque urere flammis :  
 Aut terebrare cavas uteri et tentare latebras.*

Scaliger prefers these before those of Homer, and says that Homer trifles in describing so particularly the divisions of the Trojan councils : that Virgil chuses to burn the horse, rather than describe it as thrown from the rocks : for how should the Trojans raise it thither ? Such objections are scarce worthy of a serious answer, for it is no difficulty to imagine that the same men who heaved this machine into Troy, should be able to raise it upon a rock : and as for the former objection, Virgil recites almost the same divisions in council as Homer, nay borrows them, with little variation.



The monster to the sword, part sentence gave 555  
 To plunge it headlong in the whelming wave ;  
 Th' unwise award to lodge it in the tow'rs,  
 An off'ring sacred to th' immortal pow'rs :  
 Th' unwise prevail, they lodge it in the walls,  
 And by the gods decree proud Ilion falls ; 560  
 Destruction enters in the treach'rous wood,  
 And vengeful slaughter, fierce for human blood.

He sung the Greeks stern-issuing from the steed,  
 How Ilion burns, how all her fathers bleed :  
 How to thy dome, Deiphobus ! ascends 565  
 The Spartan king ; how Ithacus attends,  
 (Horrid as Mars) and how with dire alarms  
 He fights, subdues : for Pallas strings his arms.

Thus while he sung, Ulysses' griefs renew,  
 Tears bathe his cheeks, and tears the ground bedew : 570  
 As some fond matron views in mortal fight  
 Her husband falling in his country's right :

Aristotle observes the great art of Homer, in naturally bringing about the discovery of Ulysses to Alcinous by this song. He calls this a remembrance, that is, when a present object stirs up a past image in the memory, as a picture recalls the figure of an absent friend : thus Ulysses hearing Demodocus sing to the harp his former hardships, breaks out into tears, and these tears bring about his discovery.

v. 571. *As some fond matron*——] This is undoubtedly a very moving and beautiful comparison ; but it may be asked if it be proper to compare so great a hero as Ulysses to a woman, the weakness of whose sex justifies her tears ? Besides she appears to have a sufficient cause for her sorrows, as being under the greatest calamities ;

Frantic thro' clashing swords she runs, she flies,  
 As ghastly pale he groans, and faints, and dies;  
 Close to his breast she grovels on the ground, 575  
 And bathes with floods of tears the gaping wound;  
 She cries, she shrieks: the fierce insulting foe  
 Relentless mocks her violence of woe,  
 To chains condemn'd as wildly she deplores,  
 A widow, and a slave, on foreign shores! 580

So from the sluices of Ulysses' eyes  
 Fast fell the tears, and sighs succeeded sighs:  
 Conceal'd he griev'd: the king observ'd alone  
 The silent tear, and heard the secret groan:  
 Then to the bard aloud: O cease to sing, 585  
 Dumb be thy voice, and mute the tuneful string:

but why should Ulysses weep? Nothing but his valour and success is recorded, and why should this be an occasion of sorrow? Eustathius replies, that they who think that Ulysses is compared to the matron, mistake the point of the comparison: whereas the tears alone of Ulysses are intended to be compared to the tears of the matron. It is the sorrow of the two persons, not the persons themselves, that is represented in the comparison. But there appears no sufficient cause for the tears of Ulysses; this objection would not have been made, if the subject of the song had been considered; it sets before his eyes all the calamities of a long war, all the scenes of slaughter of friends and enemies that he had beheld in it: it is also to be remembered that we have only the abridgment of the song, and yet we see spectacles of horror, blood and commiseration. Tears discover a tender, not an abject spirit. Achilles is not less a hero for weeping over the ashes of Patroclus, nor Ulysses for lamenting the calamities and deaths of thousands of his friends.

To ev'ry note his tears responsive flow,  
 And his great heart heaves with tumultuous woe ;  
 Thy lay too deeply moves : then cease the lay,  
 And o'er the banquet every heart be gay : 590  
 This social right demands ; for him the sails  
 Floating in air, invite th' impelling gales :  
 His are the gifts of Jove : the wife and good  
 Receive the stranger as a brother's blood.

But, friend, discover faithful what I crave, 595  
 Artful concealment ill becomes the brave :  
 Say what thy birth, and what the name you bore,  
 Impos'd by parents in the natal hour ?  
 (For from the natal hour distinctive names,  
 One common right, the great and lowly claims :) 600  
 Say from what city, from what regions tost,  
 And what inhabitants those regions boast ?  
 So shalt thou infant reach the realm assign'd,  
 In wond'rous ships self-mov'd, instinct with mind :  
 No helm secures their course, no pilot guides, 605  
 Like man intelligent, they plow the tides,  
 Conscious of every coast and every bay,  
 That lies beneath the sun's all-seeing ray ;  
 Tho' clouds and darkness veil th' encumber'd sky,  
 Fearless thro' darkness and thro' clouds they fly : 610

v. 604. *In wond'rous ships self-mov'd, instinct with mind.*] There is not a passage that more outrages all the rules of credibility than the description of these ships of Alcinous. The poet inserts these wonders only to shew the great dexterity of the Phæacians in navigation; and indeed it was necessary to be very full in the description of their

Tho' tempests rage, tho' rolls the swelling main,  
 The seas may roll, the tempests rage in vain,  
 Ev'n the stern god that o'er the waves presides,  
 Safe as they pass, and safe repass the tides,  
 With fury burns; while careless they convey 615  
 Promiscuous every guest to every bay.  
 These ears have heard my royal sire disclose  
 A dreadful story big with future woes,  
 How Neptune rag'd, and how by his command  
 Firm rooted in the surge a ship should stand 620

skill, who were to convey Ulysses home in despite of the very god of the ocean. It is for the same reason that they are described as sailing almost invisibly, to escape the notice of that god. Antiquity animated every thing in poetry; thus Argo is said to have had a mast made of Dodonæan oak, indued with the faculty of speech. But this is defending one absurdity, by instancing in a fable equally absurd; all that can be said in defence of it is, such extravagant fables were believed, at least, by the vulgar, in former ages; and consequently might be introduced without blame in poetry; if so, by whom could a boast of this nature be better made, than by a vain Phæacian? Besides, these extravagancies let Ulysses into the humour of the Phæacians, and in the following books he adapts his story to it, and returns fable for fable. It must likewise certainly be a great encouragement to Ulysses to find himself in such hands as could so easily restore him to his country; for it was natural to conclude, that though Alcinous was guilty of great amplification, yet that his subjects were very expert navigators.

v. 619.

—————*how by his command*

*Firm rooted in the surge a ship should stand.]*

The ancients, as Eustathius observes, mark these verses with an obelisk and asterism. The obelisk shewed that

A monument of wrath : how mound on mound  
Should bury these proud towers beneath the ground.

they judged what relates to the oracle was misplaced, the asterisk denoted that they thought the verses very beautiful. For they thought it not probable that Alcinous would have called to memory this prediction and the menace of Neptune, and yet persisted to conduct to his own country the enemy of that deity : whereas if this oracle be supposed to be forgotten by Alcinous, (as it will, if these verses be taken away) then there will be an appearance of truth, that he who was a friend to all strangers, should be persuaded to land so great and worthy a hero as Ulysses in his own dominions, and therefore they reject them to the 13th of the *Odyssy*. But, as Eutathius observes, Alcinous immediately subjoins,

*But this the gods may frustrate or fulfill,  
As suits the purpose of th' eternal will.*

And therefore the verses may be very proper in this book, for Alcinous believes that the gods might be prevailed upon not to fulfill this denunciation. It has been likewise remarked that the conduct of Alcinous is very justifiable : the Phæacians had been warned by an oracle, that an evil threatened them for the care they should shew to a stranger : yet they forbear not to perform an act of piety to Ulysses, being persuaded that men ought to do their duty, and trust the issue to the goodness of the gods. This will seem to be more probable, if we remember Alcinous is ignorant that Ulysses is the person intended by the prediction, so that he is not guilty of a voluntary opposition to the gods, but really acts with piety in assisting his guest, and only complies with the common laws of hospitality.

It is but a conjecture, yet it is not without probability, that there was a rock which looked like a vessel, in the entrance of the haven of the Phæacians : the fable may be built upon this foundation, and because it was environed

But this the gods may frustrate or fulfill,

As suits the purpose of th' eternal will.

But say thro' what waste regions hast thou stray'd, 625

What customs noted, and what coasts survey'd ?

by the ocean, the transformation might be ascribed to the god of it.

v. 621. ————— how mound on mound

*Should bury these proud tow'rs beneath the ground.]*

The Greek word is ἀμφικαλύψειν, which does not necessarily imply that the city should be buried actually, but that a mountain should surround it, or cover it round ; and in the 13th book we find that when the ship was transformed into a rock, the city continues out of danger. Eustathius is fully of opinion, that the city was threatened to be overwhelmed by a mountain ; the poet, says he, invents this fiction to prevent posterity from searching after this isle of the Phæacians, and to preserve his story from detection or falsification ; after the same manner, as he introduces Neptune and the rivers of Troy, bearing away the wall which the Greeks had raised as a fortification before their navy. But Dacier, in the omissions which she inserts at the end of the second volume of her *Odyssey*, is of a contrary opinion ; for the mountain is not said to cover the city, but to threaten to cover it : as appears from the 13th book of the *Odyssey*, where Alcinous commands a sacrifice to the gods to avert the execution of this denunciation.

But the difference in reality is small, the city is equally threatened to be buried as the vessel to be transformed : and therefore Alcinous might pronounce the same fate to both, since both were threatened equally by the prediction ; it was indeed impossible for him to speak after any other manner, for he only repeats the words of the oracle, and cannot foresee that the sacrifice of the Phæacians would appease the anger of Neptune.

Posselt by wild barbarians fierce in arms,  
 Or men, whose bosom tender pity warms ?  
 Say why the fate of Troy awak'd thy cares,  
 Why heav'd thy bosom, and why flow'd thy tears ? 630  
 Just are the ways of heav'n. from heav'n proceed  
 The woes of man ; heav'n doom'd the Greeks to bleed,  
 A theme of future song ! Say then if slain  
 Some dear-lov'd brother press'd the Phrygian plain ?  
 Or bled some friend ? who bore a brother's part, 635  
 And claim'd by merit, not by blood, the heart.

v. 635. *Or bled some friend? who bore a brother's part.*

*And claim'd by merit, not by blood the heart.]*

This excellent sentence of Homer at once guides us in the choice, and instructs us in the regard, that is to be paid to the person of a friend. If it be lawful to judge of a man from his writings, Homer had a soul susceptible of real friendship, and was a lover of sincerity. It would be endless to take notice of every casual instruction inserted in the *Odyssey* ; but such sentences shew Homer to have been a man of an amiable character as well as excellent in poetry : the great abhorrence he had of lies cannot be more strongly express'd than in those two passages in the ninth *Iliad*, and in the 14th *Odyssey* : in the first of which he makes the man of the greatest soul, Achilles, bear testimony to his aversion of them ; and in the latter declares, ' that the poorest man, though compelled by the utmost necessity, ought not to stoop to such a practice.' In this place he shews that worth creates a kind of relation, and that we are to look upon a worthy friend as a brother

This book takes up the whole thirty-third day, and part of the evening : for the council opens in the morning, and at sun-setting the Phæacians return to the palace

from the games ; after which Ulysses bathes and sups, and spends some time of the evening in discoursing and hearing the songs of Demodocus. Then Alcinoüs requests him to relate his own story, which he begins in the next book, and continues it through the four subsequent books of the Odyssæy.



T H E

O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K IX.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The adventures of the Cicons, Lotophagi, and Cyclops.

*Ulysses begins the relation of his adventures ; how after the destruction of Troy, he made an incursion on the Cicons, by whom they were repulsed ; and meeting with a storm, were driven to the coast of the Lotophagi. From thence they sailed to the land of the Cyclops, whose manners and situation are particularly characterised. The giant Polyphemus and his cave described : the usage Ulysses and his companions met there ; and lastly, the method and artifice by which he escaped.*

**T**HEN thus Ulysses. Thou, whom first in sway  
As first in virtue, these thy realms obey !

As we are now come to the episodical part of the *Odyssy*, it may be thought necessary to speak something of the nature of episodes.

As the action of the epic is always one, entire, and great action ; so the most trivial episodes must be so interwoven with it, as to be necessary parts, or convenient, as Mr. Dryden observes, to carry on the main design ; either so necessary, as without them the poem must be imperfect, or so convenient, that no others can be imagined more suitable to the place in which they stand : there is nothing to be left void in a firm building even the cavities ought not to be filled up with rubbish destructive to the strength of it, but with materials of the same kind, though of less pieces, and fitted to the main fabric.

Aristotle tells us, that what is comprehended in the first platform of the fable is proper, the rest is episode: let us examine the *Odyssèy* by this rule: the ground-work of the poem is, a prince absent from his country several years, Neptune hinders his return, yet at last he breaks through all obstacles, and returns, where he finds great disorders, the authors of which he punishes, and restores peace to his kingdoms. This is all that is essential to the model; this the poet is not at liberty to change; this is so necessary, that any alteration destroys the design, spoils the fable, and makes another poem of it. But episodes are changeable; for instance, though it was necessary that Ulysses being absent should spend several years with foreign princes, yet it was not necessary that one of these princes should be Antiphates, another Alcinous, or that Circe or Calypso should be the persons who entertained him: it was in the poet's choice to have changed these persons and states, without changing his design or fable. Thus though these adventures or episodes become parts of the subject after they are chosen, yet they are not originally essential to the subject. But in what sense then are they necessary? The reply is, Since the absence of Ulysses was absolutely necessary, it follows that not being at home, he must be in some other country; and therefore though the poet was at liberty to make use of none of these particular adventures, yet it was not in his choice to make use of none at all; if these had been omitted, he must have substituted others, or else he would have omitted part of the matter contained in his model, viz. the adventures of a person long absent from his country; and the poem would have been defective. So that episodes are not actions, but parts of an action. It is in poetry, as Aristotle observes, as in painting; a painter puts many actions into one piece, but they all conspire to form one entire and perfect action: a poet likewise uses many episodes, but all those episodes taken separately finish nothing, they are but imperfect members, which all together make one and the same action, like

How sweet the products of a peaceful reign !

The heav'n-taught poet, and enchanting strain :

the parts of a human body, they all conspire to constitute the whole man.

In a word, the episodes of Homer are complete episodes; they are proper to the subject, because they are drawn from the ground of the fable; they are so joined to the principal action, that one is the necessary consequence of the other, either truly or probably: and lastly they are imperfect members which do not make a complete and finished body; for an episode that makes a complete action, cannot be part of a principal action, as is essential to all episodes.

An episode may then be defined, 'a necessary part to an action, extended by probable circumstances.' They are part of an action, for they are not added to the principal action, but only dilate and amplify that principal action: thus the poet to shew the sufferings of Ulysses brings in the several episodes of Polyphemus, Scylla, the Sirens, *etc.* But why should the words 'extended by probable circumstances' enter the definition? Because the sufferings of Ulysses are proposed in the model of the fable in general only, but by relating the circumstances, the manner how he suffered is discovered, and this connects it with the principal action, and shews very evidently the necessary relation the episode bears to the main design of the *Odyssey*. What I have said I hope plainly discovers the difference between the episodic and principal action, as well as the nature of episodes. See Bossu more largely upon this subject.

v. 3. *How sweet the products of a peaceful reign ! etc* ] This passage has given great joy to the critics, as it has afforded them the ill-natured pleasure of railing, and the satisfaction of believing they have found a fault in a good writer. It is fitter, say they, for the mouth of Epicurus than for the sage Ulysses, to extol the pleasures of feasting

The well fill'd palace, the perpetual feast,

5

A land rejoicing, and a people blest.

and drinking in this manner : he whom the poet proposes as the standard of human wisdom, says Rapin, suffers himself to be made drunk by the Phæacians. But it may rather be imagined, that the critic was not very sober when he made the reflection ; for there is not the least appearance of a reason for that imputation. Plato indeed in his third book *de Repub.* writes, that what Ulysses here speaks is no very proper example of temperance : but every body knows that Plato, with respect to Homer, wrote with great partiality. Athenæus in his twelfth book gives us the following interpretation. Ulysses accommodates his discourse to the present occasion ; he in appearance approves of the voluptuous lives of the Phæacians, and having heard Alcinous before say, that feasting and singing, *etc.* was their supreme delight ; he by a seasonable flattery seems to comply with their inclinations ; it being the most proper method to attain his desires of being conveyed to his own country. He compares Ulysses to the Polypus, which is fabled to assume the colour of every rock to which he approaches : thus Sophocles,

Νόει πρὸς ἀνδρὶ σῶμα Πελύπυ, ὅπως  
Πέτεχ τεραπεσθαι γνεσίς φρονήματος.

That is, 'In your accesses to mankind observe the Polypus, and adapt yourself to the humour of the person to whom you apply.' Eustathius observes that this passage has been condemned, but he defends it after the very same way with Athenæus.

It is not impossible but that there may be some compliance with the nature and manners of the Phæacians, especially because Ulysses is always described as an artful man, not without some mixture of dissimulation : but it is no difficult matter to take the passage literally, and yet give it an irreproachable sense. Ulysses had gone through innumerable calamities, he had lived to see a great part

How goodly seems it, ever to employ  
 Man's social days in union, and in joy ?

of Europe and Asia laid desolate by a bloody war ; and after so many troubles, he arrives among a nation that was unacquainted with all the miseries of war, where all the people were happy, and passed their lives in ease and pleasures : this calm life fills him with admiration, and he artfully praises what he found praise-worthy in it ; namely, the entertainments and music, and passes over the gallantries of the people, as Dacier observes, without any mention. Maximus Tyrius fully vindicates Homer. It is my opinion, says that author, that the poet, by representing these guests in the midst of their entertainments, delighted with the song and music, intended to recommend a more noble pleasure than eating and drinking, such a pleasure as a wise man may imitate, by approving the better part, and rejecting the worse, and chusing to please the ear rather than the belly. 12 Differt.

If we understand the passage otherwise, the meaning may be this. I am persuaded, says Ulysses, that the most agreeable end which a king can propose, is to see a whole nation in universal joy, when music and feasting are in every house, when plenty is on every table, and wines to entertain every guest : this to me appears a state of the greatest felicity.

In this sense Ulysses pays Alcinous a very agreeable compliment ; as it is certainly the glorious aim of a king to make his subjects happy, and diffuse an universal joy through his dominions : he must be a rigid censor indeed who blames such pleasures as these, which have nothing contrary in them to virtue and strict morality ; especially as they here bear a beautiful opposition to all the horrors which Ulysses had seen in the wars of Troy, and shew Phæacia as happy as Troy was miserable. I will only add, that this agrees with the oriental way of speaking ; and in the poetical parts of the scriptures, the voice of melody,

The plenteous board high heap'd with cates divine,  
And o'er the foaming bowl the laughing wine. 10

Amid these joys, why seeks thy mind to know

Th' unhappy series of a wand'rer's woe?

Remembrance sad, whose image to review

Alas! must open all my wounds anew.

And oh, what first, what last shall I relate, 15

Of woes unnumber'd sent by heav'n and fate?

Know first the man (tho' now a wretch distress'd)

Who hopes thee, monarch! for his future guest.

Behold Ulysses! no ignoble name,

Earth sounds my wisdom, and high heav'n my fame. 20

feasting and dancing, are used to express the happiness of a nation.

v. 19. *Behold Ulysses!*—] The poet begins with declaring the name of Ulysses: the Phæacians had already been acquainted with it by the song of Demodocus, and therefore it could not fail of raising the utmost attention and curiosity (as Eustathius observes) of the whole assembly, to hear the story of so great an hero. Perhaps it may be thought that Ulysses is ostentatious, and speaks of himself too favourably; but the necessity of it will appear, if we consider that Ulysses had nothing but his personal qualifications to engage the Phæacians in his favour. It was therefore requisite to make those qualifications known, and this was not possible to be done but by this own relation, he being a stranger among strangers. Besides, he speaks before a vain-glorious people, who thought even boasting no fault. It may be questioned whether Virgil be so happy in these respects, when he puts almost the same words into the mouth of Æneas.

*Sum pius Æneas, raptos qui ex hoste penates  
Classe veho mecum, fama super aethera notus.*

My native soil is Ithaca the fair,

Where high Neritus waves his woods in air :

For his boast contributes nothing to the re-establishment of his affairs, for he speaks to the goddess Venus. Yet Scaliger infinitely prefers Virgil before Homer, though there be no other difference in the words, than *raptos qui ex hoste penates*, instead of

————— Ὅς πᾶσι δόλοισιν  
Ἄνθρώποισι μέλα —————

He questions whether subtilities, or δόλοι, ever raised any person's glory to the heavens ; whereas that is the reward of piety. But the word is to be understood to imply wisdom, and all the stratagems of war, *etc.* according to the first verse of the *Odyssey*,

*The man for wisdom's various arts renown'd.*

He is not less severe upon the verses immediately preceding,

Σοὶ δ' ἐμὰ κήδεα θυμὸς ἐπετρέπτο σοιοενταί, *etc.*

which lines are undoubtedly very beautiful, and admirably express the number of the sufferings of Ulysses ; the multitude of them is so great, that they almost confound him ; and he seems at a loss where to begin, how to proceed, or where to end ; and they agree very well with the proposition in the opening of the *Odyssey*, which was to relate the sufferings of a brave man. The verses which Scaliger quotes are

*Infandum regina jubes renovare dolorem ;  
Trojanas ut opes, etc.*

*Omnia sane non sine sua divinitate*, and he concludes, that Virgil has not so much imitated Homer, as taught us how Homer ought to have wrote.

v. 21. — *Ithaca the fair, Where high Neritus, etc.*]

Eustathius gives various interpretations of this position of Ithaca ; some understand it to signify that it lies low ; o-

Dulichium, Same, and Zacynthus crown'd  
 With shady mountains, spread their isles around.  
 (These to the north and night's dark regions run, 25  
 Those to Aurora and the rising sun.)  
 Low lies our isle, yet blest in fruitful stores ;  
 Strong are her fons, tho' rocky are her shores ;  
 And none, ah none so lovely to my sight,  
 Of all the lands that heav'n o'er spreads with light ! 30  
 In vain Calypso long constrain'd my stay ;  
 With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay ;

thers explain it to signify that it is of low position, but high with respect to the neighbouring islands ; others take *πανυπερτάτη* (*excellentissima*) in another sense to imply the excellence of the country, which though it lies low, is productive of brave inhabitants, for Homer immediately adds *αγαθή κροτοροφος*. Strabo gives a different exposition ; Ithaca is *χθαμαλή*, as it lies near to the continent, and *πανυπερτάτη*, as it is the utmost of all the islands towards the north, *πρὸς ἄρκτον*, for thus *πρὸς ζοφον* is to be understood. So that Ithaca, adds he, is not of a low situation, but as it lies opposed to the continent, nor the most lofty (*ὑψηλοτάτη*) but the most extrem of the northern islands ; for so *πανυπερτάτη* signifies. Dacier differs from Strabo in the explication of *πρὸς ἡῶ τ' ἥλιον τε*, which he believes to mean the south ; she applies the words to the east, or south-east, and appeals to the maps which so describe it. It is the most northern of the islands, and joins to the continent of Epirus ; it has Dulichium on the east, and on the south Samos and Zacynthus.

v. 31. *In vain Calypso*—] Eustathius observes, that Ulysses repeats his refusal of the goddesses Calypso and Circe in the same words, to shew Alcinous, by a secret denial, that he could not be induced to stay from his country, or marry his daughter : he calls Circe *Δολόεσσα*, because she



With all her charms as vainly Circe strove,  
And added magic, to secure my love.

In pomps or joys, the palace or the grott, 35  
My country's image never was forgot,  
My absent parents rose before my sight,  
And distant lay contentment and delight.

Hear then the woes, which mighty Jove ordain'd  
To wait my passage from the Trojan land. 40  
The winds from Ilion to the Cicons' shore,  
Beneath cold Ismarus, our vessels bore.

is skilled in magical incantations: he describes Ithaca with all its inconveniencies, to convince Alcinous of his veracity, and that he will not deceive him in other circumstances, when he gives so disadvantageous a character of a country for which he expresses so great a fondness; and lastly, in relating the death of his friends, he seems to be guilty of a tautology, in *θάνατόν τε μορον τε*. But Aulus Gellius gives us the reason of it, *Atrocitatem rei bis idem dicendo auxit, inculcavitque, non igitur illa ejusdem significationis repetitio, ignava et frigida videri debet.*

v. 41. *To the Cicons' shore.*] Here is the natural and true beginning of the *Odyssey*, which comprehends all the sufferings of Ulysses, and these sufferings take their date immediately after his leaving the shores of Troy; from that moment he endeavours to return to his own country, and all the difficulties he meets with in returning, enter into the subject of the poem. But it may then be asked, if the *Odyssey* does not take up the space of ten years, since Ulysses wastes so many in his return; and is not this contrary to the nature of epic poetry, which is agreed must not at the longest exceed the duration of one year, or rather campaign? The answer is, the poet lets all the time pass which exceeds the bounds of epic action, before he opens the poem; thus Ulysses spends some time before he arrives at the island of Circe, with her he

We boldly landed on the hostile place,  
 And sack'd the city, and destroy'd the race,  
 Their wives made captive, their possessions shar'd, 45  
 And ev'ry soldier found a like reward,  
 I then advis'd to fly ; not so the rest,  
 Who stay'd to revel, and prolong the feast :  
 The fatted sheep and fable bulls they slay,  
 And bowis flew round, and riot wastes the day. 50  
 Mean time the Cicons, to their holds retir'd,  
 Call on the Cicons, with new fury fir'd ;

continues one year, and seven with Calypso ; he begins artificially at the conclusion of the action, and finds an opportunity to repeat the most considerable and necessary incidents which preceded the opening of the Odyssy ; by this method he reduces the duration of it into less compass than the space of two months. This conduct is absolutely necessary, for from the time that the poet introduces his hero upon the stage, he ought to continue his action to the very end of it, that he may never afterwards appear idle or out of motion : this is verified in Ulysses ; from the moment he leaves the island Ogygia to the death of the suitors, he is never out of view, never idle ; he is always either in action, or preparing for it, 'till he is re-established in his dominions. If the poet had followed the natural order of the action, he, like Lucan, would not have wrote an epic poem, but an history in verse.

v. 44. *And sack'd the city*—] The poet assigns no reason why Ulysses destroys this city of the Ciconians, but we may learn from the Iliad, that they were auxiliaries of Troy, book the second.

*With great Euphemus the Ciconians move,  
 Sprung from Troezenian Coeus, lov'd of Jove.*

And therefore Ulysses assaults them as enemies. Eustath.

With early morn the gather'd country swarms,  
 And all the continent is bright with arms :  
 Thick, as the budding leaves or rising flow'rs 55  
 O'erspread the land, when spring descends in show'rs :  
 All expert soldiers, skill'd on foot to dare,  
 Or from the bounding courser urge the war.  
 Now fortune changes (so the fates ordain)  
 Our hour was come, to taste our share of pain. 60  
 Close at the ships the bloody fight began,  
 Wounded they wound, and man expires on man.  
 Long as th' morning sun increasing bright  
 O'er heav'n's pure azure spread the growing light,  
 Promiscuous death the form of war confounds, 65  
 Each adverse battle gor'd with equal wounds :  
 But when his evening wheels o'erhung the main,  
 Then conquest crown'd the fierce Ciconian train.  
 Six brave companions from each ship we lost,  
 The rest escape in haste, and quit the coast. 70

v. 69. *Six brave companions from each ship we lost.*]

This is one of the passages which fell under the censure of Zoilus; it is very improbable, says that critic, that each vessel should lose six men exactly, this seems a too equal distribution to be true, considering the chance of battle. But it has been answered, that Ulysses had twelve vessels, and that in this engagement he lost seventy two soldiers; so that the meaning is, that taking the total of his loss, and dividing it equally through the whole fleet, he found it amounted exactly to six men in every vessel. This will appear to be a true solution, if we remember that there was a necessity to supply the loss of any one ship out of the others that had suffered less: so that though one vessel lost more than the rest, yet being recruited equally

With sails outspread we fly th' unequal strife,  
Sad for their loss, but joyful of our life.

Yet as we fled, our fellows rites we pay'd,  
And thrice we call'd on each unhappy shade.

Mean-while the god, whose hand the thunder forms, 75  
Drives clouds on clouds, and blackens heav'n with storms :  
Wide o'er the waste the rage of Boreas sweeps,  
And night rush'd headlong on the shaded deeps,  
Now here, now there, the giddy ships are born,  
And all the rattling shrouds in fragments torn. 80  
We furl'd the sail, we ply'd the lab'ring oar,  
Took down our masts, and row'd our ships to shore.  
Two tedious days and two long nights we lay,  
O'erwatch'd and batter'd in the naked bay.

from the rest of the fleet, there would be exactly six men wanting in every vessel. Eustathius.

v. 74. *And thrice we call'd on each unhappy shade.*] This passage preserves a piece of antiquity : it was the custom of the Grecians when their friends died upon foreign shores, to use this ceremony of recalling their souls, though they obtained not their bodies, believing by this method that they transported them to their own country : Pindar mentions the same practice,

Κέλσται γὰρ ἐὰν  
Ψυχὰν κομιζοίαι Φρίξος, etc.

That is, 'Phrixus commands thee to call his soul into 'his own country.' Thus the Athenians, when they lost any men at sea, went to the shores, and calling thrice on their names, raised a cenotaph, or empty monument to their memories ; by performing which solemnity, they invited the shades of the departed to return, and performed all rites as if the bodies of the dead had really been buried by them in their sepulchres. Eustath.

But the third morning when Aurora brings, 85

We rear the masts, we spread the canvas wings:

Refresh'd and careless on the deck reclin'd,

We sit, and trust the pilot and the wind.

Then to my native country had I sail'd ;

But, the cape doubled, adverse winds prevail'd. 90

Strong was the tide, which by the northern blast

Impell'd, our vessels on Cythera cast.

Nine days our fleet th' uncertain tempest bore

Far wide in ocean, and from sight of shore :

The tenth we touch'd, by various errors tost, 95

The land of Lotos, and the flow'ry coast.

The Romans as well as the Greeks followed the same custom: thus Virgil:

———*Et magna Manes ter voce vocavi.*

The occasion of this practice arose from the opinion, that the souls of the departed were not admitted into the state of the happy, without the performance of the sepulchral solemnities.

v. 95. *The tenth we touch'd*———

*The land of Lotos*———]

This passage has given occasion for much controversy; for since the Lotophagi in reality are distant from the Malean cape twenty-two thousand five hundred stades, Ulysses must sail above two thousand every day, if in nine days he sail'd to the Lotophagi. This objection would be unanswerable, if we place that nation in the Atlantic ocean, but Dacier observes from Strabo, that Polybius examined this point, and thus gives us the result of it. This great historian maintains, that Homer has not placed the Lotophagi in the Atlantic ocean, as he does the islands of Circe and Calypso, because it was improbable that in the

We climb'd the beach, and springs of water found,  
 Then spread our hasty banquet on the ground.  
 Three men were sent, deputed from the crew,  
 (An herald one) the dubious coast to view,

100

compass of ten days the most favourable winds could have carried Ulysses from the Malean cape into that ocean; it therefore follows, that the poet has given us the true situation of this nation, conformably to geography, and placed it, as it really lies, in the Mediterranean; now in ten days a good wind will carry a vessel from Malea into the Mediterranean, as Homer relates.

This is an instance that Homer sometimes follows truth without fiction, at other times disguises it. But I confess I think Homer's poetry would have been as beautiful if he had described all his islands in their true positions: his inconstancy, in this point, may seem to introduce confusion and ambiguity, when the truth would have been more clear, and as beautiful in his poetry.

Nothing can better shew the great deference which former ages paid Homer, than these defences of the learned ancients; they continually ascribe his deviations from truth, (as in the instance before us) to design, not to ignorance; to his art as a poet, and not to want of skill as a geographer. In a writer of less fame, such relations might be thought errors, but in Homer, they are either understood to be no errors, or if errors, they are vindicated by the greatest names of antiquity.

Eustathius adds, that the ancients disagree about this island: some place it about Cyrene, from Maurusia of the African Moors: it is also named Meninx, and lies upon the African coast, near the lesser Syrte. It is about three hundred and fifty stades in length, and somewhat less in breadth: it is also named Lotophagitis from Lotos.

v. 100. *An herald one.*] The reason why the poet mentions the herald in particular, is because his office was sacred; and by the common law of nations his person in-

And learn what habitants possess the place.  
 They went, and found a hospitable race;  
 Not prone to ill, nor strange to foreign guest,  
 They eat, they drink, and nature gives the feast;  
 The trees around them all their food produce, 105  
 Lotos the name, divine, nectareous juice;  
 (Thence call'd Lotophagi) which whoso tastes,  
 Insatiate riots in the sweet repasts,

violable: Ulysses therefore joins an herald in this commission, for the greater security of those whom he sends to search the country. Eustathius.

v. 106. *Lotos*.] Eustathius assures us, that there are various kinds of it. It has been a question whether it is a herb, a root, or a tree: he is of opinion, that Homer speaks of it as an herb: for he calls it *ἄνθρον ἄδαρ*, and that the word *ἐπέπλεσθαι* is in its proper sense applied to the grazing of beasts, and therefore he judges it not to be a tree, or root. He adds, there is an Ægyptian Lotos, which, as Herodotus affirms, grows in great abundance along the Nile in the time of its inundations; it resembles (says that historian in his Euterpe) a lily, the Ægyptians dry it in the sun, then take the pulp out of it, which grows like the head of a poppy; and bake it as bread: this kind of it agrees likewise with the *ἄνθρον ἄδαρ* of Homer. Athenæus writes of the Lybian Lotos in the fourteenth book of his Deipnosophist; he quotes the words of Polybius in the twelfth book of his history, now not extant; that historian speaks of it as an eye-witness, having examined the nature of it. 'The Lotos is a tree of no great height, rough and thorny; it bears a green leaf, somewhat thicker and broader than that of the bramble or briar; its fruit at first is like the ripe berries of the myrtle, both in size and colour, but when it ripens it turns to purple; it is then about the bigness of an olive, it is round, and contains a very small kernel;

Nor other home nor other care intends,

But quits his house, his country, and his friends: 110

The three we sent, from off th' enchanting ground

We dragg'd reluctant, and by force we bound :

The rest in haste forsook the pleasing shore,

Or, the charm tasted, had return'd no more.

Now plac'd in order, on their banks they sweep 115

The sea's smooth face, and cleave the hoary deep ;

' when it is ripe they gather it, and bruising it among  
' bread corn, they put it up into a vessel, and keep it as  
' food for their slaves; they dress it after the same man-  
' ner for their other domestics, but first take out the ker-  
' nel from it: it has the taste of a fig, or date, but is of  
' a far better smell: they likewise make a wine of it, by  
' steeping and bruising it in water; it has a very agree-  
' able taste, like wine tempered with honey. They drink  
' it without mixing it with water, but it will not keep a-  
' bove ten days, they therefore make it only in small quan-  
' tities for immediate use.' Perhaps it was this last kind  
of Lotos, which the companions of Ulysses tasted; and  
if it was thus prepared, it gives a reason why they were  
overcome with it; for being a wine, it had the power of  
intoxication.

v. 114. *The charm once tasted, had return'd no more.*] It must be confessed, that the effects of this Lotos are extraordinary, and seem fabulous: how then shall we reconcile the relation to credibility? The foundation of it might perhaps be no more than this: the companions of Ulysses might be willing to settle among these Lotophagi, being won by the pleasure of the place, and tired with a life of dangers and the perils of seas. Or perhaps it is only an allegory, to teach us that those who indulge themselves in pleasures, are with difficulty withdrawn from them, and want an Ulysses to lead them by a kind of violence into the paths of glory.



With heavy hearts we labour thro' the tyde,  
To coasts unknown, and oceans yet untry'd.

The land of Cyclops first; a savage kind,  
Nor tam'd by manners, nor by laws confin'd :

120

v. 119. *The land of Cyclops first* —]. Homer here confines himself to the true geography of Sicily: for, in reality, a ship may easily sail in one day from the land of the Lotophagi to Sicily: these Cyclops inhabited the western part of that island, about Drepane and Lilybæum. Bochart shews us, that they derive their name from the place of their habitation; for the Phæacians call them Chek-lub, by contraction for Chek-lelub; that is, the gulph of Lilybæum, or the men who dwell about the Lilybæan gulph. The Greeks (who understood not the Phæacian language) formed the word Cyclop, from Chek-lub, from the affinity of sound; which word in the Greek language, signifying a circular eye, might give occasion to fable that they had but one large round eye in the middle of their foreheads. Dacier.

Eustathius tells us, that the eye of Cyclops is an allegory, to represent that in anger, or any other violent passion, men see but one single object, as that passion directs, or see but with one eye: *εἰς ἓν τι, καὶ μόνον ἐφορᾷ*: and that passion transforms us into a kind of savages, and makes us brutal and sanguinary, like this Polyphemus; and he that by reason extinguishes such a passion, may like Ulysses be said to put out that eye that made him see but one single object.

I have already given another reason of this fiction; namely their wearing a head-piece, or martial vizor, that had but one sight through it. The vulgar form their judgments from appearances: and a mariner, who passed these coasts at a distance, observing the resemblance of a broad eye in the forehead of one of these Cyclops, might relate it accordingly, and imposè it as a truth upon the

Untaught to plant, to turn the glebe and sow,  
 They all their products to free nature owe.  
 The soil untill'd a ready harvest yields,  
 With wheat and barley wave the golden fields,

credulity of the ignorant : it is notorious that things equally monstrous have found belief in all ages.

But it may be asked, if there were any such persons who bore the name of Cyclops? No less an historian than Thucydides informs us, that Sicily was at first possessed and inhabited by giants, by the Læstrigons, and Cyclops, a barbarous and inhuman people : but he adds, that these savages dwelt only in one part of that island.

Cedrenus gives us an exact description of the Cyclops : *Ἐκείθεν Ὀδυσσεύς ἐμπίπτει Κύκλωπιῶν Σικελία ἕκ ἐνὶ ὀφθαλμῷ*, etc. ‘Ulysses fell among the Cyclops in Sicily, a people not one-eyed, according to the Mythologists, but men like other men, only of a more gigantic stature, and of a barbarous and savage temper.’ From this description, we may see what Homer writes as a poet, and what as an historian; he paints these people in general agreeably to their persons, only disguises some features, to give an ornament to his relation, and to introduce the Marvellous, which demands a place chiefly in epic poetry.

What Homer speaks of the fertility of Sicily, is agreeable to history : it was called antiently *Romani Imperii Horreum*. Pliny, lib. x. cap. 10. writes, that the Leontine plains bear for every grain of corn, an hundred. Diodorus Siculus relates in his history what Homer speaks in poetry, that the fields of Leontium yield wheat without the culture of the husbandman : he was an eye-witness, being a native of the island. From hence in general it may be observed, that where-ever we can trace Homer, we find, if not historic truth, yet the resemblance of it ; that is, as plain truth as can be related without converting his poem into an history.

Spontaneous wines from weighty clusters pour, 125

And Jove descends in each prolific show'r,

By these no statutes and no rights are known,

No council held, no monarch fills the throne,

v. 127. *By these no statutes and no rights are known,  
No council held, no monarch fills the throne.*]

Plato (observes Spondanus) in his third book of laws, treats of government as practised in the first ages of the world; and refers to this passage of Homer; 'Mankind was originally independant, every master of a family was a kind of king of his family, and reigned over his wife and children like the Cyclopeans,' according to the expression of Homer,

Τοῖσιν δ' ἔτ' ἀγοραὶ βεληφόροι, ἔτε θεμιστες.

Aristotle likewise complains, that even in his times, in many places, men lived without laws, according to their own fancies, ζῆ ἕκαστος ὡς βέλεται, κυκλωπικῶς θεμιστέων, παίδων, ἢ ἀλόγως, referring likewise to this passage of Homer.

Dacier adds from Plato, that after the deluge, three manners of life succeeded among mankind; the first was rude and savage; men were afraid of a second flood, and therefore inhabited the summits of mountains, without any dependance upon one another, and each was absolute in his own family: the second was less brutal; as the fear of the deluge wore away by degrees, they descended towards the bottom of mountains, and began to have some intercourse: the third was more polished; when a full security from the apprehensions of a flood was established by time, they then began to inhabit the plains, and a more general commerce by degrees prevailing, they entered into societies, and established laws for the general good of the whole community. These Cyclopeans maintained the first state of life in the days of Ulysses; they had no intercourse with other societies, by reason of

But high on hills or airy cliffs they dwell,  
 Or deep in caves whose entrance leads to hell. 130  
 Each rules his race, his neighbour not his care,  
 Heedless of others, to his own severe.

Oppos'd to the Cyclopean coasts, there lay  
 An isle, whose hills their subject fields survey ;  
 Its name Lachæa, crown'd with many a grove, 135  
 Where savage goats thro' pathless thickets rove :

their barbarities, and consequently their manners were not at all polished by the general laws of humanity. This account agrees excellently with the holy scriptures, and perhaps Plato borrowed it from the writings of Moses; after the deluge men retreated to the mountains for fear of a second flood; their chief riches, like these Cyclopeans, consisted in flocks and herds; and every master of a family ruled his house without any controul or subordination.

v. 129. *But high on hills——or deep in caves.*] This is said, to give an air of probability to the revenge which Ulysses takes upon this giant, and indeed to the whole story. He describes his solitary life, to shew that he was utterly destitute of assistance; and it is for the same reason, continues Eustathius, that the poet relates that he left his fleet under a desert neighbouring island, namely, to make it probable, that the Cyclops could not seize it, or pursue Ulysses, having no shipping.

v. 134. *An isle, whose hills, etc.*] This little isle is now called Ægusa, which signifies the isle of goats. Cluverius describes it after the manner of Homer, *Prata mollia, et irrigua, solum fertile, portum commodum, fontes limpidos*. It is not certain whether the poet gives any name to it; perhaps it had not received any in those ages, it being without inhabitants; tho' some take *λαχαια* for a proper name, as is observed by Eustathius.

No needy mortals here, with hunger bold,  
 Or wretched hunters thro' the wint'ry cold  
 Pursue their flight, but leave them safe to bound  
 From hill to hill, o'er all the desert ground : 140  
 Nor knows the soil to feed the fleecy care,  
 Or feels the labours of the crooked share,  
 But uninhabited, untill'd, unfown  
 It lies, and breeds the bleating goat alone.  
 For there no vessel with vermilion prore, 145  
 Or bark of traffic, glides from shore to shore ;  
 The rugged race of savages, unskill'd  
 The seas to traverse, or the ships to build,  
 Gaze on the coast, nor cultivate the soil,  
 Unlearn'd in all th' industrious arts of toil. 150  
 Yet here all products and all plants abound,  
 Sprung from the fruitful genius of the ground ;  
 Fields waving high with heavy crops are seen,  
 And vines that flourish in eternal green,  
 Refreshing meads along the murm'ring main, 155  
 And fountains streaming down the fruitful plain.  
 A port there is, inclos'd on either side,  
 Where ships may rest, unanchor'd and unty'd ;  
 'Till the glad mariners incline to sail,  
 And the sea whitens with the rising gale. 160  
 High at its head, from out the cavern'd rock  
 In living rills a gushing fountain broke

v. 144. *Bleating goat.*] It is exactly thus in the original, ver. 124. *μνηάδης, balantes*; which Pollux, lib. 5. observes not to be the proper term for the voice of goats, which is *φριμαγιάς*.

Around it, and above, for ever green  
 The bushing alders form'd a shady scene.  
 Hither some fav'ring god, beyond our thought, 165  
 Thro' all-surrounding shade our navy brought;  
 For gloomy night descended on the main,  
 Nor glimmer'd Phœbe in th' ethereal plain:  
 But all unseen the clouded island lay,  
 And all unseen the surge and rowling sea, 170  
 'Till safe we anchor'd in the shelter'd bay:  
 Our sails we gather'd, cast our cables o'er,  
 And slept secure along the sandy shore.  
 Soon as again the rosy morning shone,  
 Reveal'd the landscape and the scene unknown, 175  
 With wonder seiz'd we view the pleasing ground,  
 And walk delighted, and expatiate round.  
 Rows'd by the woodland nymphs, at early dawn,  
 The mountain goats came bounding o'er the lawn:

v. 165. *Hither some fav'ring god*—] This circumstance is inserted with great judgment, Ulysses otherwise might have landed in Sicily, and fallen into the hands of the Cyclopeans, and consequently been lost inevitably: he therefore piously ascribes his safety, by being driven upon this desolate island, to the guidance of the gods; he uses it as a retreat, leaves his navy there, and passes over into Sicily in one single vessel, undiscovered by these gigantic savages; this reconciles the relation to probability, and renders his escape practicable. Eustathius;

v. 178. *The woodland nymphs.*] This passage is not without obscurity, and it is not easy to understand what is meant by the daughters of Jupiter. Eustathius tells us, the poet speaks allegorically, and that he means to specify the plants and herbs of the field. Jupiter denotes the

In haste our fellows to the ships repair, 180

For arms and weapons of the sylvan war ;

Strait in three squadrons all our crew we part,

And bend the bow, or wing the missile dart ;

The bounteous gods afford a copious prey,

And nine fat goats each vessel bears away : 185

air, not only in Homer, but in the Latin poets. Thus Virgil.

*Tum pater omnipotens fœcundis imbribus Æther  
Conjugis in gremium lætæ descendit*——

and consequently the herbs and plants, being nourished by the mild air and fruitful rains, may be said to be the daughters of Jupiter, or offspring of the skies ; and these goats and beasts of the field, being fed by these plants and herbs, may be said to be awakned by the daughters of Jupiter, that is, they awake to feed upon the herbage early in the morning. *Κῆραι Διὸς, ἀλληγορικῶς αἱ τῶν φυτῶν αὐξητικαὶ δυνάμεις, ὡς ὁ Ζεὺς ποιεῖ.* Thus Homer makes deities of the vegetative faculties and virtues of the field. I fear such boldnesses would not be allowed in modern poetry.

It must be confessed that this interpretation is very refined : but I am sure it will be a more natural explication to take these for the real mountain nymphs (Oreades) as they are in many places of the *Odyssey* ; the very expression is found in the sixth book,

——*Νύμφαι κῆραι Διὸς*——

and there signifies the nymphs attending upon Diana in her sports : immediately after Ulysses, being awakened by a sudden noise, mistakes Nausicaa and her damsels for nymphs of the mountains or floods ; and this conjecture will not be without probability, if we remember that these nymphs were huntresses, as is evident from their relation to Diana. Why then may not the other expression be meant of the nymphs that are fabled to inhabit the mountains ?

The royal bark had ten. Our ships complete  
We thus supply'd, (for twelve were all the fleet.)

Here, till the setting sun rowl'd down the light,  
We sat indulging in the genial rite :

Nor wines were wanting ; those from ample jars 190

We drain'd, the prize of our Ciconian wars.

The land of Cyclops lay in prospect near ;

The voice of goats and bleating flocks we hear,

And from their mountains rising smokes appear.

Now sunk the sun, and darkness cover'd o'er 195

The face of things : along the sea-beat shore

Satiate we slept : But when the sacred dawn

Arising glitter'd o'er the dewy lawn,

I call'd my fellows, and these words address'd.

My dear associates, here indulge your rest : 200

While, with my single ship, advent'rous I

Go forth, the manners of yon men to try ;

v. 201. *While, with my single ship advent'rous I.*] The reader may be pleas'd to observe, that the poet has here given the reins to his fancy, and run out into a luxuriant description of Ægusa and Sicily : he refreshes the mind of the reader with a pleasing and beautiful scene, before he enters upon a story of so much horror, as this of the Cyclops.

A very sufficient reason may be assign'd, why Ulysses here goes in person to search this land : he dares not, as Eustathius remarks, trust his companions ; their disobedience among the Ciconians, and their unworthy conduct among the Lotophagi, have convinced him that no confidence is to be reposed in them : this seems probable, and upon this probability Homer proceeds to bring about the punishment of Polypheme, which the wisdom of Ulysses



Whether a race unjust, of barb'rous might,  
 Rude, and unconscious of a stranger's right;  
 Or such who harbour pity in their breast, 205  
 Revere the gods, and succour the distress?

This said, I climb'd my vessel's lofty side;  
 My train obey'd me and the ship unty'd.  
 In order seated on their banks, they sweep  
 Neptune's smooth face, and cleave the yielding deep. 210  
 When to the nearest verge of land we drew,  
 Fast by the sea a lonely cave we view,  
 High, and with dark'ning lawrels cover'd o'er;  
 Where sheep and goats lay slumbering round the shore.  
 Near this a fence of marble from the rock, 215  
 Brown with o'er-arching pine, and spreading oak.

A giant shepherd here his flock maintains  
 Far from the rest, and solitary reigns,  
 In shelter thick of horrid shade reclin'd;  
 And gloomy mischiefs labour in his mind. 220  
 A form enormous! far unlike the race  
 Of human birth, in stature, and in face;

effects, and it is an action of importance, and consequently ought to be performed by the hero of the poem.

v. 221. *A form enormous! far unlike the race of human birth.*] Goropius Becanus, an Antwerpian, has wrote a large discourse to prove, that there never were any such men as giants; contrary to the testimony both of prophane and sacred history: thus Moses speaks of the Remains of Aferoth, the Zamzummins of Ham, the Enims of Moab, and Anakims of Hebron. See Deut. ii. ver. 20. 'That also was called a land of giants, it was a great people, and tall as the Zamzummins.' Thus

As some lone mountain's monstrous growth he stood,  
Crown'd with rough thickets, and a nodding wood.

Goliath must be allowed to be a giant, for he was six cubits and a span, that is, nine feet and a span in height; his coat of mail weighed five thousand shekles of brass, about one hundred and fifty pounds: (but I confess others understand the lesser shekel) the head of his spear alone weighed six hundred shekels of iron, that is, about eighteen or nineteen pounds. We find the like relations in prophane history: Plutarch in his life of Theseus says, that age was productive of men of prodigious stature, giants. Thus Diodorus Siculus; *Ægyptii scribunt, Isidis ætate, fuisse vasto corpore homines, quos Græci dixerunt Gigantes.* Herodotus affirms that the body of Orestes was dug up, and appeared to be seven cubits long; but Aulus Gellius believes this to be an error. Josephus writes, l. 18. cap. 6. that Vitellius sent a Jew named Eleazar, seven cubits in height, as a present from Artabanus king of the Parthians, to Tiberius Cæsar; this man was ten feet and an half high. Pliny 7. 16. speaks of a man that was nine feet, nine inches high; and in another place, 6. 30. *Sybortas, gentem Æthiopum Nomadum, octona cubita longitudine excedere.*

Thus it is evident, that there have been men of very extraordinary stature in former ages. Though perhaps such instances were not frequent in any age or any nation. So that Homer only amplifies, not invents; and as there was really a people called Cyclopeans, so they might be men of great stature, or giants.

It may seem strange, that in all antient stories the first planters of most nations are recorded to be giants; I scarce can persuade myself but such accounts are generally fabulous; and hope to be pardoned for a conjecture which may give a seeming reason how such stories came to prevail. The Greeks were a people of very great antiquity; they made many expeditions, as appears from Jason, etc. and sent out frequent colonies: now the head

I left my vessel at the point of land, 225

And close to guard it, gave our crew command:

With only twelve, the boldest and the best,

I seek the adventure, and forsake the rest.

Then took a goat-skin fill'd with precious wine,

The gift of Maron, of Evanthus' line, 230

(The priest of Phœbus at th' Ismarian shrine)

of every colony was called Ἄναξ, and these adventurers being persons of great figure in story, were recorded as men of war, of might and renown, through the old world: it is therefore not impossible, but the Hebrews might form their word Anac, from the Greek Ἄναξ, and use it to denote persons of uncommon might and abilities. These they called Anac, and sons of Anac; and afterwards in a less proper sense used it to signify men of uncommon stature, or giants. So that in this sense, all nations may be said to be originally peopled by a son of Anac, or a giant. But this is submitted as a conjecture to the reader's judgment.

v. 229. *Precious wine, the gift of Maron.*] Such digressions as these are very frequent in Homer, but I am far from thinking them always beauties: it is true, they give variety to poetry; but whether that be an equivalent for calling off the attention of the reader from the more important action, and diverting it with small incidents, is what I much question. It is not indeed impossible but this Maron might have been the friend of Homer, and this praise of him will then be a monument of his grateful disposition; and in this view a beauty. It must be confessed that Ulysses makes use of this wine to a very good effect, viz. to bring about the destruction of Polypheme, and his own deliverance; and therefore it was necessary to set it off very particularly; but this might have been done in fewer lines. As it now stands, it is a

In sacred shade his honour'd mansion stood  
 Amidst Apollo's consecrated wood ;  
 Him, and his house, heav'n mov'd my mind to save,  
 And costly presents in return he gave ; 235  
 Seven golden talents to perfection wrought,  
 A silver bowl that held a copious draught,  
 And twelve large vessels of unmingled wine,  
 Mellifluous, undecaying, and divine !  
 Which now some ages from his race conceal'd, 240  
 The hoary fire in gratitude reveal'd,  
 Such was the wine : to quench whose fervent steam,  
 Scarce twenty measures from the living stream  
 To cool one cup suffic'd : the goblet crown'd  
 Breath'd aromatic fragrances around. 245  
 Of this an ample vase we heav'd aboard,  
 And brought another with provisions stor'd.  
 My soul foreboded I should find the bow'r  
 Of some fell monster, fierce with barb'rous pow'r,  
 Some rustic wretch, who liv'd in heav'n's despight, 250  
 Contemning laws, and trampling on the right.

little episode; our expectations are raised to learn the event of so uncommon an adventure, when all of a sudden Homer breaks the story, and gives us a history of Maron. But I distrust my judgment much rather than Homer's.

v. 243. *Scarce twenty measures from the living stream  
 To cool one cup suffic'd—*]

There is no wine of so strong a body as to bear such a disproportionable quantity; but Homer amplifies the strength of it to prepare the reader for its surprizing effects immediately upon Polypheme.

v. 250. *Some rustic wretch, who liv'd, etc.*] This

The cave we found, but vacant all within  
 (His flock the giant tended on the green)  
 But round the grott we gaze, and all we view  
 In order rang'd, our admiration drew : 255  
 The bending shelves with loads of cheefes prest,  
 The folded flocks each sep'rate from the rest,  
 (The larger here, and there the lesser lambs,  
 The new fall'n young here bleating for their dams ;  
 The kid distinguish'd from the lambkin lies :) 260  
 The cavern echoes with responsive cries.  
 Capacious chargers all around were lay'd,  
 Full pails, and vessels of the milking trade.  
 With fresh provision hence our fleet to store  
 My friends advise me, and to quit the shore ; 265  
 Or drive a flock of sheep and goats away,  
 Consult our safety, and put off to sea.

whole passage must be considered as told by a person long after the adventure was past, otherwise how should Ulysses know that this cave was the habitation of a savage monster before he had seen him? and when he tells us that himself and twelve companions went to search, what people were inhabitants of this island; Eustathius and Dacier seem both to have overlooked this observation; for in a following note she condemns Ulysses for not flying from the island, as he was advised by his companions. But if, on the other hand, we suppose that Ulysses was under apprehensions from the savageness of the place, of finding a savage race of people, it will be natural enough that his mind should forbode as much; and it appears from other passages, that this sort of instinctive presage was a favourite opinion of Homer's.

Their wholesome counsel rashly I declin'd,  
 Curious to view the man of monstrous kind,  
 And try what social rites a savage lends : 270  
 Dire rites, alas ! and fatal to my friends !

Then first a fire we kindle, and prepare  
 For his return with sacrifice and prayer.  
 The loaden shelves afford us full repast ;  
 We sit expecting. Lo ! he comes at last. 275  
 Near half a forest on his back he bore,  
 And cast the pond'rous burden at the door.  
 It thunder'd as it fell. We trembled then,  
 And sought the deep recesses of the den.

Now driv'n before him, thro' the arching rock, 280  
 Came tumbling, heaps on heaps, th' unnumber'd flock :  
 Big udder'd ewes, and goats of female kind,  
 (The males were penn'd in outward courts behind)  
 Then, heav'd on high, a rock's enormous weight  
 To the cave's mouth he roll'd, and clos'd the gate. 285  
 (Scarce twenty four-wheel'd cars, compact and strong,  
 The massy load could bear, or roll along)  
 He next betakes him to his evening cares,  
 And sitting down, to milk his flocks prepares ;  
 Of half their udders eases first the dams, 290  
 Then to the mother's teat submits the lambs.  
 Half the white stream to hard'ning cheese he prest,  
 And high in wicker baskets heap'd : the rest  
 Reserv'd in bowls, supply'd his nightly feast.  
 His labour done, he fir'd the pyle that gave 295  
 A sudden blaze, and lighted all the cave.

We stand discover'd by the rising fires;  
 Askance the giant glares, and thus inquires.

What are ye, guests; on what adventure, say,  
 Thus far ye wander thro' the wat'ry way? 300

Pirates perhaps, who seek thro' seas unknown  
 The lives of others, and expose your own?

His voice like thunder thro' the cavern sounds:  
 My bold companions thrilling fear confounds,  
 Appall'd at sight of more than mortal man! 305  
 At length, with heart recover'd, I began.

From Troy's fam'd fields, sad wand'ers o'er the main,  
 Behold the relics of the Grecian train!

Thro' various seas by various perils tost,  
 And forc'd by storms, unwilling, on your coast; 310

Far from our destin'd course and native land,  
 Such was our fate, and such high Jove's command!

Nor what we are befits us to disclaim,  
 Atrides' friends, (in arms a mighty name)

v. 307. *From Troy's fam'd fields, etc.*] This speech is very well adapted to make an impression upon Polypheme. Ulysses applies to move either his fears or his compassion; he tells him he is an unfortunate person, and comes as a suppliant; and if this prevails nothing, he adds, he is a subject of the great Agamemnon, who had lately destroyed a mighty kingdom: which is spoken to make him afraid to offer violence to the subject of a king who had power to revenge any injuries offered his people. To intimidate him further, he concludes with the mention of the gods, and in particular of Jupiter, as avengers of any breach of the laws of hospitality: these are arguments well chosen to move any person, but an inhuman Polypheme. Eustathius.

Who taught proud Troy and all her sons to bow: 315

Victors of late, but humble suppliants now!

Low at thy knee thy succour we implore;

Respect us, human, and relieve us, poor.

At least some hospitable gift bestow;

'Tis what the happy to th' unhappy owe: 320

'Tis what the gods require: Those gods revere,

The poor and stranger are their constant care:

To Jove their cause, and their revenge belongs,

He wanders with them, and he feels their wrongs.

Fools that ye are! (the savage thus replies, 325

His inward fury blazing at his eyes)

Or strangers, distant far from our abodes,

To bid me rev'rence or regard the gods.

Know then we Cyclops are, a race above

Those air-bred people, and their goat-nurs'd Jove: 330

And learn, our pow'r proceeds with thee and thine,

Not as he wills, but as ourselves incline.

But answer, the good ship that brought you o'er,

Where lies she anchor'd? near, or off the shore?

Thus he. His meditated fraud I find, 335

(Vers'd in the turns of various humankind)

And cautious, thus. Against a dreadful rock,

Fast by your shore the gallant vessel broke,

Scarce with these few I 'scap'd; of all my train,

Whom angry Neptune whelm'd beneath the main; 340

The scatter'd wreck the winds blew back again.

He answer'd with his deed. His bloody hand

Snatch'd two, unhappy! of my martial band;



And dash'd like dogs against the stony floor :  
 The pavement swims with brains and mingled gore. 345  
 Torn limb from limb, he spreads his horrid feast,  
 And fierce devours it like a mountain beast :  
 He sucks the marrow, and the blood he drains,  
 Nor intrails, flesh, nor solid bone remains.  
 We see the death from which we cannot move, 350  
 And humbled groan beneath the hand of Jove.

v. 344. *And dash'd like dogs*—————

*The pavement swims, etc. ]*

There is a great beauty in the versification in the original.

Σὺν δὲ δὺω μάρψας, ὅσπε σκύλακας ποτὶ γαίῃ  
 Κοπῖ'. εκ δ' ἐσκέφαλος χαμάδις ῥέε, δεῦε δὲ γαίαν,

Dionysius Halicarn. takes notice of it, in his dissertation upon placing words: when the companions of Ulysses, says that author, are dashed against the rock, to express the horror of the action, Homer dwells upon the most inharmonious harsh letters and syllables: he no where uses any softness, or any run of verses to please the ear. Scaliger injudiciously condemns this description; 'Homer,' says he, 'makes use of the most offensive and loathsome expressions, more fit for a butcher's shambles than the majesty of heroic poetry.' Macrobius, lib. 5. cap. 13. of his Saturnalia, commends these lines of Homer, and even prefers them before the same description in Virgil; his words are, *Narrationem facti nudam Maro posuit, Homerus πάθος miscuit, et dolore narrandi invidiam crudelitatis equavit.* And indeed he must be a strange critic that expects soft verses upon a horrible occasion, whereas the verses ought, if possible, to represent the thought they are intended to convey; and every person's ear will inform him that Homer has not in this passage executed this rule unsuccessfully.

His ample maw with human carnage fill'd,  
 A milky deluge next the giant swill'd;  
 Then stretch'd in length o'er half the cavern'd rock,  
 Lay senseless, and supine, amidst the flock. 355

To seize the time, and with a sudden wound  
 To fix the slumb'ring monster to the ground,  
 My soul impels me; and in act I stand  
 To draw the sword; but wisdom held my hand.  
 A deed so rash had finish'd all our fate, 360

No mortal forces from the lofty gate  
 Could roll the rock. In hopeless grief we lay,  
 And sigh, expecting the return of day.  
 Now did the rosy finger'd morn arise,  
 And shed her sacred light along the skies. 365

He wakes, he lights the fire, he milks the dams,  
 And to the mother's teat submits the lambs.  
 The task thus finish'd of his morning hours,  
 Two more he snatches, murders, and devours.  
 Then pleas'd and whistling, drives his flock before; 370

Removes the rocky mountain from the door,  
 And shuts again; with equal ease dispos'd,  
 As a light quiver's lid it op'd and clos'd.  
 His giant voice the echoing region fills:  
 His flocks, obedient, spread o'er all the hills. 375

Thus left behind, e'en in the last despair  
 I thought, devis'd, and Pallas heard my prayer.  
 Revenge, and doubt, and caution, work'd my breast;  
 But this of many counsels seem'd the best:  
 The monsters club within the cave I spy'd, 380  
 A tree of stateliest growth, and yet undry'd,

Green from the wood ; of height and bulk so vast,  
 The largest ship might claim it for a mast.  
 This shorten'd of its top, I gave my train  
 A fathom's length, to shape it and to plain ; 385  
 The narrow'r end I sharpen'd to a spire ;  
 Whose point we harden'd with the force of fire,  
 And hid it in the dust that strow'd the cave.  
 Then to my few companions, bold and brave,  
 Propos'd, who first the vent'rous deed should try ; 390  
 In the broad orbit of his monstrous eye  
 To plunge the brand, and twirl the pointed wood,  
 When slumber next should tame the man of blood.  
 Just as I wish'd, the lots were cast on four :  
 Myself the fifth. We stand, and wait the hour. 395  
 He comes with evening : all his fleecy flock  
 Before him march, and pour into the rock :  
 Not one, or male or female stay'd behind ;  
 (So fortune chanc'd, or so some god design'd)

v. 394. *The lots were cast—*] Ulysses bids his friends to cast lots ; this is done to shew that he would not voluntarily expose them to so imminent danger. If he had made the choice himself, they whom he had chosen might have thought he had given them up to destruction, and they whom he rejected might have judged it a stain upon them as a want of merit, and so have complained of injustice ; but by this method he avoids those inconveniencies.

v. 399. *Or so some god design'd.*] Ulysses ascribes it to the influence of the gods that Polypheme drives the whole flock into his den, and does not separate the females from the males as he had before done ; for by this accident Ulysses makes his escape, as appears from the following part of the story. Homer here uses the word *οἷσα ἀμενος*, to

Then heaving high the stone's unwieldy weight, 400  
 He roll'd it on the cave, and clos'd the gate.  
 First down he sits, to milk the woolly dams,  
 And then permits their udder to the lambs.  
 Next seiz'd two wretches more, and headlong cast,  
 Brain'd on the rock; his second dire repast. 405  
 I then approach'd him reeking with their gore,  
 And held the brimming goblet foaming o'er:  
 Cyclop! since human flesh has been thy feast,  
 Now drain this goblet, potent to digest:  
 Know hence what treasures in our ship we lost, 410  
 And what rich liquors other climates boast.  
 We to thy shore the precious freight shall bear  
 If home thou send us, and vouchsafe to spare.  
 But oh! thus furious, thirsting thus for gore,  
 The sons of men shall ne'er approach thy shore, } 415  
 And never shalt thou taste this nectar more.

He heard, he took, and pouring down his throat  
 Delighted swill'd the large luxurious draught.  
 More! give me more, he cry'd: the boon be thine,  
 Whoe'er thou art that bear'st celestial wine! 420  
 Declare thy name; not mortal is this juice,  
 Such as th' unblest Cyclopean climes produce,  
 (Tho' sure our vine the largest cluster yields,  
 And Jove's scorn'd thunder serves to drench our fields)  
 But this descended from the blest abodes, 425  
 A rill of Nectar, streaming from the gods.

shew the suspicion which Polypheme might entertain that Ulysses had other companions abroad who might plunder his flocks; and this gives another reason why he drove them all into his cave, namely for the greater security.

He said, and greedy grasp'd the heady bowl,  
 Thrice drain'd and pour'd the deluge on his soul.  
 His sense lay cover'd with the dozy fume;  
 While thus my fraudulent speech I re-assume.  
 Thy promis'd boon, O Cyclop! now I claim,  
 And plead my title: No-man is my name.

430

v. 432.—*No-man is my name.*] I will not trouble the reader with a long account of ἄτις to be found in Eustathius, who seems delighted with this piece of pleasantry; nor with what Dacier observes, who declares she approves of it extremely, and calls it a very happy imagination. If it were modesty in me to dissent from Homer, and two commentators, I would own my opinion of it, and acknowledge the whole to be nothing but a collusion of words, and fitter to have place in a farce or comedy, than in epic poetry. Lucian has thus used it, and applied it to raise laughter in one of his facetious dialogues. The whole wit or jest lies in the ambiguity of ἄτις, which Ulysses imposes upon Polypheme as his own name, which in reality signifies *No Man*. I doubt not but Homer was well pleased with it, for afterwards he plays upon the word, and calls Ulysses ἄτιδενός ἄτις. But the faults of Homer have a kind of veneration, perhaps like old age, from their antiquity.

Euripides has translated this whole passage in his tragedy, called the Cyclops. The chorus begins thus, *Why dost thou thus cry out, Cyclops? Cyc. I am undone. Cho. You seem to be in a woful condition. Cyc. I am utterly miserable. Cho. You have been drunk and fall'n into the embers. Cyc. No man has undone me. Cho. Well then No-man has injured you. Cyc. No man has blinded me. Cho. Then you are not blind.*

This appears to me more fit for the two *Sofia's* in Plautus, than for tragic or epic poetry; and I fancy an au-

By that distinguish'd from my tender years,  
'Tis what my parents call me, and my peers.

The giant then. Our promis'd grace receive, 435  
The hospitable boon we mean to give :  
When all thy wretched crew have felt my pow'r,  
No-man shall be the last I will devour.

He said : then nodding with the fumes of wine  
Dropt his huge head, and snoring lay supine. 440  
His neck obliquely o'er his shoulder hung,  
Prest with the weight of sleep that tames the strong !  
There belcht the mingled streams of wine and blood,  
And human flesh, his indigested food.

Sudden I stir the embers, and inspire 445  
With animating breath the seeds of fire ;  
Each drooping spirit with bold words repair,  
And urge my train the dreadful deed to dare.  
The stake now glow'd beneath the burning bed  
(Green as it was) and sparkled fiery red. 450

Then forth the vengeful instrument I bring ;  
With beating hearts my fellows form a ring.  
Urg'd by some present god, they swift let fall  
The pointed torment on his visual ball.  
Myself above them from a rising ground 455  
Guide the sharp stake, and twirl it round and round.  
As when a shipwright stands his workmen o'er,  
Who ply the wimble some huge beam to bore ;

thor who should introduce such a sport of words upon the stage, even in the comedy of our days, would meet with small applause.

v. 458. *Who ply the wimble.*] This and the following

Urg'd on all hands it nimbly spins about,  
 The grain deep piercing till it scoops it out : 460  
 In his broad eye so whirls the fiery wood ;  
 From the pierc'd pupil spouts the boiling blood ;  
 Sing'd are his brows ; the scorching lids grow black ;  
 The gelly bubbles, and the fibres crack.  
 And as when arm'ers temper in the ford 465  
 The keen-edg'd pole-axe, or the shining sword,  
 The red-hot metal hisses in the lake,  
 Thus in his eye-ball his'd the plunging stake.  
 He sends a dreadful groan : the rocks around  
 Thro' all their inmost-winding caves resound. 470  
 Scar'd we receded. Forth, with frantic hand  
 He tore, and dash'd on earth the goary brand :

comparison are drawn from low life, but ennobled with a dignity of expression. Instead of ἐλασθεσ, Aristarchus reads ἐχολθεσ, as Eustathius informs us. The similitudes are natural and lively, we are made spectators of what they represent. Sophocles has imitated this, in the tragedy where Oedipus tears out his own eyes ! and Euripides has transferred this whole adventure into his Cyclops with very little alteration, and in particular the former comparison. But to instance in all that Euripides has imitated, would be to transcribe a great part of that tragedy. In short, this episode in general is very noble ; but if the interlude about Outis be at all allowable in so grave and majestic a poem, it is only allowable because it is here related before a light and injudicious assembly, I mean the Phæacians, to whom any thing more great or serious would have been less pleasing ; so that the poet writes to his audience. I wonder this has never been offered in defence of this low entertainment.

Then calls the Cyclops, all that round him dwell,  
 With voice like thunder, and a direful yell.  
 From all their dens the one-ey'd race repair, 475  
 From rifted rocks, and mountains bleak in air.  
 All haste assembled, at his well-known roar,  
 Enquire the cause, and croud the cavern door.

What hurts thee, Polypheme? what strange affright  
 Thus breaks our slumbers, and disturbs the night? 480  
 Does any mortal in th' unguarded hour  
 Of sleep, oppress thee, or by fraud or pow'r?  
 Of thieves insidious thy fair flock surprize?  
 Thus they: the Cyclop from his den replies.

Friends, No-man kills; No-man in the hour 485  
 Of sleep, oppresses me with fraudulent pow'r.  
 ' If no man hurt thee, but the hand divine  
 ' InFLICT disease, it fits thee to resign:  
 ' To Jove or to thy father Neptune pray,  
 The brethren cry'd, and instant strode away. 490

Joy touch'd my secret soul, and conscious heart,  
 Pleas'd with th' effect of conduct and of art.  
 Mean-time the Cyclop, raging with his wound,  
 Spreads his wide arms, and searches round and round:  
 At last, the stone removing from the gate, 495  
 With hands extended in the midst he fate;

v. 495.—*The stone removing from the gate.*] This conduct of Polypheme may seem very absurd, and it looks to be improbable that he should not call the other giants to assist him, in the detection of the persons who had taken his sight from him; especially when it was now daylight, and they at hand. Eustathius was aware of the objection, and imputes it to his folly and dullness. Tully, 5



And search'd each passing sheep, and felt it o'er  
Secure to seize us ere we reach'd the door.

(Such as his shallow wit, he deem'd was mine)

But secret I revolv'd the deep design : 500

'Twas for our lives my lab'ring bosom wrought ;

Each scheme I turn'd, and sharpen'd every thought ;

This way and that, I cast to save my friends,

'Till one resolve my varying counsel ends.

Strong were the rams, with native purple fair, 505

Well fed, and largest of the fleecy care.

These three and three, with osier bands we ty'd,

(The twining bands the Cyclop's bed supply'd)

The midmost bore a man ; the outward two

Secur'd each side : So bound we all the crew. 510

One ram remain'd, the leader of the flock ;

In his deep fleece my grasping hands I lock,

Tuscul. gives us the same character of Polypheme ; and because it vindicates Homer for introducing a speech of Polypheme to his ram ; I will beg leave to transcribe it. *Tiresiam, quem sapientem fingunt pœtæ, nunquam inducunt deplorantem cœcitatem suam ; at vero Polyphemum Homerus, cum immensam ferumque finxisset, cum ariete etiam colloquentem facit ejusque laudare fortunas, quod qua vellet, ingredi posset, et que vellet attingere : recte hic equidem ; nihilo enim erat ipse Cyclops quam aries ille prudentior.* This is a full defence of Homer ; but Tully has mistaken the words of Polypheme to the ram, for there is no resemblance to *ejus laudare fortunas, quod qua vellet ingredi posset, etc.* I suppose Tully quoted by memory.

v. 511. *One ram remain'd, the leader of the flock.*] This passage has been misunderstood, to imply that Ulysses took more care of himself than of his companions, in chus-

And fast beneath, in woolly curls invove,  
 There cling implicate, and confide in Jove.  
 When rosy morning glimmer'd o'er the dales, 515  
 He drove to pasture all the lusty males :  
 The ewes still folded, with distended thighs  
 Unmilk'd, lay bleating in distressful cries.

ing the largest ram for his own convenience ; an imputation unworthy of the character of an hero. But there is no ground for it, he takes more care of his friends than of his own person, for he allots them three sheep, and lets them escape before him. Besides, this conduct was necessary ; for all his friends were bound, and, by chusing this ram, he keeps himself at liberty to unbind the rest after their escape. Neither was there any other method practicable ; for he being the last, there was no person to bind him. Eustathius.

The care Ulysses takes of his companions agrees with the character of Horace,

*Dum sibi, dum fociis reditum parat, aspera multa  
 Pertulit*——

But it may seem improbable that a ram should be able to carry so great a burden as Ulysses ; the generation of sheep as well as men, may appear to have decreased since the days of Ulysses. Homer himself seems to have guarded against this objection ; he describes these sheep as εὐτρεφέες, καλοὶ, μεγάλοι ; the ram is spoken of as μακρὰ βιβάς, (an expression applied to Ajax, as Eustathius observes, in the Iliad.) History informs us of sheep of a very large size in other countries, and a poet is at liberty to chuse the largest, if by that method he gives his story a greater appearance of truth.

v. 517. *The ewes still folded,  
 Unmilk'd, lay bleating.*]

This particularity may seem of no importance, and conse-

But heedless of those cares, with anguish stung,  
He felt their fleeces as they pass'd along. 520

(Fool that he was) and let them safely go,  
All unsuspecting of their freight below.

The mather-ram at last approach'd the gate,  
Charg'd with his wool, and with Ulysses' fate.  
Him while he pass'd the monster blind bespoke : 525

What makes my ram the lag of all the flock ?  
First thou wert wont to crop the flow'ry mead,  
First to the field and river's bank to lead,  
And first with stately step at evening hour  
Thy fleecy fellows usher to their bow'r. 530

Now far the last, with pensive pace and slow  
Thou mov'st, as conscious of thy mather's woe !  
Sce'st thou these lids that now unfold in vain ?  
(The deed of No man and his wicked train)

Oh ! didst thou feel for thy afflicted lord, 535  
And wou'd but fate the pow'r of speech afford ;  
Soon might'st thou tell me, where in secret here  
The dastard lurks, all trembling with his fear.

Swung round and round, and dash'd from rock to rock,  
His batter'd brains shou'd on the pavement smoke. 540  
No ease, no pleasure my sad heart receives,  
While such a monster as vile No-man lives.

quently unnecessary: but it is in poetry as in painting; they both with very good effect use circumstances that are not absolutely necessary to the subject, but only appendages and embellishments. This particular has that effect, it represents nature, and therefore gives an air of truth and probability to the story. Dacier.

'The giant spoke, and thro' the hollow rock  
Dismiss the ram, the father of the flock.

No sooner freed, and thro' th' enclosure past, 545

First I release myself, my fellows last :

Fat sheep and goats in throngs we drive before,  
And reach our vessel on the winding shore.

With joy the sailors view their friends return'd,  
And hail us living whom as dead they mourn'd. 550

Big tears of transport stand in ev'ry eye :

I check their fondness, and command to fly.

Aboard in haste they heave the wealthy sheep,  
And snatch their oars, and rush into the deep.

Now off at sea, and from the shallows clear, 555

As far as human voice cou'd reach the ear ;

With taunts the distant giant I accost,

Hear me, oh Cyclop ! hear, ungracious host !

'Twas on no coward, no ignoble slave,

Thou meditat'st thy meal in yonder cave ; 560

But one, the vengeance fated from above

Doom'd to inflict ; the instrument of Jove.

Thy barb'rous breach of hospitable bands,

The god, the god revenges by my hands.

These words the Cyclop's burning rage provoke : 565

From the tall hill he rends a pointed rock ;

High o'er the billows flew the massy load,

And near the ship came thund'ring on the flood.

It almost brush'd the helm, and fell before :

The whole sea shook, and refluent beat the shore. 570

v. 569. *It almost brush'd the helm, etc.*] The ancients, remarks Eustathius, placed an obelisk and asterism

The strong concussion on the heaving tyde  
 Roll'd back the vessel to the island's side :  
 Again I shov'd her off ; our fate to fly,  
 Each nerve we stretch, and ev'ry oar we ply.  
 Just 'scap'd impending death, when now again 575  
 We twice as far had furrow'd back the main,  
 Once more I raise my voice ; my friends afraid  
 With mild entreaties my design dissuade.  
 What boots the godless giant to provoke ?  
 Whose arm may sink us at a single stroke. 580  
 Already, when the dreadful rock he threw,  
 Old ocean shook, and back his surges flew.  
 Thy sounding voice directs his aim again ;  
 The rock o'erwhelms us, and we 'scap'd in vain.

before this verse ; the former, to note that they thought it misplaced ; the latter, to shew that they looked upon it as a beauty. Apparently it is not agreeable to the description ; for how is it possible that this huge rock falling before the vessel should endanger the rudder, which is in the stern ? Can a ship sail with the stern foremost ? Some antient critics, to take away the contradiction, have asserted that Ulysses turned his ship to speak to Polypheme ; but this is absurd, for why could not Ulysses speak from the stern as well as from the prow ? It therefore seems that the verse ought to be entirely omitted, as undoubtedly it may without any chasm in the author. We find it inserted a little lower, and there it corresponds with the description, and stands with propriety.

But if we suppose that the ship of Ulysses lay at such a distance from the cave of Polypheme, as to make it necessary to bring it nearer, to be heard distinctly ; then indeed we may solve the difficulty, and let the verse stand : for if we suppose Ulysses approaching towards Polypheme,

But I, of mind elate, and scorning fear,      585:  
 Thus with new taunts insult the monster's ear.  
 Cyclop! if any, pitying thy disgrace,  
 Ask who disfigur'd thus that eye-less face?  
 Say 'twas Ulysses; 'twas his deed declare,  
 Laertes' son, of Ithaca the fair;      590  
 Ulysses, far in-fighting fields renown'd,  
 Before whose arm Troy tumbled to the ground:  
 Th' astonish'd savage with a roar replies :  
 Oh heav'ns! oh faith of antient prophecies!

then the rock may be said to be thrown before the vessel, that is, beyond it, and endanger the rudder, and this bears some appearance of probability.

This passage brings to my memory a description of Polypheme in Apollonius. Argonaut. 1.

Κείνος ἀνῆρ καὶ πόλις ἐπὶ γλαυκοῖο θίεσκεν  
 Οἰδμαῖος, εἶδε θεὸς βιάπλεν πόδας ἀλλ' ὅσον ἄκροισ  
 Ἰχθυεσι τεργόμενος διερεῖν πεφόρητο κελυθῶ.

If Polypheme had really this quality of running upon the waves, he might have destroyed Ulysses without throwing this mountain; but Apollonius is undoubtedly guilty of an absurdity, and one might rather believe that he would sink the earth at every step, than run upon the waters with such lightness as not to wet his feet. Virgil has more judiciously applied those lines to Camilla in his *Æneis*.

— *Mare per medium fluctu suspensa tumentis*  
*Ferret iter, celeres nec tingeret æquore plantas.*

The poet expresses the swiftness of Camilla in the nimble flow of the verse, which consists almost entirely of dactyles, and runs off with the utmost rapidity, like the last of those quoted from Apollonius.

This, Telemus Eurymedes foretold, 595

(The mighty seer who on these hills grew old ;

Skill'd the dark fates of mortals to declare,

And learn'd in all wing'd omens of the air)

Long since he menac'd, such was Fate's command ;

And nam'd Ulysses as the destin'd hand. 600

I deem'd some godlike giant to behold,

Or lofty hero, haughty, brave, and bold ;

v. 595. *This, Telemus Eurymedes foretold.*] This incident sufficiently shews the use of that dissimulation which enters into the character of Ulysses : if he had discovered his name, the Cyclops had destroyed him as his most dangerous enemy. Plutarch, in his discourse upon garrulity, commends the fidelity of the companions of Ulysses, who, when they were dragged by this giant and dashed against the rock, confessed not a word concerning their lord, and scorned to purchase their lives at the expence of their honesty. Ulysses himself, adds he, was the most eloquent and most silent of men ; he knew that a word spoken never wrought so much good, as a word concealed ; men teach us to speak, but the gods teach us silence ; for silence is the first thing that is taught us at our initiation into sacred mysteries ; and we find these companions had profited under so great a master in silence as Ulysses.

Ovid relates this prophecy in the story of Polypheme and Galatea.

*Telemus interea Siculum delatus in æquor,*

*Telemus Eurymides, quem nulla sesellarat ales,*

*Terribilem Polyphemon adit ; lumenque quod unum*

*Fronte geris media, rapiet tibi, dixit, Ulysses ;*

*Risit, et, o vatam solidissime, falleris, inquit,*

*Altera jam rapuit : ———*

Not this weak pigmy-wretch, of mean design,  
Who not by strength subdu'd me, but by wine.

But come, accept our gifts, and join to pray 605

Great Neptune's blessing on the wat'ry way :

For his I am, and I the lineage own ;

Th' immortal father no less boasts the son.

His pow'r can heal me and re-light my eye ;

And only his of all the gods on high. 610

Oh ! could this arm (I thus aloud rejoind)  
From that vast bulk dislodge thy bloody mind,  
And send thee howling to the realms of night !  
As sure as Neptune cannot give thee sight.

Thus I : while raging he repeats his cries, 615  
With hands uplifted to the starry skies.

Hear me, Oh Neptune ! thou whose arms are hurl'd  
From shore to shore, and gird the solid world.

v. 603. *Not this weak pigmy wretch*—] This is spoken in compliance with the character of a giant ; the Phæacians wondered at the manly stature of Ulysses ; Polypheme speaks of him as a dwarf ; his rage undoubtedly made him treat him with so much contempt. Nothing in nature can be better imagined than this story of the Cyclops, if we consider the assembly before which it was spoken, I mean the Phæacians, who had been driven from their habitation by the Cyclopeans, as appears from the sixth of the *Odyssey*, and compelled to make a new settlement in their present country : Ulysses gratifies them by shewing what revenge he took upon one of their ancient enemies, and they could not decently refuse assistance to a person who had punished those who had insulted their forefathers.

v. 617. *The prayer of the Cyclops.*] This is the master-



If thine I am, nor thou my birth disown,  
 And if th' unhappy Cyclop be thy son ; 620  
 Let not Ulysses breathe his native air,  
 Laertes' son, of Ithaca the fair.

If to review his country be his fate,  
 Be it thro' toils and suff'rings, long and late,  
 His lost companions let him first deplore ; 625  
 Some vessel not his own transport him o'er ;  
 And when at home from foreign suff'rings freed,  
 More near and deep, domestic woes succeed !

With imprecations thus he fill'd the air,  
 And angry Neptune heard th' unrighteous pray'r. 630  
 A larger rock then heaving from the plain,  
 He whirl'd it round : it fung across the main :  
 It fell, and brush'd the stern : The billows roar,  
 Shake at the weight, and reflux beat the shore.

With all our force we kept aloof to sea, 635  
 And gain'd the island where our vessels lay.  
 Our sight the whole collected navy chear'd,  
 Who, waiting long, by turns had hop'd and fear'd.

piece of Ulysses ; he shews Neptune to be his enemy, which might deter the Phæacians from assisting in his transportation, yet brings this very circumstance as an argument to induce them to it. " O Neptune, says the Cyclops, destroy Ulysses, or if he be fated to return, may't be in a vessel not of his own !" Here he plainly tells the Phæacians that the prayer of Cyclops was almost accomplished, for his own ships was destroyed by Neptune, and now he was ready to sail in a foreign vessel ; by which the whole prayer would be compleated. By this he per-

There disembarking on the green sea-side,  
 We land our cattle, and the spoil divide :      640  
 Of these due shares to ev'ry sailor fall ;  
 The master ram was voted mine by all ;  
 And him (the guardian of Ulysses' fate)  
 With pious mind to heav'n I consecrate.  
 But the great God whose thunder rends the skies,      645  
 Averse, beholds the smoaking sacrifice ;

suades them, that they were the people ordained by the fates to land him in his own country.

v. 642. *The master ram was voted mine.*] This perhaps might be a present of honour and distinction : but I should rather take it with Eustathius to be the ram which brought Ulysses out of the den of Polypheme. That hero immediately offers it in sacrifice to Jupiter, in gratitude for his deliverance ; an instance of piety to be imitated in more enlightened ages.

The book concludes with a testimony of this hero's humanity ; in the midst of the joy for his own safety his generous heart finds room for a tender sentiment for the loss of his companions ; both his joys and his sorrows are commendable and virtuous.

Virgil has borrowed this episode of Polyphemus, and inserted it into the third of the *Æneis*. I will not presume to decide which author has the greatest success, they both have their peculiar excellencies. Rapin confesses this episode to be equal to any parts of the *Iliad*, that it is an original, and that Homer introduced that monstrous character to shew the marvellous, and paint it in a new set of colours. Demetrius Phalereus calls it a piece of sublime strangely horrible ; and Longinus, even while he is condemning the *Odyssey*, allows this adventure of Polypheme to be very great and beautiful ; (for so Monsieur Boileau understands Longinus, though Monsieur Dacier differs from his judgment.) In Homer we find a greater

And sees me wand'ring still from coast to coast ;  
 And all my vessels, all my people, lost !

While thoughtless we indulge the genial rite,  
 As plenteous cates and flowing bowls invite ; } 650  
 'Till evening Phœbus roll'd away the light :  
 Stretch'd on the shore in careless ease we rest,  
 'Till ruddy morning purpled o'er the east.  
 Then from their anchors all our ships unbind,  
 And mount the decks, and call the willing wind. } 655  
 Now rang'd in order on our banks, we sweep  
 With hasty strokes the hoarse-resounding deep ;  
 Blind to the future, pensive with our fears,  
 Glad for the living, for the dead in tears.

variety of natural incidents than in Virgil, but in Virgil a greater pomp of verse. Homer is not uniform in his description, but sometimes stoops perhaps below the dignity of epic poetry ; Virgil walks along with an even, grave, and majestic pace : they both raise our admiration, mixed with delight and terror.



## T H E

## O D Y S S E Y.

## B O O K X.

## T H E A R G U M E N T.

Adventures with Æolus, the Læstrigons, and Circe.

*Ulysses arrives at the island of Æolus, who gives him prosperous winds, and incloses the adverse ones in a bag, which his companions untying, they are driven back again, and rejected. Then they sail to the Læstrigons, where they lose eleven ships, and with one only remaining, proceed to the island of Circe. Eurylochus is sent first with some companions, all which, except Eurylochus, are transformed into swine. Ulysses then undertakes the adventure, and by the help of Mercury, who gives him the herb Moly, overcomes the enchantress, and procures the restoration of his men. After a year's stay with her, he prepares at her instigation for his voyage to the infernal shades.*

**A**T length we reach'd Æolia's sea-girt shore,  
 Where great Hippotades the sceptre bore,  
 A floating isle! High-rais'd by toil divine,  
 Strong walls of brass the rocky coast confine.

Poetry is a mixture of history and fable; the foundation is historical, because the poet does not entirely neglect truth; the rest is fabulous, because naked truth would not be sufficiently surprizing; for the marvellous ought to take place, especially in epic poetry. But it may be asked, does not Homer offend against all degrees

Six blooming youths, in private grandeur bred, 5  
 And six fair daughters, grac'd the royal bed;

of probability in these episodes of the Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis, Cyclops and Antiphates? How are these incredible stories to be reduced into the bounds of probability? it is true, the marvellous ought to be used in epic poetry; but ought it to transgress all power of belief? Aristotle in his Art of poetry lays down a rule to justify these incidents: *A poet, says that author, ought to prefer things impossible, provided they are probable, before things possible, that are nevertheless incredible.* Chap. 15. This rule is not without obscurity; but Monsieur Dacier has explained it in his annotations upon that author: a thing may be impossible, and yet probable: thus when the poet introduces a deity, any incident humanly impossible receives a full probability by being ascribed to the skill and power of a god: it is thus we justify the story of the transformation of the ship of the Phæacians into a rock, and the fleet of Æneas into sea nymphs. But such relations ought not to be too frequent in a poem; for it is an established rule, that all incidents which require a divine probability only, should be so disengaged from the action, that they may be subtracted from it without destroying it; for instance, if we omit the transformation of the ship, the action of the *Odyssey* will retain the same perfection. And therefore those episodes which are necessary, and make essential parts of the poem, ought to be grounded upon human probability; now the episodes of Circe, Polypheme, the Sirens, etc. are necessary to the action of the *Odyssey*: but will any man say they are within the bounds of human probability? How then shall we solve this difficulty? Homer artificially has brought them within the degrees of it; he makes Ulysses relate them before a credulous and ignorant assembly; he lets us into the character of the Phæacians, by saying they were a very dull nation, in the sixth book,

These sons their sisters wed, and all remain  
Their parents pride, and pleasure of their reign.

*Where never science rear'd her laurel'd head.*

It is thus the poet gives probability to his fables, by reciting them to a people who believed them, and who through a laziness of life were fond of romantic stories; he adapts himself to his audience, and yet even here he is not unmindful of his more intelligent readers; he gives them, (observes Bossu) in these fables all the pleasure that can be reaped from physical or moral truths, disguised under miraculous allegories, and by this method reconciles them to poetical probability.

There are several heads to which probability may be reduced; either to divinity, and then nothing is improbable, for every thing is possible to a deity; or to our ideas of things whether true or false; thus in the descent of Ulysses into hell, there is not one word of probability or historic truth; but if we examine it by the ideas that the old world entertained of hell, it becomes probable; or lastly, we may have respect to vulgar opinion or fame; for a poet is at liberty to relate a falsehood, provided it be commonly believed to be true. We might have recourse to this last rule, which is likewise laid down by Aristotle, to vindicate the *Odyssey*, if there were occasion for it; for in all ages such fables have found belief.

I will only add, that Virgil has given a sanction to these stories, by inserting them in his *Æneis*; and Horace calls them by the remarkable epithet of specious miracles.

—*Ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat,*

*Antiphaten, Scyllamque et cum Cyclope Charybdir.*

Longinus calls these fables dreams, but adds, that they are the dreams of Jupiter; he likewise blames those episodes, because in all of them there is much more fable and narration than action; which criticism may perhaps be too severe, if we consider that past adventures are here brought

All day they feast, all day the bowls flow round,  
And joy and music thro' the isle resound :

into present use, and though they be not actions, yet they are the representations of actions, agreeable to the nature of episodes.

It may be questioned if Virgil is so happy in the choice of the audience, to which he relates many of these fables; the Carthaginians were not ignorant, like the Phæacians: from whence then do his stories receive their probability? it is not so easy to answer this objection, unless we have recourse to common fame: Virgil was not the author of them, Homer had established them, and brought them into fame, so that Virgil had common opinion to vindicate him, joined with Homer's authority.

v. 1. *We reach'd Æolia's shore.*] It is difficult to distinguish what is truth from what is fiction in this relation: Diodorus, who was a Sicilian, speaks of Æolus, and refers to this passage: 'this is that Æolus, says he, who entertained Ulysses in his voyages: he is reported to have been a pious and just prince, and given to hospitality, and therefore φίλος ἀθανάτοις, as Homer expresses it.' But whence has the fable of his being the governor of the winds taken its foundation? Eustathius tells us, that he was a very wise man, and one who from long observation could foretell what weather was like to follow: others say he was an astronomer, and studied chiefly the nature of the winds: and as Atlas from his knowledge in astrology was said to sustain the heavens; so Æolus, from his experience and observation, was fabled to be the ruler or disposer of the winds. But what explication can be given of this bag, in which he is said to bind the winds? Eratosthenes, continues Eustathius, said pleasantly, that we shall then find the places where Ulysses voyaged, when we have discovered the artist, or cobbler, τὸν σκυτέα who sewed up this bag of the winds. But the reason of the fiction is supposed to be this: Æolus taught the use and manage-



At night each pair on splendid carpets lay,  
And crown'd with love the pleasures of the day.

ment of sails, and having foretold Ulysses from what quarter the winds would blow, he may be said to have gathered them into a kind of enclosure, and retained them as use should require. Diodorus explains it a little differently, lib. 5. Πρὸς δὲ τετοῖς τὴν τῶν ἰσίων χρεῖαν τοῖς ναυτικοῖς ἐπεισηγήσασθαι, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς τῆς πυρὸς προσημασίας παρατετηρηκότα, προλέγειν τὰς ἐκωρῖες ἀνέμους εὐτόχως ἐξ ἑταμίαν ἀνέμων μῦθος ἀνέδειξε; that is, 'He taught the use of sails, and having learned from observing the bearing of the smoke and fires (of those Vulcanian islands) what winds would blow, he usually foretold them with exactness, and from hence he is fabled to be the disposer of the winds.' The words of Varro, quoted by Servius, are to the same purpose: *Varro autem dicit hunc insularum regem fuisse, ex quarum nebulis et fumo Vulcaniæ insulæ prædicens futura flabra ventorum, ab imperitis visus est ventos sua potestate retinere.*

Polybius will not admit that this story of Æolus is entirely fable; and Strabo is of the same opinion, that Ulysses was in the Sicilian seas; and that there was such a king as Æolus, he affirms to be truth; but that he met with such adventures is, in the main, fiction. There may another reason, as Eustathius observes, be given for the fiction of binding up the winds in a bag: they who practised the art of incantation or charms, made use of the skin of a dolphin, and pretended by certain ceremonies to bind or loose the winds as they pleased; and this practice is a sufficient ground to build upon in poetry.

The solution also of Bochart is worth our notice: Homer borrowed the word Αἶολος from the Phæacian Aol, which signifies a whirlwind or tempest, from whence the Greeks formed their word ἀελλᾶ; the Phæacians observing the king of this island to be very expert in foretelling the winds, called him king Aolin, or king of the winds and storms; from hence Homer formed a proper name and

This happy port affords our wand'ring fleet,  
A month's reception, and a safe retreat.

called him *Αἶολος*. It must be confessed, that this solution is ingenious, and not without an appearance of probability.

But having laid together what may be said in vindication of this story of *Æolus*: justice requires that I should not suppress what has been objected against it by no less a critic than Longinus: he observes that a genius naturally lofty sometimes falls into trifling; an instance of this, adds he, is what Homer says of the bag wherein *Æolus* inclosed the winds. Cap. 7. *περὶ ὑψῆς*.

v. 3. *A floating isle*—] The word in the original is *πλωτῆ*: some take it, as Eustathius remarks, for a proper name; but Aristarchus believes Homer intended to express by it a floating island, that was frequently removed by concussions and earthquakes, for it is seen sometimes on the right, at other times on the left hand; the like has been said of Delos: and Herodotus thus describes the island Echemis in the *Ægyptian* seas. Dionysius, in his *περιήγησις*, affirms, that this island is not called by the name of *πλωτῆ*, by reason of its floating, but because it is an island of fame, and much sailed unto, or *πλωτῆ* by navigators; that is, *πλεομένη*, or *ἐν τόποις πλεομένοισι κειμένη*, or lying in seas of great navigation: but perhaps the former opinion of Aristarchus may be preferable, as it best contributes to raise the wonder and admiration of the credulous ignorant Phæacians, which was the sole intention of Ulysses.

These islands were seven in number, (but eleven at this day) Strongyle, Hiera, Didyme, Hicesia, Lipara, Erycodes, and Phænicodes, all lying in the Sicilian seas, as Diodorus Siculus testifies; but differs in the name of one of the islands.

Strabo is of opinion, that the island called by Homer, the *Æolian*, is Strongyle; *Ἡ δὲ Στρογγύλη, ἐστὶ διαπυρρὸς, τῷ φέγγει πλεονεκτῆσα, ἐνλαῦθα δὲ τὸν Αἰόλον οἰκῆσαι Φασί.*

Full oft the monarch urg'd me to relate

15

The fall of Ilion, and the Grecian fate ;

‘ This island Strongyle abounds with subterraneous fires, etc. and here Æolus is said to have reigned.’ Pliny agrees with Strabo, lib. 3. but Dacier understands it to be Lipara, according to Virgil, *Æn.* lib. 8. but in reality the seven were all called the Æolian islands.

*Insula Sicanium juxta latus, Æolianque  
Erigitur Liparen, fumantibus ardua saxis.*

But why is it fabled to be surrounded with a wall of brass ? Eustathius says, that this may proceed from its being almost inaccessible ; but this reason is not sufficient to give foundation to such a fiction. Dacier observes that it is thus described, because of the subterranean fires, which from time to time break out from the entrails of this island. Aristotle speaking of Lipara, which is the most considerable of the Æolian islands, thus describes it ; ‘ all night long the island Lipara appears enlightened with fires.’ The same relation agrees with Strongyle, called Strombolo at this day.

I will take the liberty to propose a conjecture, which may perhaps not unhappily give a reason of this fiction of the wall of brass, from this description of Aristotle : all night fires appear (says that author) from this island, and these fires falling upon the seas, might cast a ruddy reflection round the island, which to navigators might look like a wall of brass enclosing it. This is but a conjecture drawn from appearances ; but to write according to appearances is allowable in poetry, where a seeming or a real truth may be used indifferently.

v. 5. *Six blooming youths—and six fair daughters.*]

Diodorus Siculus mentions the names of the six sons of Æolus, but is silent concerning his daughters, and therefore others, who can find mysteries in the plainest description, assure us, that this is not to be understood historical.

Full oft I told : At length for parting mov'd ;  
The king with mighty gifts my suit approv'd.

ly, but allegorically : Æolus represents the year, his twelve children are the twelve months, six of which are female, to denote those six months in which the earth brings forth her fruits ; by his six sons the other months are understood, in which the seed is sown, or in which the herbs, fruits, etc. are nourished in order to production ; these may therefore be called males. But this is to darken an author into mystery, not to explain him. Dacier gives us another allegorical interpretation : the poet makes him the governor of the winds, and gives him twelve children ; these denote the twelve principal winds ; half of which children are males, half females ; the males denote the winter winds, which as it were brood upon the earth, and generate its increase ; the females those warmer seasons of the year, when the more prolific winds blow, and make the earth teem with fruitfulness ; these children of Æolus are in continual feasts in his palace ; that is, the winds are continually fed by the exhalations from the earth, which may be called their food or nourishment : the brothers and sisters intermarry ; this denotes the nature of the winds, which blow promiscuously, and one wind unites itself with another from all quarters of the world indifferently : the brothers and sisters are said to sleep by night together : that is, the winds are usually still and calm, and as it were rest together, at that season. But what occasion is there to have recourse to an uncertain allegory, when such great names as Polybius, Strabo, and Diodorus assure us, that this relation is in part true history ; and if there was really such a king as Æolus, why might he not be a father of six sons and as many daughters ? I should prefer a plain history to a dark allegory.

v. 9. *All day they feast,*——

———*and music through the isle resounds.*]

Homer was not unacquainted with the wonders related of this island Lipara. ‘ In this island, says Aristotle, a mo-

The adverse winds in leathern bags he brac'd,  
 Compress'd their force, and lock'd each struggling blast: 20  
 For him the mighty Sire of Gods assign'd  
 The tempest's lord, and tyrant of the wind;  
 His word alone the list'ning storms obey,  
 To smooth the deep, or swell the foamy sea.  
 These in my hollow ship the monarch hung, 25  
 Securely fetter'd by a silver thong,  
 But Zephyrus exempt, with friendly gales  
 He charg'd to fill, and guide the swelling sails: }  
 Rare gift! but oh, what gift to fools avails! }  
 Nine prosp'rous days we ply'd the lab'ring oar; 30  
 The tenth presents our welcome native shore:  
 The hills display the beacon's friendly light,  
 And rising mountains gain upon our sight.

'nument is reported to be, of which they tell miracles:  
 'they assure us that they hear issuing from it the found of  
 'timbrels or cymbals, plainly and distinctly.' It is easy to  
 perceive that this is founded upon the noise the fires make  
 which are inclosed in the caverns of this island, and that  
 Homer alludes to the antient name of it, which in the  
 Phœnician language (Meloginin, as Bochart observes)  
 signifies the land of those who play upon instruments. We  
 learn from Callimachus, in his hymn to Diana, that Li-  
 para was originally called Meligounis. *She (Diana) went  
 to find out the Cyclops: she found them in Lipara, for  
 that is the name the isle now bears, but antiently it  
 was called Meligounis; they were labouring a huge mass  
 of red hot iron, etc.* So that Homer is not all inventi-  
 on, but adapts his poetry to tradition and antient story.  
 Dacier.

v. 32. *The hills display the beacon's friendly light.*]  
 Eustathius observes, that these fires were a kind of bea-

Then first my eyes, by watchful toils oppress'd,  
Comply'd to take the balmy gifts of rest; 35

Then first my hands did from the rudder part,  
(So much the love of home possess'd my heart)

When lo! on board a fond debate arose;

What rare device those vessels might enclose?

What sum, what prize from Æolus I brought? 40

Whilst to his neighbour each express'd his thought.

Say, whence, ye gods, contending nations strive

Who most shall please, who most our hero give?

cons kept continually burning to direct navigators; the smoke gave notice by day, the light of the flame by night. Ithaca was environed with rocks, and consequently there was a necessity for this care, to guide seafaring men to avoid those rocks, and to point out the places of landing with security.

But is it not an imputation to the wisdom of Ulysses, to suffer himself to be surprized with sleep, when he was almost ready to enter the ports of his own country? And is it not probable that the joy he must be supposed to receive at the sight of it, should not induce him to a few hours watchfulness? it is easier to defend his sleeping here, than in the 13th of the *Odyssy*: the poet very judiciously tells us, that Ulysses for nine days together almost continually waked and took charge of the vessel, and the word *νεμνησται* shews that nature was wearied out, and that he fell into an involuntary repose; it can therefore be no diminution to his character to be forced to yield to the calls of nature, any more than it is to be hungry: his prudence and love of his country sufficiently appear from the care he took through the space of nine days to arrive at it; so that this circumstance must be imputed to the infirmity of human nature, and not to a defect of care or wisdom in Ulysses.

Long have his coffers groan'd with Trojan spoils ;  
 Whilst we, the wretched part'ners of his toils 45  
 Reproach'd by want, our fruitless labours mourn,  
 And only rich in barren fame return.  
 Now Æolus, ye see, augments his store :  
 But come my friends, these mystic gifts explore.  
 They said : and (oh curs'd fate ! ) the thongs unbound ! 50  
 The gushing tempest sweeps the ocean round :  
 Snatch'd in the whirl, the hurried navy flew,  
 The ocean widen'd, and the shores withdrew.

v. 50. *They said : and (oh curs'd fate ! ) the thongs unbound.*] This relation has been blamed as improbable ; what occasion was there to unbind the bag, when these companions of Ulysses might have satisfied their curiosity that there was no treasure in it from the lightness of it ? But Homer himself obviates this objection, by telling us that Æolus fastened it in the vessel, as Eustathius observes.

Νηί δ' ἐνὶ γλυφουργῇ κατέδη—————

Bossu gives us the moral of this fable or allegory, cap. 10. lib. 1. By the winds inclosed in the bag, into which the companions of Ulysses were so unwise as to pry, is to be understood, that we ought not to intrude into those mysteries of government which the prince intends to keep secret : the tempests and confusions raised by the loosing the winds, represent the mischiefs and disorders that arise from such a vain curiosity in the subject : a wise people permit the winds to rest without molestation, and satisfy themselves with those that the prince is pleased to release, and believe them to be the most proper and useful. But whatever judgment is passed upon this explication, it is certainly an instance of the ill consequences of avarice, and unseasonable curiosity.

Rowz'd from my fatal sleep, I long debate  
 If still to live, or desp'rate plunge to fate : 55  
 Thus doubting, prostrate on the deck I lay,  
 'Till all the coward thoughts of death gave way.

Mean-while our vessels plough the liquid plain,  
 And soon the known Æolian coast regain, }  
 Our groans the rocks re-murmur'd to the main. 60 }  
 We leap'd on shore, and with a scanty feast  
 Our thirst and hunger hastily repress'd  
 That done, two chosen heralds strait attend  
 Our second progress to my royal friend :  
 And him amidst his jovial sons we found ; 65  
 The banquet steaming, and the goblets crown'd :  
 There humbly stopp'd with conscious shame and awe,  
 Nor nearer than the gate presum'd to draw.  
 But soon his sons their well-known guest descry'd,  
 And starting from their couches loudly cry'd, 70  
 Ulysses here ! what dæmon cou'dst thou meet  
 To thwart thy passage, and repel thy fleet ?  
 Wast thou not furnish'd by our choicest care  
 For Greece, for home, and all thy soul held dear ?

v. 55. *If still to live, or desp'rate plunge to fate.*] We ought not to infer from this passage, that Homer thought a person might lawfully take away his own life to avoid the greatest dangers ; what Ulysses here speaks arises from the violence of a sudden passion, and gives us a true picture of human nature : the wisest of men are not free from the infirmity of passion, but reason corrects and subdues it. This is the case in the instance before us ; Ulysses has so much of the man in him as to be liable to the passion of man ; but so much virtue and wisdom as to restrain and govern it.



Book X. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 161  
 Thus they; in silence long my fate I mourn'd, 75  
 At length these words with accent low return'd.  
 Me, lock'd in sleep, my faithless crew bereft  
 Of all the blessings of your godlike gift!  
 But grant, oh grant our loss we may retrieve:  
 A favour you, and you alone can give. 80  
 Thus I with art to move their pity try'd,  
 And touch'd the youths; but their stern fire reply'd,  
 Vile-wretch, begone! this instant I command  
 Thy fleet accurs'd to leave our hallow'd land.  
 His baneful suit pollutes these bless'd abodes, 85  
 Whose fate proclaims him hateful to the gods.  
 Thus fierce he said: we sighing went our way,  
 And with disponding hearts put off to sea.  
 The sailors spent with toils their folly mourn,  
 But mourn in vain; no prospect of return. 90

v. 83. *Vile wretch, begone!*—] This inhospitable character of Æolus may seem contrary to the humane disposition which Homer before ascribed to him: he therefore tells us, that Ulysses appeared to him to be an object of divine vengeance, and that to give him assistance would be to act against the will of the gods. But, observes Eustathius, is not this an ill-chosen relation to be made to the Phæacians, as the critics have remarked, and might it not deter them from assisting a man whom Æolus had rejected as an enemy to the gods? He answers, that was evident to the Phæacians, that Ulysses, was no longer under the displeasure of heaven, that the imprecations of Polypheme were fulfilled; he being to be transported to his own country by strangers, according to his prayer in the ninth of the *Odyssey*, and consequently

Six days and nights a doubtful course we steer,  
 The next proud Lamos' stately tow'rs appear,  
 And Læstrigonia's gates arise distinct in air.  
 The shepherd quitting here at night the plain,  
 Calls, to succeed his cares, the watchful swain;

}

95

the Phæacians have nothing to fear from the assistance which they lend Ulysses.

v. 94. *The shepherd quitting here at night the plain, etc.*] This passage has been thought to be very difficult: but Eustathius makes it intelligible: the land of the Læstrigons was fruitful, and fit for pasturage; it was the practice to tend the sheep by day, and the oxen by night; for it was infested by a kind of fly that was very grievous to the oxen by day, whereas the wool of the sheep defended them from it: and therefore the shepherds drove their oxen to pasture by night. If the same shepherd who watched the sheep by day, could pass the night without sleep, and attend the oxen, he performed a double duty, and consequently merited a double reward. Homer says, that the ways of the night and day were near to each other, that is, the pastures of the sheep and oxen, and the ways that lead to them were adjacent; for the shepherd that drove his flocks home, (or ἐισελάων, as Homer expresses it,) could call to the herdsman, who drove his herds to pasture, or ἐξελάων, and be heard with ease, and therefore the roads must be adjoining.

Crates gives us a very different interpretation: he asserts that Homer intended to express the situation of the Læstrigons, and affirms that they lay under the head of the dragon, Κεφαλὴν δράκοντος, (which Dacier renders the tail of the dragon) according to Aratus.

— ἤχιπερ (κεφαλῇ) ἄκραι  
 Μίσγονῆαι δῦσιες, καὶ ἀνατολαὶ ἀλλήλησιν;

which Tully thus translates,

But he that scorns the chains of sleep to wear,  
And adds the herdsman's to the shepherd's care,

*Hoc caput hic paullum sese subitoque recondit  
Ortus ubi atque obitus partem admiscuntur in unam.*

If this be true, the poet intended to express that there was scarce any night at all among the Læstrigons, according to that of Manilius,

*Vixque ortus, occasus erit*————

But how will this agree with the situation of the Læstrigons, who were undoubtedly Sicilians, according to the direct affirmation of Thucydides, lib. 6. of his history? Besides, if Læstrigonia lay under the head of the dragon, Ulysses must have spent seven months instead of seven days, in sailing from the Æolian islands to that country. Neither is there any necessity to have recourse to this solution; for what signifies the length or shortness of the day to the double wages of the shepherds, when it was paid to him who took upon him a double charge of watching the whole day and night, which comprehends the space of four and twenty hours; which alone, whether the greater part of it was by night or day, entitled the shepherd to a double reward? I therefore should rather chuse the former interpretation, with which Didymus agrees. *Νυκτεριναί, καὶ ἡμεριναί νομαὶ ἐγγύς εἰσὶ τῆς πόλεως*; that is, 'both the night pastures, and those of the day, are adjacent to the city.'

It is evident that the Læstrigons also inhabited Formiæ, a city of Campania near Cajeta: thus Horace lib. 3. Ode 17.

*Æli vetusto nobilis ab Lamo*——  
*Auctore ab illo ducit originem*  
*Qui Formiarum mænia dicitur*  
*Princeps*————

So near the pastures, and so short the way,  
His double toils may claim a double pay,  
And join the labours of the night and day.

100

It was called Hormiæ, according to Strabo, *Φορμίαι, Λακωνικὸν κλίμα, Ορμίαι λεγόμενον διὰ τὸ ἕνορμον*; that is, 'Formiæ was built by a Laconian, called also Hormiæ, from its being an excellent station for ships.' Tully had this place in view in his epistle to Atticus, lib. 2. Epist. 13. *Si vero in hanc τηλέπουλον, veneris λαιστρυγονίην, Formias dico.* And Pliny to the same purpose, lib. 3. cap. 5. *Oppidum Formiæ, Hormiæ ante dictum, ut existimavere, antiqua Læstrigonum sedes.* But how will this agree with Homer, who places them in Sicily, and Tully and Pliny in Campania in Italy?

Dacier answers, that they were originally Sicilians, as appears from Pliny, lib. 3. cap. 8. *Flumina, Symæthus, Terias, intus Læstrigonii campi, oppidum Leontini.* And why might not these Læstrigons, or a colony of them, leave Sicily to settle in Italy, as it is evident the Phæacians had done, and fixed in Corcyra? Bochart's opinion concerning this nation is not to be neglected; the words Læstrigons and Leontines are of the same import; Læstrigon is a Phœnician name, *Lais tircam*, that is, *a devouring lion*; this is rendered literally by the Latin word *Leontinum*, and both denote the savage and leonine disposition of this people; the word *lamus* is also of Pœnician extract: *laham*, or *lahama*, signifies a *devourer*; from hence probably was derived that *Lamia*, who devoured young infants, mentioned by Horace in his Art of Poetry.

*Nec pransiæ Lamiae vivum puerum extrahat alvo.*

We are informed that there was a queen of Libya of that name, by Diodorus Siculus; she was a person of great beauty, but of great barbarity.

Within a long recess a bay there lies,  
 Edg'd round with cliffs, high pointing to the skies ;  
 The jutting shores that swell on either side  
 Contract its mouth, and break the rushing tide.  
 Our eager failors seize the fair retreat, 105  
 And bound within the port their crouded fleet :  
 For here retir'd the sinking billows sleep,  
 And smiling calmness silver'd o'er the deep.  
 I only in the bay refus'd to moor,  
 And fix'd, without, my haulsers to the shore. 110  
 From thence we clim'd a point, whose airy brow  
 Commands the prospect of the plains below :  
 No tracts of beasts, or signs of men we found,  
 But smoky volumes rolling from the ground.  
 Two with our herald thither we command, 115  
 With speed to learn what men possess'd the land.  
 They went, and kept the wheel's smooth beaten road :  
 Which to the city drew the mountain wood ;

v. 109. *I only in the bay refus'd to moor.*] It may appear at the first view, that Ulysses took more care of himself than of his companions ; and it may be asked, why did not he restrain them from entering the bay, when his caution plainly shews that he was apprehensive of danger ? had he more fear than the rest of the company ? No ; but a greater foresight ; a wise man provides as far as lies within his power against all contingencies, and the event shews, that his companions were rash, and he wise to act with so much circumspection ; they staid not for command, and therefore were justly punished for acting precipitately without the direction of their general and king.

When lo! they met, beside a crystal spring,

The daughter of Antiphates the king ;

120

She to Artacia's silver streams came down,

(Artacia's streams alone supply the town :)

The damsel they approach, and ask'd what race

The people were ? who monarch of the place ?

v. 120. *The daughter of Antiphates, etc.*] It is not evident from whence Ulysses had the knowledge of these particulars ; the persons whom he sent to search the land perished in the attempt ; or were destroyed with the fleet by the Læstrigons ; how then could this relation be made to Ulysses ? It is probable that he had his information from Circe or Calypso ; for Circe in the sequel of the Odyssey tells Ulysses, that she was acquainted with all the sufferings that he had undergone by sea ; and if she, as a goddess, knew his adventures, why might she not relate to him these particulars ? Homer a little lower tells us, that the Læstrigons transfix'd (*πέροντες*) the companions of Ulysses, and then carried them away on their weapons like so many fishes ; others prefer *ἔγοντες*, that is, connecting them together like a range of fishes ; both which very well express the prodigious strength of these giants : others chuse the word *ὑσπαιζόντες*, or, ' they eat them yet alive (*palpitantes*) like fishes.' The preference is submitted to the reader. Eustathius.

I will only add, that possibly the relation of the barbarity of Polypheme, and Antiphates, with respect to their eating the flesh of men, may not be entirely fabulous : modern history assures us, that savages have been found in parts of the world lately discovered, who eat the bodies of their enemies : it is therefore no wonder that the more polite and civilized nations of antiquity, looked upon such men as monsters, and that their poets paint them as such, or perhaps aggravated the *fierte*, or fierceness of their features, struck with horror at their brutal inhumanity.

With joy the maid th'unwary strangers heard, 125  
 And shew'd them where the royal dome appear'd.

They went ; but as they entring saw the queen  
 Of size enormous, and terrific mien,  
 (Not yielding to some bulky mountain's height)

A sudden horror struck their aking sight. 130

Swift at her call her husband scowr'd away

To wreck his hunger on the destin'd prey ;

One for his food the raging glutton flew,

But two rush'd out, and to the navy flew.

Balk'd of his prey, the yelling monster flies, 135

And fills the city with his hideous cries ;

A ghastly band of giants hear the roar,

And pouring down the mountains, croud the shore.

Fragments they rend from off the craggy brow,

And dash the ruins on the ships below : 140

The crackling vessels burst ; hoarse groans arise,

And mingled horrors echo to the skies ;

The men, like fish, they stuck upon the flood,

And cram'd their filthy throats with human food.

While thus their fury rages at the bay, 145

My sword our cables cut, I call'd to weigh ;

And charg'd my men, as they from fate would flee,

Each nerve to strain, each bending oar to ply.

The sailors catch the word, their oars they seize,

And sweep with equal strokes the smoky seas ; 150

Clear of the rocks the impatient vessel flies ;

Whilst in the port each wretch encumber'd dies.

With earnest haste my frightened sailors press,

While kindling transports glow'd at our success ;

But the sad fate that did our friends destroy 155  
Cool'd every breast, and damp'd the rising joy.

Now dropp'd our anchors in the Ææan bay,  
Where Circe dwelt, the daughter of the day;

v. 158. *Where Circe dwelt.*] Hesiod in his Theogony agrees with Homer as to the genealogy of Circe and Æetes.

Ἡελίῳ δ' ἀκόμαντι τεκε κλυτὴ ὠκεανίη  
Περσηίς, Κίρκην τε καὶ Αἰήτην βασιλῆα.

That is, 'Perseis the daughter of Oceanus bore to Phœbus, Circe and king Æetes.' But why are they fabled to be the offspring of the sun? Eustathius answers, either from their high birth, as the great personages of antiquity were called Διογενεῖς, or the sons of Jupiter, and the sun in the antient mythology represented that deity; or from their extraordinary beauty, which might be compared to the sun; or from their illustrious actions. But perhaps the whole might be derived from the way of speaking among the orientals; at this day we are informed from the best historians, that such language prevails in the eastern countries, and kings and great personages are called the brothers or offspring of the sun.

This Ææa is a mountain or promontory in Italy: perhaps originally an island, and still keeping the resemblance of it. Thus Procopius, Gothicorum, lib. 1. *Circeium haud modico tractu in mare porrectum insule speciem fert, tam præternavigantibus quam terrestri itinere prætereuntibus:* and Strabo, lib. 5. *Κιρκαιῶν ὄρος νησιάζον θαλάττῃ τε καὶ ἔλεσι.* But is the relation that Homer makes of this island, and of Circe, agreeable to truth? Undoubtedly it is not; but Homer was very well acquainted with the story of Medea, and applies what was reported of that enchantress to Circe, and gives the name of Ææa to the island of Circe, in resemblance to Æa, a city of Colchos, in the country of Medea and



Her mother Perfe, of old Ocean's strain,  
 Thus from the sun descended, and the main. 160  
 (From the same lineage stern Æetes came  
 The far-fam'd brother of th' enchantress dame)  
 Goddess, and queen, to whom the pow'rs belong  
 Of dreadful magic, and commanding song.  
 Some god directing, to this peaceful bay 165  
 Silent we came, and melancholy lay,  
 Spent and o'erwatch'd. Two days and nights roll'd on,  
 And now the third succeeding morning shone,  
 I climb'd a cliff, with spear and sword in hand,  
 Whose ridge o'erlook'd a shady length of land; 170

Æetes. That Homer was not a stranger to the story of Medea is evident, for he mentions the ship Argo in the twelfth Odyssey, in which Jason sailed to Colchos, where Medea fell in love with him; so that though Circe be a fabled deity, yet what Homer says of her, was applicable to the character of another person, and consequently a just foundation for a story in poetry. With this opinion Strabo agrees.

v. 169. *I climb'd a cliff.*] Scaliger lib. 5. of his Poetics observes, that there is a general resemblance between Ulysses in Homer, and Æneas in Virgil, and that Æneas acts in the same manner as Ulysses.

—————*exire, locosque*

*Explorare novos, quas vento accesserit oras,*

*Qui teneant, (nam inculta videt) hominesque ferant*

*Quærere constituit.*

That critic remarks, that though the attitudes of the two heroes are the same, yet they are drawn by Virgil with a more masterly hand: *Fusior et latior Homerus invenitur, pictior Virgilius et numerus asstrictior.*

To learn if aught of mortal works appear,  
 Or chearful voice of mortal strike the ear?  
 From the high point I mark'd, in distant view,  
 A stream of curling smoke, ascending blue,  
 And spiry tops, the tufted trees above, 175  
 Of Circe's palace bosom'd in the grove.

Thither to haste, the region to explore,  
 Was first my thought: but speeding back to shore  
 I deem'd it best to visit first my crew,  
 And send out spies the dubious coast to view. 180  
 As down the hill I solitary go,  
 Some pow'r divine who pities human woe  
 Sent a tall stag, descending from the wood,  
 To cool his fervor in the crystal flood;  
 Luxuriant on the wave-worn bank he lay, 185  
 Stretch'd forth, and panting in the sunny ray.  
 I lanc'd my spear, and with a sudden wound  
 Transpierc'd his back, and fix'd him to the ground.  
 He falls, and mourns his fate with human cries:  
 Thro' the wide wound the vital spirit flies. 190  
 I drew, and casting on the river side  
 The bloody spear, his gather'd feet I ty'd  
 With twining osiers which the bank supply'd. }

Ulysses himself here takes a general view of the island, but sends his companions for a more particular information; this was necessary to introduce the following story, and give it an air of probability; if he had made the experiment in his own person, his virtue would have been proof against the sorceries of Circe, and consequently there could not have been room for a description of her enchantments. Eustathius.

An ell in length the pliant wisp I weav'd,  
 And the huge body on my shoulders heav'd : 195

Then leaning on the spear with both my hands,  
 Up-bore my load, and prefs'd the sinking sands,  
 With weighty steps, till at the ship I threw  
 The welcome burden, and bespoke my crew.

Chear up, my friends ! it is not yet our fate 200  
 To glide with ghosts thro' Pluto's gloomy gate.  
 Food in the desert land, behold ! is giv'n,  
 Live, and enjoy the providence of heav'n.

The joyful crew survey his mighty size,  
 And on the future banquet feast their eyes, 205

As huge in length extended lay the beast ;  
 Then wash their hands, and hasten to the feast.  
 There, till the setting sun rowl'd down the light,  
 They sat indulging in the genial rite.

When evening rose, and darkness cover'd o'er 210  
 The face of things, we slept along the shore.

But when the rosy morning warm'd the east,  
 My men I summon'd, and these words address.

Followers and friends ; attend what I propose :  
 Ye sad companions of Ulysses' woes ? 215

We know not here what land before us lies,  
 Or to what quarter now we turn our eyes,  
 Or where the sun shall set, or where shall rise. }  
 }

v. 218. *Or where the sun shall set, or where shall rise.*] The interpretations of this passage are various ; some, says Eustathius, judge these words not to proceed from the ignorance of Ulysses, but that they are the language of despair suggested by his continual calamities : for

Here let us think (if thinking be not vain)

If any counsel, any hope remain.

220

how could Ulysses be ignorant of the east or west, when he saw the sun rise and set every day? others understand it to signify, that he was ignorant of the clime of the world (*ὅπη κοσμικῆ κλίματος*) in which this island lay. Strabo was of opinion, that the appearances of the heavenly bodies, as the stars, etc. were different in this island from the position which he had ever before observed in any country, and therefore he might well confess his ignorance, and express his concern for his almost desperate condition. He understands by *ἠὲς* all that region through which the sun passes opposite to the north. It is true, that the four quarters of the world may be supposed to be here mentioned by Ulysses, *ἠὲς* may express the southern parts through which the sun passes, and *ζόφος* the opposite quarter, which may be said comparatively to be *ζόφος*, or dark. And then the rising and setting of the sun will undeniably denote the eastern and western regions. Spondanus is of opinion, that Homer intended to express the four quarters of the world, otherwise the second verse is a tautology. Dacier calls it an explication of the first description. And indeed the mind of man is apt to dwell long upon any object, by which it is deeply affected, as Ulysses must here be supposed to be, and therefore he might enlarge upon the sentiment advanced in the former line. The meaning then will be this. I know not, says that hero, where this island lies, whether east and west, where the sun rises, or where he sets. I should therefore understand Ulysses to mean, that he knows not how this island lies with respect to the rest of the world, and especially to Ithaca his own country. This is evident from his conduct when he sailed from Formæ the land of the Læstrigons; for instead of making toward the east where Ithaca lay, he bore to this island of Circe, which lies on the west of Formæ.

v. 220. *If any counsel, any hope remain.*] This ex-

Alas ! from yonder promontory's brow,  
 I view'd the coast, a region flat and low ;  
 An isle encircled with the boundless flood ;  
 A length of thickets, and entangled wood.  
 Some smoke I saw amid the forest rise, 225  
 And all around it only seas and skies !

With broken hearts my sad companions stood,  
 Mindful of Cyclops and his human food,  
 And horrid Læstrigons, the men of blood. }  
 Prefaging tears apace began to rain ; 230  
 But tears in mortal miseries are vain.  
 In equal parts I strait divide my band,  
 And name a chief each party to command ;  
 I led the one, and of the other side  
 Appointed brave Eurylochus the guide. 235  
 Then in the brazen helm the lots we throw,  
 And fortune casts Eurylochus to go :

pression may be thought unworthy of the mouth of an hero, and serve only to cause his companions to despair ; but in reality it has a double effect ; it gives us a lively picture of human nature, which in the greatest men will shew some degrees of sensibility, and at the same time it arms his friends against surprize, and sets the danger they are in full before their eyes, that they may proceed with due circumspection. We do not find that Ulysses abandons himself to despair, he still acts like a brave man, but joins wisdom with bravery, and proceeds at once with the caution of a philosopher, and the spirit of an hero.

v. 236. *Then in the brazen helm the lots we throw.*]  
 Dacier is of opinion that Ulysses cast lots out of an apprehension of being disobeyed if he had given positive commands ; his companions being so greatly discour-

He march'd, with twice eleven in his train:  
Pensive they march, and pensive we remain.

The palace in a woody vale they found, 240  
High rais'd of stone; a shaded space around:  
Where mountain wolves and brindled lions roam,  
(By magic tam'd) familiar to the dome.

ged by the adventures of Polypheme and the Læstrigons. It will be a nobler reason, and more worthy of an hero to say, that Ulysses was so far from declining a common danger, that he submits himself to an equal chance with his companions to undertake it: this expedition appeared very hazardous, and if he had directly commanded a select number of his men to attempt it, they might have thought he had exposed them to almost certain destruction; but the contrary conduct takes away this apprehension, and at the same time shews the bravery of Ulysses, who puts himself upon a level with the meanest of his soldiers, and is ready to expose his person to an equality of danger.

Ulysses divides his men into two bodies; each contains two and twenty men: this is agreeable, observes Eustathius, to the former account of Homer; each vessel carried fifty men, six out of every one were destroyed by the Ciconians, and therefore forty four is the exact number, inclusive of himself and the surviving company.

v. 242. *Where mountain wolves and brindled lions,* etc.] Virgil has borrowed almost this whole description of Circe, and as Scaliger judges, perhaps with good reason, greatly improved it.

*Hinc exaudiri gemitus iræque leonum  
Vincla recusantum, et fera sub nocte rudentum,  
Setigerique suos, atque in præsepibus urfi, etc.*

From hence we heard rebellowing from the main,  
The roars of lions that refuse the chain,

With gentle blandishment our men they meet,  
 And wag their tails, and fawning lick their feet. 245

The grunts of bristled boars, and groans of bears,  
 And herds of howling wolves that stun the sailors ears :  
 These from their caverns, at the close of night,  
 Fill the sad isle with horror and affright :  
 Darkling they mourn their fate, whom Circe's pow'r,  
 That watch'd the moon, and planetary hour,  
 With words and wicked herbs, from human kind  
 Had alter'd, and in brutal shapes confin'd. Dryden.

It must be confessed, that *Ire leonum vincla recusantum*, and the epithets and short descriptions adapted to the nature of each savage, are beautiful additions. Virgil likewise differs from Homer in the manner of the description : Homer draws the beasts with a gentleness of nature ; Virgil paints them with the fierceness of savages. The reason of Homer's conduct is, because they still retained the sentiments of men, in the forms of beasts, and consequently their native tenderness.

There is a beautiful moral couched under this fable or allegory : Homer intended to teach, as Eustathius remarks, that pleasure and sensuality debase men into beasts. Thus Socrates understood it, as Xenophon informs us. Perhaps, adds Dacier, by the fawning wolves and lions that guard the portals of Circe's palace, the poet means to represent the attendants of such houses of debauchery, which appear gentle and courteous, but are in reality of a brutal disposition, and more dangerous than lions. But upon what foundation is this fable built ? Many writers inform us, that Circe was a famous courtesan, and that her beauty drew her admirers as it were by enchantment. Thus Horace writes,

———*Circes pocula nosti,*

*Quæ si cum sociis stultus, cupidusque bibisset,*

As from some feast a man returning late,  
His faithful dogs all meet him at the gate,

*Sub domina Meretrice fuisset turpis et excors,  
Vixisset canis immundus, vel amica luto sus.*

It is evident, that Ulysses had a very intimate commerce with Circe, for Hesiod writes that he had two sons by her, Agrius and Latinus, who afterwards reigned in Tuscany: other authors call them Naufithous and Telegonus.

Κίρκη δ' Ἑλίας θυγάτηρ ὑπεριονίδαο  
Γέιναιτ' Ὀδυσσεὺς ταλισιφρονος ἐν φιλότῆϊ.  
Ἄγριον, ἠδὲ Λατῖνον.

Dionysius Halicarn. and Aristotle mention Telegonus as the son of Circe and Ulysses, who afterwards slew his father with the bone of a fish inadvertently. Thus Horace,

*Telegoni juga Parricide.*

But then is not this intrigue a breach of morality, and conjugal fidelity in that hero? I refer the reader to note XIV. of the fifth book of the *Odyssey*: I shall only add, that the notions of morality are now very different from what they were in former ages. Adultery alone was esteemed criminal, and punished with death by the antient heathens: concubinage was not only permitted, but thought to be honourable, as appears from the practice, not only of heroes, but even of the Pagan deities; and consequently this was the vice of the age, not in particular of Ulysses. But there is a stronger objection against Ulysses, and it may be asked, how is he to be vindicated for wasting no less space than a whole year in dalliance with an harlot? Penelope and his country seem both forgotten, and consequently he appears to neglect his own re-establishment, the chief design of the *Odyssey*: what adds some weight to this observation is, that his companions seem more sensible of his long absence from his country, and regret it more than that hero; for they



Rejoicing round, some morsel to receive,  
 (Such as the good man ever us'd to give.)

awake him out of his dream, and intreat him to depart from the island. It is therefore necessary to take away this objection: for if it be unanswerable, Ulysses is guilty of all the miseries of his family and country, by neglecting to redress them by returning, and therefore he must cease to be an hero, and is no longer to be proposed as a pattern of wisdom, and imitation, as he is in the opening of the *Odyssey*. But the stay of Ulysses is involuntary, and consequently irreproachable; he is in the power of a deity, and therefore not capable of departing without her permission: this is evident: for upon the remonstrance made by his companions, he dares not undertake his voyage without her dismissal. His asking consent plainly shews that it was not safe, if practicable, to go away without it; if he had been a free agent, her leave had been unnecessary: it is true, she tells him she will not detain him any longer against his inclinations; but this does not imply that his stay till then had been voluntary, or that he never had intreated to be dismissed before, but rather intimates the contrary: it only shews that now at last she is willing he should go away. But why should Ulysses stand in need of being admonished by his companions? does not this imply that he was unmindful of returning? This is only an evidence that they were desirous to return as well as he; but he makes a wise use of their impatience, and takes an occasion from their importunities to press for an immediate dismissal.

In short, I am not pleading for perfection in the character of Ulysses: human nature allows it not, and therefore it is not to be ascribed to it in poetry. But if Ulysses were here guilty, his character ceases to be of a piece: we no longer interest ourselves in his misfortunes, since they were all owing to his own folly: the nature of the poem requires, that he should be continually endeavouring to restore his affairs: if then he be here sunk in-

Domestic thus the grisly beasts drew near ; 250  
 They gaze with wonder, not unmixt with fear.  
 Now on the threshold of the dome they stood,  
 And heard a voice resounding thro' the wood ;  
 Plac'd at her loom within, the goddess sung ;  
 The vaulted roofs and solid pavement rung. 255  
 O'er the fair web the rising figures shine,  
 Immortal labour ! worthy hands divine.  
 Polites to the rest the question mov'd,  
 (A gallant leader, and a man I lov'd.)

What voice celestial, chaunting to the loom 260  
 (Or nymph, or goddess) echoes from the room ?  
 Say shall we seek access ? With that they call ;  
 And wide unfold the portals of the hall.

The goddess rising, asks her guests to stay,  
 Who blindly follow where she leads the way. 265  
 Eurylochus alone of all the band,  
 Suspecting fraud, more prudently remain'd.  
 On thrones around, with downy coverings grac'd,  
 With semblance fair th' unhappy men she plac'd.  
 Milk newly prest, the sacred flow'r of wheat, 270  
 And honey fresh, and Pramnian wines the treat :  
 But venom'd was the bread, and mix'd the bowl,  
 With drugs of force to darken all the soul :

to a lethargy, his character is at once lost, his calamities are a just punishment, and the moral of the *Odyssëy* is destroyed, which is to shew wisdom and virtue rewarded, and vice and folly punished by the death of the suitors, and re-establishment of *Ulysses*.

v. 272. *But venom'd was the bread, and mix'd the*

Soon in the luscious feast themselves they lost,  
And drank oblivion of their native coast.

275

*bowls.*] It is an undoubted truth, that Homer ascribes more to these magical drugs and incantations than they have in reality; but we are to remember that he is speaking before a credulous audience, who readily believed these improbabilities, and at the same time he very judiciously provides for the satisfaction of his more understanding readers, by couching an excellent moral under his fables; *viz.* that by indulging our appetites we sink below the dignity of human nature, and degenerate into brutality.

I am not in the number of those who believe that there never were any magicians who performed things of an uncommon nature: the story of Jannes and Jambres, of the witch of Endor, and Simon Magus, are undeniable instances of the contrary. Magic is supposed to have been first practised in Ægypt, and to have spread afterwards among the Chaldeans: it is very evident that Homer had been in Ægypt, where he might hear an account of the wonders performed by it. Dacier is of opinion, that these de-luders, or magicians, were mimics of the real miracles of Moses, and that they are described with a wand, in imitation of that great prophet.

But if any person thinks that magic is mere fable, and never had any existence, yet established fame and common opinion justify a poet for using it. What has been more ridiculed than the winds being inclosed in a bag by Æolus, and committed to Ulysses? but as absurd as this appears, more countries than Lapland pretend to the power of settling a storm or a fair wind at this day, as is notorious from travellers of credit; and perhaps a poet would not even in these ages be thought ridiculous, if speaking of Lapland, he should introduce one of these Venefica's, and describe the ceremonies she used in the performance of her pretended incantations. Milton not unhappily has intro-

Instant her circling wand the goddess waves,  
 To hogs transforms 'em, and the sty receives.  
 No more was seen the human form divine,  
 Head, face and members bristle into swine :

duced the imagined power of these Lapland witches into his Paradise Lost.

———*The night-hag, when call'd  
 In secret, riding thro' the air she comes,  
 Lur'd with the smell of infant blood, to dance  
 With Lapland-witches, while the labouring moon  
 Eclipses at their charms.*———

In short, Virgil has imitated Homer in all these bold episodes, and Horace calls them the miracles of the *Odyssey*.

v. 278. *No more was seen the human form divine,* etc.] Longinus here reports a criticism of Zoilus; he is very pleasant upon this transformation of the companions of Ulysses, and calls them, *the squeaking pigs of Homer*. We may gather from this instance the nature of his criticisms, and conjecture that they tended to turn the finest incidents of Homer into ridicule. Burlesque was his talent, and instead of informing the reason by pointing out the errors of the poem, his only aim was to make his readers laugh; but he drew upon himself the indignation of all the learned world: he was known by the name of the vile Thracian slave, and lived in great want and poverty; and posterity prosecutes his memory with the same animosity. The man was really very learned, as Dionysius Halicarn. informs us: his morals were never reproached, and yet, as Vitruvius relates, he was crucified by Ptolemy, or as others write, stoned to death, or burnt alive at Smyrna; so that his only crime was his defamation of Homer: a tragical instance of the great value which was set upon his poetry by antiquity, and of the danger of attacking a celebrated author with malice and envy.

Still curst with sense, their minds remain alone, 280

And their own voice affrights them when they groan.

Mean-while the goddess in disdain bestows

The mast and acorn, brutal food ! and strows

The fruits of cornel, as their feast, around ;

Now prone and groveling on unfav'ry ground. 285

Eurylochus with pensive steps and slow,

Aghast returns ; the messenger of woe,

And bitter fate. To speak he made essay,

In vain essay'd, nor would his tongue obey,

His swelling heart deny'd the words their way : 290

But speaking tears the want of words supply,

And the full soul bursts copious from his eye.

Affrighted, anxious for our fellows fates,

We press to hear what sadly he relates.

We went, Ulysses ! (such was thy command) 295

Thro' the lone thicket, and the desert land.

v. 295, etc. *We went, Ulysses ! (such was thy command.)*] We have here a very lively picture of a person in a great fright, which was admired, observes Eustathius, by the ancients. There is not only a remarkable harmony in the flowing of the poetry, but the very manner of speaking represents the disorder of the speaker ; he is in too great an emotion to introduce his speech by any preface, he breaks at once into it, without preparation, as if he could not soon enough deliver his thoughts. Longinus quotes these lines as an instance of the great judgment of Homer : there is nothing, says that critic, which gives more life to a discourse, than the taking away the connections and conjunctions ; when the discourse is not bound together and embarrassed, it walks and slides along of itself, and will want very little ostentimes of going fast-

A palace in a woody vale we found  
 Brown with dark forests, and with shades around.  
 A voice celestial echo'd from the dome,  
 Or nymph, or goddess, chaunting to the loom. 300  
 Access we sought, nor was access deny'd:  
 Radiant she came; the portals open'd wide;

ter even than the thought of the orator: thus in Xenophon, *joining their bucklers, they gave back, they fought, they flew, they died together*; of the same nature is that of Eurylochus.

*We went, Ulysses—such was thy command—  
 Access we sought—nor was access deny'd:  
 Radiant she came—the portals open'd wide, etc.  
 I only wait behind—of all the train;  
 I waited long—and ey'd the doors in vain:  
 The rest are vanish'd—none repass'd the gate.*

These periods thus cut off, and yet pronounced with precipitation, are signs of a lively sorrow; which at the same time hinders, yet forces him to speak.

Many such sudden transitions are to be found in Virgil, of equal beauty with this of Homer;

*Me, me, inquam qui feci, in me convertite tela.*

Here the poet shews the earnestness of the speaker who is in so much haste to speak, that his thoughts run to the end of the sentence almost before his tongue can begin it. Thus Achæmenides in his flight from the Cyclops.

—————*Per sidera testor,  
 Per superos, atque hoc cæli spirabile lumen,  
 Tollite me, Teucric.*

Here the poet makes no connection with the preceding discourse, but leaves out the *inquit*, to express the precipitation and terror of Achæmenides.

The goddess mild invites the guests to stay :  
 They blindly follow where she leads the way.  
 I only wait behind, of all the train; " 305  
 I waited long, and ey'd the doors in vain :  
 The rest are vanish'd, none repass'd the gate :  
 And not a man appears to tell their fate.

But our countryman Spenser has equalled, if not surpassed these great poets of antiquity, in painting a figure of terror in the ninth Canto of the Fairy Queen, where Sir Trevisan flies from Despair.

*He answer'd nought at all: but adding new  
 Fear to his first amazement, staring wide  
 With stony eyes, and heartless hollow hue,  
 Astonish'd stood, as one that had espy'd  
 Infernal furies, with their chains unty'd ;  
 Him yet again, and yet again bespake,  
 The gentle knight ; who nought to him reply'd ;  
 But trembling every joint did inly quake,  
 And fault'ring tongue at last, these words seem'd  
 forth to shake,  
 For God's dear love, Sir knight, do me not stay  
 For lo ! he comes, he comes, fast after me,  
 Eft looking back, would fain have run away.*

The description sets the figure full before our eyes, he speaks short, and in broken and interrupted periods, which excellently represent the agony of his thoughts ; and when he is a little more confirmed and emboldened, he proceeds,

*And am I now in safety sure, quoth he,  
 From him who would have forced me to die?*

I heard, and instant o'er my shoulders flung  
 The belt in which my weighty faulchion hung ; 310  
 (A beamy blade) then seiz'd the bended bow,  
 And bade him guide the way, resolv'd to go.  
 He, prostrate falling, with both hands embrac'd  
 My knees, and weeping thus his suit address'd.

*And is the point of death now turn'd from me ?  
 Then I may tell this hapless history.*

We see he breaks out into interrogations, which, as Longinus observes, gives great motion, strength, and action to discourse. If the poet had proceeded simply, the expression had not been equal to the occasion ; but by these short questions, he gives strength to it, and shews the disorder of the speaker, by the sudden starts and vehemence of the periods. The whole Canto of Despair is a piece of inimitable poetry ; the picture of Sir Trevisan has a general resemblance to this of Eurylochus, and seems to have been copied after it, as will appear upon comparison.

v. 313. *With both hands embrac'd my knees—*]  
 The character of Eurylochus, who had married Climene the sister of Ulysses, is the character of a brave man, who being witness to the dreadful fate of his companions is diffident of himself, and judges that the only way to conquer the danger is to fly from it. To fear upon such an occasion, observes Dacier, is not cowardice, but wisdom. But what is more remarkable in this description, is the art of Homer in inserting the character of a brave man under so great a consternation, to set off the character of Ulysses, who knows how at once to be bold and wise ; for the more terrible and desperate the adventure is represented by Eurylochus, the greater appears the intrepidity of Ulysses, who trusting to his own wisdom, and the assistance of the gods, has the courage to attempt it. What adds to the merit of the action is, that he undertakes it solely for his companions, as Horace describes him,



O king belov'd of Jove ! thy servant spare, 315

And ah, thyself the rash attempt forbear !

Never, alas ! thou never shalt return,

Or see the wretched for whose loss we mourn,

With what remains, from certain ruin fly,

And save the few not fated yet to die. 320

I answer'd stern. Inglorious then remain,

Here feast and loiter, and desert thy train.

Alone, unfriended, will I tempt my way ;

The laws of fate compel, and I obey.

*Dum sibi, dum sociis reditum parat, aspera multa  
Pertulit, adversis rerum immer sabilis undis.*

v. 321.—*Inglorious then remain,  
Here feast and loiter—*]

This expression is used sarcastically by Ulysses, and in derision of his fears. Dacier remarks, that Ulysses having not seen what is related by Eurylochus, believes his refusal to return, proceeds from his faint-heartedness: an instance, adds she, that we frequently form wrong judgments of mens actions, when we are ignorant of the motives of them. I confess I am of opinion, that there is some degree of cowardice in the character of Eurylochus: a man truly brave would not express such confusion and terror, in any extremity; he is not to be inspirited either by Ulysses, or the example of his other companions, as appears from the sequel, in so much that Ulysses threatens to kill him for a coward; this prevails over his first fears, and he submits to meet a future danger, merely to avoid one that is present. What makes this observation more just is, that we never see a brave man drawn by Homer or Virgil in such faint colours; but they always discover a presence of mind upon all emergencies.

This said, and scornful turning from the shore 325  
 My haughty step, I stalk'd the valley o'er.  
 'Till now approaching nigh the magic bow'r,  
 Where dwelt th' enchantress skill'd in herbs of pow'r ;  
 A form divine forth issu'd from the wood,  
 (Immortal Hermes with the golden rod) 330  
 In human semblance. On his bloomy face  
 Youth smil'd celestial, with each opening grace.  
 He seiz'd my hand, and gracious thus began.  
 Ah whither roam'st thou ? much-enduring man !  
 O blind to fate ! what led thy steps to rove 335  
 The horrid mazes of this magic grove ?  
 Each friend you seek in yon enclosure lies,  
 All lost their form, and habitants of ftyes.  
 Think'st thou by wit to model their escape ?  
 Sooner shalt thou, a stranger to thy shape, 340  
 Fall prone their equal : First thy danger know,  
 Then take the antidote the gods bestow.  
 The plant I give thro' all the direful bow'r  
 Shall guard thee, and avert the evil hour.  
 Now hear her wicked arts. Before thy eyes 345  
 The bowl shall sparkle, and the banquet rise ;  
 Take this, nor from the faithless feast abstain,  
 For temper'd drugs and poisons shall be vain.  
 Soon as she strikes her wand, and gives the word,  
 Draw forth and brandish thy refulgent sword, 350  
 And menace death : those menaces shall move  
 Her alter'd mind to blandishment and love.  
 Nor shun the blessing proffer'd to thy arms,  
 Ascend her bed, and taste celestial charms :

So shall thy tedious toils a respite find, 355

And thy lost friends return to humankind.

But swear her first by those dread oaths that tie

The pow'rs below, the blessed in the sky ;

Left to the naked secret fraud be meant,

Or magic bind thee, cold and impotent. 360

Thus while he spoke the sov'reign plant he drew,

Where on th' all-bearing earth unmark'd it grew,

v. 361.—*The sovereign plant he drew,*

*Where on th' all-bearing earth unmark'd it grew, etc.]*

This whole passage is to be understood allegorically. Mercury is reason, he being the God of science: the plant which he gives as a preservative against incantation is instruction; the root of it is black, the flower white and sweet; the root denotes that the foundation or principles of instruction appear obscure and bitter, and are distasteful at first, according to that saying of Plato, *The beginnings of instruction are always accompanied with reluctance and pain.* The flower of Moly is white and sweet; this denotes that the fruits of instruction are sweet, agreeable and nourishing. Mercury gives this plant; this intimates, that all instruction is the gift of heaven: Mercury brings it not with him, but gathers it from the place where he stands, to shew that wisdom is not confined to places, but that every where it may be found, if heaven vouchsafes to discover it, and we are disposed to receive and follow it. Thus Isocrates understands the allegory of Moly: he adds, Πικρὰν εἶναι ῥίζαν αὐτῆς τὸ δὲ Μάλυος ἄνθος, λευκὸν κατὰ γάλα διὰ τῆς τῆς τελῆς παιδείας λαμπρότητα, ἤδη κ' τὸ ἡδὺ καὶ τροφίμον. The root of Moly is bitter, but the flower of it white as milk, to denote the excellency of instruction, as well as the pleasure and utility of it in the end. He further illustrates the allegory, by adding Κάρεπτος τῆς παιδείας εἰ καὶ μὴ γάλακτι ἰκέλες ἀλλὰ γλυ-

And shew'd its nature and its wond'rous pow'r :  
 Black was the root, but milky white the flow'r ;  
 Moly the name to mortals hard to find,  
 But all is easy to th' etherial kind.

365.

This Hermes gave, then gliding off the glade  
 Shot to Olympus from the woodland shade.

*κῆϊς etc.* That is, ' the fruits of instruction are not only  
 ' white as milk, but sweet, though they spring from a bit-  
 ' ter root.' Eustathius.

Maximus Tyrius also gives this story an allegorical  
 sense, Differt. 16. *Αὐτὸν μὲν τὸν Ὀδυσσεῖα ἔχ' ὀρέξας, ὡς  
 παντοδααῖς συμφοραῖς ἀντιτεχνώμενος ἀρετῇ σώζει, τῷ τῶ αὐ-  
 τῷ τὸ ἐκ Κίρκης Μῶλυ, τῷ τῶ τὸ ἐν θαλάττῃ κρηδόμενον ;*  
 that is, ' Dost thou not observe Ulysses, how by oppos-  
 ' ing virtue to adversity he preserves his life ? This is the  
 ' Moly that protects him from Circe, this is the scarf that  
 ' delivers him from the storm, from Polypheme, from  
 ' hell, etc. See also Differt. 19.

It is pretended that Moly is an Ægyptian plant, and that  
 it was really made use of as a preservative against en-  
 chantments : but I believe the Moly of Mercury, and the  
 Nepenthe of Helen, are of the same production, and grow  
 only in poetical ground.

Ovid has translated this passage in his Metamorphosis,  
 lib. 14.

*Pacifer huic dederat florem Cyllenius album ;  
 Moly vocant superi, nigra radice tenetur, etc.*

There is a remarkable sweetness in the verse which de-  
 scribes the appearance of Mercury in the shape of a young  
 man ;

—Νεηνίη ἀνδρὶ ἑοικώς  
 Πρῶτον ὑπηνήτην τῷ πῆρ χαριστάτη ἦβη.

While full of thought, revolving fates to come,  
 I speed my passage to th' enchanted dome : 370  
 Arriv'd, before the lofty gates I stay'd ;  
 The lofty gates the goddess wide display'd ;  
 She leads before, and to the feast invites ;  
 I follow sadly to the magic rites.  
 Radiant with starry studs, a silver feat 375  
 Receiv'd my limbs ; a footstool eas'd my feet.  
 She mix'd the potion, fraudulent of soul ;  
 The poison mantled in the golden bowl.  
 I took, and quaff'd it, confident in heav'n :  
 Then way'd the wand, and then the word was giv'n. 380

—On his bloomy face  
 Youth smil'd celestial—

Virgil was sensible of the beauty of it, and imitated it ;

*Ora puer prima signans intonsa juventa.*

But in the opinion of Macrobius, he falls short of Homer, lib. 5. Saturn. 13. *Prætermissa gratia incipientis pubertatis τῆ πρὸς χαρῆς ἀνάγ, minus gratam fecit latinam descriptionem.*

v. 379. *I took, and quaff'd it, confident in heav'n.*] It may be asked if Ulysses is not as culpable as his companions, in drinking this potion? Where lies the difference? and how is the allegory carried on, when Ulysses yields to the sollicitation of Circe, that is, pleasure, and indulges, not resists his appetites? The moral of the fable is, that all pleasure is not unlawful, but the excess of it: we may enjoy, provided it be with moderation. Ulysses does not taste till he is fortified against it; whereas his companions yielded without any care or circumspection: they indulged their appetites only. Ulysses tastes merely out of a desire to deliver his associates: he makes himself

Hence, to thy fellows! (dreadful she began)  
Go, be a beast!—I heard, and yet was man.

Then sudden whirling like a waving flame  
My beamy faulchion, I assault the dame.  
Struck with unusual fear, she trembling cries, 385  
She faints, she falls; she lifts her weeping eyes.

What art thou? say! from whence, from whom you  
O more than human! tell thy race, thy name. [came?  
Amazing strength, these poisons to sustain!  
No mortal thou, nor mortal is thy brain. 390

Or art thou he? the man to come (foretold  
By Hermes pow'rful with the wand of gold)  
The man from Troy, who wander'd ocean round;  
The man for wisdom's various arts renown'd,  
Ulysses? oh! thy threat'ned fury cease, 395  
Sheath thy bright sword, and join our hands in peace;  
Let mutual joys our mutual trust combine,  
And love and love-born confidence be thine.

And how, dread Circe? (furious I rejoin)  
Can love and love-born confidence be mine? 400  
Beneath thy charms when my companions groan,  
Transform'd to beasts, with accents not their own.

master of Circe, or pleasure, and is not in the power of it, and enjoys it upon his own terms; they are slaves to it, and out of a capacity ever to regain their freedom but by the assistance of Ulysses. The general moral of the whole fable of Circe is, that pleasure is as dreadful an enemy as danger, and a Circe as hard to be conquered as a Polypheme.

O thou of fraudulent heart ! shall I be led  
 To share thy feast-rites, or ascend thy bed ;  
 That, all unarm'd, thy vengeance may have vent, 405  
 And magic bind me, cold and impotent ?  
 Celestial as thou art, yet stand deny'd ;  
 Or swear that oath by which the gods are ty'd,  
 Swear, in thy soul no latent frauds remain,  
 Swear, by the vow which never can be vain. 410

The goddess swore : then seiz'd my hand, and led,  
 To the sweet transports of the genial bed.  
 Ministrant to their queen, with busy care  
 Four faithful handmaids the soft rites prepare ;  
 Nymphs sprung from fountains, or from shady woods,  
 Or the fair offspring of the sacred floods. 416  
 One o'er the couches painted carpets threw,  
 Whose purple lustre glow'd against the view :  
 White linen lay beneath. Another plac'd  
 The silver stands with golden flasks grac'd : 420

v. 403.—*Shall I be led  
 To share thy feast-rites.*]

Eustathius observes, that we have here the picture of a man truly wise, who when pleasure courts him to indulge his appetites, not only knows how to abstain, but suspects it to be a bait to draw him into some inconveniencies : a man should never think himself in security in the house of a Circe. It may be added, that these apprehensions of Ulysses are not without a foundation ; from this intercourse with that goddess, Telegonus sprung, who accidentally slew his father Ulysses.

v. 414. *Four faithful handmaids, etc.*] This large description of the entertainment in the palace of Circe is particularly judicious ; Ulysses is in an house of pleasure, and

With dulcet bev'rage this the beaker crown'd,  
 Fair in the midst, with gilded cups around :  
 That in the tripod o'er the kindled pyle  
 The water pours ; the bubling waters boil :  
 An ample vase receives the smoking wave, 425  
 And in the bath prepar'd my limbs I lave ;  
 Reviving sweets repair the mind's decay,  
 And take the painful sense of toil away.  
 A vest and tunic o'er me next she threw,  
 Fresh from the bath and dropping balmy dew ; 430  
 Then led and plac'd me on the sov'reign seat,  
 With carpets spread ; a footstool at my feet.  
 The golden ew'r a nymph obsequious brings,  
 Replenish'd from the cool translucent springs ;  
 With copious water the bright vase supplies 435  
 A silver laver of capacious size.  
 I wash'd. The table in fair order spread,  
 They heap the glittering canisters with bread ;

the poet dwells upon it, and shews how every circumstance contributes to promote and advance it. The attendants are all nymphs, and the bath and perfumes usher in the feast and wines. The four verses that follow, are omitted by Dacier, and they are marked in Eustathius as superfluous ; they are to be found in other parts of the *Odyssey* ; but that, I confess, would be no argument why they should not stand here (such repetitions being frequent in Homer) if they had a due propriety ; but they contain a tautology ; we see before a table spread for the entertainment of Ulysses, why then should that circumstance be repeated ? If they are omitted, there will no chasm or incoherence appear, and therefore probably they were not originally inserted here by Homer.



Viands of various kinds allure the taste,  
Of choicest fort and favour, rich repast! 440

Circe in vain invites the feast to share;  
Absent I ponder, and absorpt in care:  
While scenes of woe rose anxious in my breast,  
The queen beheld me, and these words address.

Why sits Ulysses silent and apart? 445  
Some hoard of grief close harbour'd at his heart,  
Untouch'd before thee stand the cates divine,  
And unregarded laughs the rosy wine.  
Can yet a doubt, or any dread remain,  
When sworn that oath which never can be vain! 450

I answer'd; Goddess! humane is thy breast,  
By justice sway'd, by tender pity prest:  
Ill fits it me, whose friends are sunk to beasts,  
To quaff thy bowls, or riot in thy feasts.  
Me wouldst thou please? for them thy cares employ, 455  
And them to me restore, and me to joy.

With that, she parted: In her potent hand  
She bore the virtue of the magic wand.  
Then hast'ning to the styes set wide the door,  
Urg'd forth, and drove the bristly herd before; 460  
Unwieldy, out they rush'd, with gen'ral cry,  
Enormous beasts dishonest to the eye.  
Now touch'd by counter-charms, they change agen,  
And stand majestic, and recall'd to men.  
Those hairs of late that bristled ev'ry part, 465  
Fall off, miraculous effect of art:

'Till all the form in full proportion rise,  
 More young, more large, more graceful to my eyes.  
 They saw, they knew me, and with eager pace  
 Clung to their master in a long embrace : 470  
 Sad, pleasing sight ! with tears each eye ran o'er,  
 And sobs of joy re-echo'd thro' the bow'r :  
 Ev'n Circe wept, her adamantine heart  
 Felt pity enter, and sustain'd her part.

Son of Laertes ! (then the queen began) 475  
 Oh much enduring, much-experienc'd man !  
 Hasten to thy vessel on the sea-beat shore,  
 Unload thy treasures, and thy galley moor ;  
 Then bring thy friends, secure from future harms,  
 And in our grotto's stow thy spoils and arms. 480

She said, Obedient to her high command  
 I quit the place, and hasten to the strand.  
 My sad companions on the beach I found,  
 Their wistful eyes in floods of sorrow drown'd.  
 As from fresh pastures and the dewy field 485  
 (When loaded cribs their evening banquet yield)

v. 468. *More young—more graceful to my eyes.*] Homer excellently carries on his allegory: he intends by this expression of the enlargement of the beauty of Ulysses's companions, to teach that men who turn from an evil course, into the paths of virtue, excel even themselves; having learned the value of virtue from the miseries they suffered in pursuit of vice, they become new men, and as if they were enjoy a second life. Eustathius.

v. 485. *As from fresh pastures and the dewy fields,* etc.] If this simile were to be rendered literally, it would run thus; 'as calves seeing the droves of cows returning at night when they are filled with their pasturage, run

The lowing herds return ; around them throng  
 With leaps and bounds their late-imprison'd young,  
 Rush to their mothers with unruly joy,  
 And echoing hills return the tender cry : 490  
 So round me press'd exulting at my sight,  
 With cries and agonies of wild delight,

‘ skipping out to meet them ; the stalls no longer detain them, but running round their dams they fill the plain with their lowings, etc.’ If a similitude of this nature were to be introduced into the modern poetry, I am of opinion it would fall under ridicule for want of delicacy : but in reality, images drawn from nature and a rural life, have always a very good effect ; in particular, this before us enlivens a melancholy description of sorrows, and so exactly expresses in every point the joy of Ulysses’s companions, we see them in the very description. To judge rightly of comparisons, we are not to examine if the subject from whence they are derived be great or little, noble or familiar, but we are principally to consider if the image produced be clear and lively, if the poet have skill to dignify it by poetical words, and if it perfectly paints the thing it is intended to represent. This rule fully vindicates Homer, though he frequently paints low life, yet he never uses terms which are not noble ; or if he uses humble words or phrases, it is with so much art, that, as Dionysius observes, they become noble and harmonious : in short, a top may be used with propriety and elegance in a similitude by a Virgil, and the sun may be dishonoured by a Mævius ; a mean thought expressed in noble terms being more tolerable, than a noble thought disgraced by mean expressions. Things that have an intrinsic greatness need only to be barely represented to fill the soul with admiration, but it shews the skill of a poet to raise a low subject, and exalt common appearances into dignity.

The weeping failors ; nor less fierce their joy  
Than if return'd to Ithaca from Troy.

Ah master ! ever-honour'd, ever dear, 495  
(These tender words on ev'ry side I hear)

What other joy can equal thy return ?

Not that lov'd country for whose sight we mourn,

The soil that nurs'd us, and that gave us breath :

But ah ! relate our lost companions death. 500

I answer'd chearful. Haste your galley moor,

And bring our treasures and our arms a-shore :

Those in yon hollow caverns let us lay ;

Then rise and follow where I lead the way.

Your fellows live : believe your eyes and come 505

To take the joys of Circe's sacred dome,

With ready speed the joyful crew obey :

Alone Eurylochus persuades their stay.

Whither (he cry'd) ah whither will ye run ?

Seek ye to meet those evils ye shou'd shun ? 510

Will you the terrors of the dome explore,

In swine to grovel, or in lions roar,

Or wolf-like howl away the midnight hour

In dreadful watch around the magic bow'r ?

Remember Cyclops, and his bloody deed ; 515

'The leader's rashness made the soldiers bleed.

v. 515. *Remember Cyclops, etc.*] The poet paints Eurylochus uniformly, under great disorder of mind and terrible apprehensions : there is no similitude between Circe and Cyclops, with respect to the usage of the companions of Ulysses ; but Homer puts these expressions into his mouth, to represent the nature of terror, which confounds the thoughts, and consequently distracts the lan-

I heard incens'd, and first resolv'd to speed  
 My flying faulchion at the rebel's head.  
 Dear as he was, by ties of kindred bound,  
 This hand had stretch'd him breathless on the ground:  
 But all at once my interposing train 521  
 For mercy pleaded, nor could plead in vain.  
 Leave here the man who dares his prince desert,  
 Leave to repentance and his own sad heart,  
 To guard the ship. Seek we the sacred shades 525  
 Of Circe's palace, where Ulysses leads.

This with one voice declar'd, the rising train  
 Left the black vessel by the murmur'ing main.  
 Shame touch'd Eurylochus his alter'd breast,  
 He fear'd my threats, and follow'd with the rest. 530

Mean-while the goddess, with indulgent cares  
 And social joys, the late-transform'd repairs;  
 The bath, the feast, their fainting soul renews;  
 Rich in refulgent robes, and dropping balmy dews:  
 Brightning with joy their eager eyes behold 535  
 Each others face, and each his story told:  
 Then gushing tears the narrative confound,  
 And with their sobb the vaulted roofs resound.  
 When hush'd their passion, thus the goddess cries:  
 Ulysses, taught by labours to be wise, } 540  
 Let this short memory of grief suffice.

guage of a person who is possessed by it. The character therefore of Eurylochus is the imitation of a person confounded with fears, speaking irrationally and incoherently. Eustathius.

To me are known the various woes ye bore,  
 In storms by sea, in perils on the shore ;  
 Forget whatever was in fortune's pow'r,  
 And share the pleasures of this genial hour. 545

Such be your minds as ere ye left your coast,  
 Or learn'd to sorrow for a country lost.  
 Exiles and wand'ers now, where-e'er ye go,  
 Too faithful memory renews your woe ;  
 The cause remov'd, habitual griefs remain, 550  
 And the soul saddens by the use of pain.

Her kind intreaty mov'd the gen'ral breast ;  
 Tir'd with long toil, we willing sunk to rest.  
 We ply'd the banquet and the bowl we crown'd,  
 'Till the full circle of the year came round. 555

But when the seasons, following in their train,  
 Brought back the months, the days, and hours again ;  
 As from a lethargy at once they rise,  
 And urge their chief with animating cries.

Is this, Ulysses, our inglorious lot ? 560  
 And is the name of Ithaca forgot ?  
 Shall never the dear land in prospect rise,  
 Or the lov'd palace glitter in our eyes ?

Melting I heard ; yet till the sun's decline  
 Prolong'd the feast, and quaff'd the rosy wine : 565  
 But when the shades came on at evening hour,  
 And all lay slumbring in the dusky bow'r ;  
 I came a suppliant to fair Circe's bed,  
 The tender moment seiz'd, and thus I said.

Be mindful, goddess, of thy promise made ; 570  
 Must sad Ulysses ever be delay'd ?

Around their lord my sad companions mourn,  
 Each breast beats homeward, anxious to return :  
 If but a moment parted from thy eyes,  
 Their tears flow round me, and my heart complies. 575  
 Go then (she cry'd) ah go ! yet think, not I,  
 Not Circe, but the fates your wish deny.  
 Ah hope not yet to breathe thy native air !  
 Far other journey first demands thy care ;  
 To tread the uncomfortable paths beneath, 580  
 And view the realms of darkness and of death.

v. 597. *Far other journey*———

*To tread th' uncomfortable paths beneath.*

There should in all the episodes of epic poetry appear a convenience, if not a necessity of every incident ; it may therefore be asked what necessity there is for this descent of Ulysses into hell, to consult the shade of Tiresias ? Could not Circe, who was a goddess, have discovered to him all the future contingencies of his life ? Eustathius excellently answers this objection ; Circe declares to Ulysses the necessity of consulting Tiresias, that he may learn from the mouth of that prophet, that his death was to be from the Ocean ; she acts thus in order to dispose him to stay with her, after his return from the regions of the dead : or if she cannot persuade him to stay with her, that she may at least secure him from returning to her rival Calypso ; she had promised him immortality, but by this descent, he will learn that 'tis decreed he should receive his death from the Ocean ; for he died by the bone of a sea-fish called Xiphias. Her love for Ulysses induces her not to make the discovery herself, for it is evident she would not find credit, but Ulysses would impute it to her love, and the desire she had to deter him from leaving her island. This will appear more probable, if we observe the conduct of Circe in the future parts of the *Odyssey* : she re-

There seek the Theban bard, depriv'd of sight,  
 Within, irradiate with prophetic light ;  
 To whom Persephone, entire and whole,  
 Gave to retain th' unseparated soul :

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lates to him the dangers of Scylla and Charybdis, of the oxen of Phœbus, and the Sirens ; but says nothing concerning his death : this likewise gives an air of probability to the relation. The isle of Circe was adjoining to Scylla and Charybdis, etc. and consequently she may be supposed to be acquainted with those places, and give an account of them to Ulysses with exactness, but she leaves the decrees of heaven and the fate of Ulysses to the narration of the prophet, it best suiting his character to see into futurity. By the descent of Ulysses into hell may be signified, that a wise man ought to be ignorant of nothing ; that he ought to ascend in thought to heaven, and understand the heavenly appearances, and be acquainted with what is contained in the bowels of the earth, and bring to light the secrets of nature : that he ought to know the nature of the soul, what it suffers, and how it acts after it is separated from the body. Eustathius.

v. 584. *To whom Persephone, etc.*] Homer here gives the reason why Tiresias should be consulted, rather than any other ghost, because,

Τῷ τε φρενὲς ἔμπροσθὶ ἐῖσι.

This expression is fully explained, and the notion of the soul after death, which prevailed among the ancients, is set in a clear light, verse 92, and 122, of the 23d book of the Iliads, to which passages I refer the readers. But whence had Tiresias this privilege above the rest of the dead ? Callimachus ascribes it to Minerva.

Καὶ μόνος εὔτε θάνη, πεπνυμένος ἐν νεκύεσσιν  
 Φοιῖάσει, μεγάλῳ τίμιος ἀγεσιλάῳ.

Tully mentions this pre-eminence of Tiresias in his first



The rest are forms of empty æther made,  
Impassive semblance, and a fitting shade.

book of divination. Perhaps the whole fiction may arise from his great reputation among the ancients for prophecy; and in honour to his memory they might imagine that his soul after death retained the same superiority. Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* gives us a very jocular reason for the blindness and prophetic knowledge of Tiresias, from a matrimonial contest between Jupiter and Juno. Cato Major, as Plutarch in his *Political Precepts* informs us, applied this verse to Scipio, when he was made consul contrary to the Roman statutes.

Ὅϊός πέπνυται, τοῖ δὲ σκιαὶ αἰσῶσιν.

But I ought not to suppress what Diodorus Siculus relates concerning Tiresias. *Bibl. lib. 4.* he tells us, that he had a daughter named Daphne, a priestess at Delphi. Παρ ἧς φασὶ καὶ τὸν ποιητὴν Ὅμηρον πολλὰ τῶν ἐπῶν σφειτριζόμενον, κοσμηῆσαι τὴν ἰδίαν ποιησιν. That is, 'From whom it is said, that the poet Homer received many (of the Sibyls) verses, and adorned his poetry with them.' If this be true, there lay a debt of gratitude upon Homer, and he pays it honourably, by this distinguishing character, which he gives to the father. An instance of a worthy disposition in the poet, and it remains at once an honour to Tiresias, and a monument of his own gratitude.

This descent of Ulysses into hell has a very happy effect, it gives Homer an opportunity to embellish his poetry with an admirable variety, and to insert fables and histories that at once instruct and delight. It is particularly happy with respect to the Phœnicians, who could not but highly admire a person whose wisdom had not only delivered him from so many perils on earth, but had been permitted by the gods to see the regions of the dead, and return among the living; this relation could not fail of

Struck at the word, my very heart was dead ;  
 Pensive I fate ; my tears bedew'd the bed ;  
 To hate the light and life my soul begun, 590  
 And saw that all was grief beneath the sun.  
 Compos'd at length, the gushing tears suppress'd,  
 And my tost limbs now weary'd into rest,  
 How shall I tread (I cry'd) ah Circe ! say,  
 The dark descent, and who shall guide the way ? 595  
 Can living eyes behold the realms below ?  
 What bark to waft me, and what wind to blow ?  
 Thy fated road (the magic pow'r reply'd)  
 Divine Ulysses ! asks no mortal guide.  
 Rear but the mast, the spacious sail display, 600  
 The northern winds shall wing thee on thy way.  
 Soon shalt thou reach old Ocean's utmost ends,  
 Where to the main the shelving shore descends ;

pleasing an audience delighted with strange stories, and extraordinary adventures.

v. 602. *Soon shalt thou reach old Ocean's utmost ends,* etc.] This whole scene is excellently imagined by the poet, as Eustathius observes: the trees are all barren, the place is upon the shores where nothing grows; and all the rivers are of a melancholy signification, suitable to the ideas we have of those infernal regions. Ulysses arrives at this place, where he calls up the shades of the dead, in the space of one day; from whence we may conjecture, that he means a place that lies between Cumæ and Baixæ, near the lake Avernus, in Italy; which, as Strabo remarks, is the scene of the necromancy of Homer, according to the opinion of antiquity. He further adds, that there really are such rivers as Homer mentions, though not placed in their true situation, according to the liberty allowable to

The barren trees of Proserpine's black woods,  
 Poplars and willows trembling o'er the floods : 605  
 There fix thy vessel in the lonely bay,  
 And enter there the kingdoms void of day:

poetry. Others write, that the Cimmerii once inhabited Italy, and that the famous cave of Paufilippe was begun by them about the time of the Trojan wars: here they offered sacrifice to the Manes, which might give occasion to Homer's fiction, The Grecians, who inhabited these places after the Cimmerians, converted these dark habitations into stoves, baths, etc.

Silius Italicus writes, that the Lucrine lake was antiently called Cocytus, lib. 12.

*Ast hic Lucrino marfisse vocabula quondam  
 Cocyti memorat.—*

It is also probable, that Acheron was the antient name of Avernus, because Acherusia, a large water near Cumæ, flows into it by concealed passages. Silius Italicus informs us, that Avernus was also called Styx.

*Ille olim populis dictum Styga, nomine verso,  
 Stagna inter celebrem nunc nitia monstrat Avernum.*

Here Hannibal offered sacrifice to the Manes, as it is recorded by Livy; and Tully affirms it from an antient poet, from whom he quotes the following fragment;

*Inde in vicinia nostra Averni lacus  
 Unde animæ excitantur obscura umbra,  
 Alti Acherontis aperto ostio.*

This may seem to justify the observation that Acheron was once the name of Avernus, though the words are capable of a different interpretation.

Where Phlegeton's loud torrents rushing down,  
 His in the flaming gulph of Acheron ;  
 And where, slow rolling from the Stygian bed,           610  
 Cocytus' lamentable waters spread :

If these remarks be true, it is probable that Homer does not neglect geography, as most commentators judge. Virgil describes Æneas descending into hell by Avernus, after the example of Homer. Milton places these rivers in hell, and beautifully describes their natures in his Paradise Lost.

————— *Along the banks*

*Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge  
 Into the burning lake their baleful streams,  
 Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate ;  
 Sad Acheron, of sorrow, black and deep :  
 Cocytus, nam'd of lamentation loud  
 Heard on the rueful stream : fierce Phlegeton,  
 Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage ;  
 Far off from these a slow and silent stream,  
 Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls  
 Her watry labyrinth, whereof who drinks  
 Forthwith his former state and being forgets,  
 Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.*

Thus also agreeably to the idea of hell the offerings to the infernal powers are all black, the Cimmerians lie in a land of darkness ; the heifer which Ulysses is to offer is barren, like that in Virgil.

————— *Sterilemque tibi Proserpina, vaccam ;*

to denote that the grave is unfruitful, that it devours all things, that it is a place where all things are forgotten.

Where the dark rock o'erhangs th' infernal lake,  
 And mingling streams eternal murmurs make.  
 First draw thy faulchion, and on ev'ry side  
 Trench the black earth a cubit long and wide : 615  
 To all the shades around libations pour,  
 And o'er th' ingredients strow the hallow'd flour :  
 New wine and milk, with honey temper'd, bring,  
 And living water from the crystal spring.  
 Then the wan shades and feeble ghosts implore, 620  
 With promis'd off'rings on thy native shore ;  
 A barren cow, the stateliest of the isle,  
 And, heap'd with various wealth, a blazing pyle :  
 These to the rest ; but to the Seer must bleed  
 A fable ram, the pride of all thy breed. 625  
 These solemn vows and holy offerings paid  
 To all the phantom-nations of the dead ;  
 Be next thy care the fable sheep to place  
 Full o'er the pit, and hell-ward turn their face :  
 But from the infernal rite thine eye withdraw, 630  
 And back to Ocean glance with rev'rend awe,  
 Sudden shall skim along the dusky glades  
 Thin airy shoals, and visionary shades.  
 Then give command the sacrifice to haste,  
 Let the flea'd victims in the flames be cast, 635  
 And sacred vows, and mystic song, apply'd  
 To grisly Pluto, and his gloomy bride.  
 Wide o'er the pool thy faulchion wav'd around  
 Shall drive the spectres from forbidden ground :  
 The sacred draught shall all the dead forbear, 640  
 'Till awful from the shades arise the Seer,

Let him, Oraculous, the end, the way,  
 The turns of all thy future fate, display,  
 Thy pilgrimage to come, and remnant of thy day.

So speaking, from the ruddy orient shone  
 The morn conspicuous on her golden throne.

The goddess with a radiant tunic drest  
 My limbs, and o'er me cast a filken vest.

Long flowing robes of purest white array

The nymph, that added lustre to the day :

A tiar wreath'd her head with many a fold ;

Her waste was circled with a zone of gold.

Forth issuing then, from place to place I flew ;

Rouze man by man, and animate my crew.

Rise, rise, my mates ! 'tis Circe gives command :

Our journey calls us ; haste, and quit the land.

All rise and follow, yet depart not all,

For fate decreed one wretched man to fall.

A youth there was, Elpenor was he nam'd,

Nor much for sense, nor much for courage fam'd ;

v. 659. *A youth there was, Elpenor was he nam'd.*] Homer dismisses not the description of this house of pleasure and debauch, without shewing the moral of his fable, which is the ill consequences that attend those who indulge themselves in sensuality ; this is set forth in the punishment of Elpenor. He describes him as a person of no worth, to shew that debauchery enervates our faculties, and renders both the mind and body incapable of thinking, or acting with greatness and bravery. At the same time these circumstantial relations are not without a good effect ; for they render the story probable, as if it were spoken with the veracity of an history, not the liberty of poetry.

The youngest of our band, a vulgar soul  
 Born but to banquet, and to drain the bowl.  
 He, hot and careless, on a turret's height  
 With sleep repair'd the long debauch of night :  
 The sudden tumult stirr'd him where he lay, 605  
 And down he hasten'd, but forgot the way ;  
 Full endlong from the roof the sleeper fell,  
 And snap'd the spinal joint, and wak'd in hell.

The rest croud round me with an eager look ;  
 I met them with a sigh, and thus bespoke, 670  
 Already, friends ! ye think your toils are o'er,  
 Your hopes already touch your native shore :  
 Alas ! far otherwise the nymph declares,  
 Far other journey first demands our cares ;

I will conclude this book with a paragraph from Plutarch's Morals: it is a piece of advice to the fair sex, drawn from the story of Circe and Ulysses. ' They who bait their hooks (says this philosopher) with intoxicat- ed drugs may catch fish with little trouble; but then they prove dangerous to eat, and unpleas- ant to the taste: thus women who use arts to ensnare their admirers, become wives of fools and madmen: they whom the sorceress Circe enchanted, were no better than brutes; and she used them accordingly, enclosing them with styes; but she loved Ulysses intirely, whose prudence avoided her intoxications, and made his conversation agreeable. Those women who will not believe that Pasiphae was ever enamoured of a bull, are yet themselves so extravagant, as to abandon the society of men of sense and temperance, and to betake themselves to the embraces of brutal and stupid fellows.' Plut. Conjugal Precepts.

To tread th' uncomfortable paths beneath, 675  
 The dreary realms of darkness and of death :  
 To seek Tiresias' awful shade below,  
 And thence our fortunes and our fates to know.

My sad companions heard in deep despair ;  
 Frantic they tore their manly growth of hair ; 680  
 To earth they fell ; the tears began to rain ;  
 But tears in mortal miseries are vain.

Sadly they far'd along the sea-beat shore ;  
 Still heav'd their hearts, and still their eyes ran o'er.  
 The ready victims at our bark we found, 685  
 The fable ewe, and ram together bound.

For swift as thought, the goddess had been there,  
 And thence had glided, viewless as the air :  
 The paths of gods what mortal can survey ?  
 Who eyes their motion, who shall trace their way ? 690



T H E  
O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XI.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The descent into hell.

*Ulysses continues his narration, how he arrived at the land of the Cimmerians, and what ceremonies he performed to invoke the dead. The manner of his descent, and the apparition of the shades: his conversation with Elpenor, and with Tiresias, who informs him in a prophetic manner of his fortunes to come. He meets his mother Anticlea, from whom he learns the state of his family. He sees the shades of the antient Heroines, afterwards of the Heroes, and converses in particular with Agamemnon and Achilles. Ajax keeps at a sullen distance, and disdains to answer him. He then beholds Tityus, Tantalus, Syfiphus, Hercules: till he is deterred from further curiosity by the apparition of horrid spectres, and the cries of the wicked in torments,*

**N**OW to the shores we bend, a mournful train,  
Climb the tall bark, and launch into the main:  
At once the mast we rear, at once unbind  
The spacious sheet, and stretch it to the wind:

The ancients called this book *Νεκρομαντεία*, or *Νεκρία*, the book of Necromancy: because (says Eustathius) it contains an interview between Ulysses and the shades of the dead.

Virgil has not only borrowed the general design from

Then pale and pensive stand, with cares oppress, 5  
 And solemn horror saddens every breast.

Homer, but imitated many particular incidents: L'Abbe Fraguier in the Memoirs of Literature gives his judgment in favour of the Roman poet, and justly observes, that the end and design of the journey is more important in Virgil than in Homer. Ulysses descends to consult Tiresias, Æneas his father. Ulysses takes a review of the shades of celebrated persons that preceded his times, or whom he knew at Troy, who have no relation to the story of the Odyssey: Æneas receives the history of his own posterity; his father instructs him how to manage the Italian war, and how to conclude it with honour; that is, to lay the foundations of the greatest empire in the world; and the poet by a very happy address takes an opportunity to pay a noble compliment to his patron Augustus. In the Æneid there is a magnificent description of the descent and entrance into hell; and the diseases, cares, and terrors that Æneas sees in his journey, are very happily imagined, as an introduction into the regions of death: whereas in Homer there is nothing so noble, we scarce are able to discover the place where the poet lays his scene, or whether Ulysses continues below or above the ground. Instead of a descent into hell, it seems rather a conjuring up, or an evocation of the dead from hell; according to the words of Horace, who undoubtedly had this passage of Homer in his thoughts. Satyr 8. lib. 1.

—————*Scalpere terram*

*Unguibus, et pullam divellere mordicus agnam  
 Cæperunt; cruor in fossam confusus, ut inde  
 Manes elicerent, animas responsa daturas.*

But if it be understood of an evocation only, how shall we account for several visions, and descriptions in the conclusion of this book? Ulysses sees Tantalus in the waters

A freshning breeze the magic \* pow'r supply'd,  
While the wing'd vessel flew along the tyde;

\* Circe.

of hell, and Sisyphus rowling a stone up an infernal mountain; these Ulysses could not conjure up, and consequently must be supposed to have entered at least the borders of those infernal regions. In short, Fraguier is of opinion, that Virgil profited more by the Frogs of Aristophanes than by Homer: and Mr Dryden prefers the sixth book of the *Æneid* to the eleventh of the *Odyssey*, I think with very great reason.

I will take the opportunity briefly to mention the original of all these fictions of infernal rivers, judges, etc. spoken of by Homer, and repeated and enlarged by Virgil. They are of *Ægyptian* extract, as Mr Sandys (that faithful traveller, and judicious poet) observes, speaking of the Mummies of Memphis, p. 134.

' These ceremonies performed, they laid the corps in a boat to be wafted over Acherusia, a lake on the south of Memphis, by one only person, whom they called Charon; which gave Orpheus the invention of his infernal ferriman; an ill-favoured slovenly fellow, as Virgil describes him, *Æneid* 6. About this lake stood the shady temple of Hecate, with the ports of Cocytus and Oblivion, separated by bars of brass, the original of like fables. When landed on the other side, the bodies were brought before certain judges; if convinced of an evil life, they were deprived of burial; if otherwise, they suffered them to be interred.' This explication shews the foundation of these ancient fables of Charon, Rhadamanthus, etc. And also that the poets had a regard to truth in their inventions, and grounded even their fables upon some remarkable customs, which grew obscure and absurd only because the memory of the customs to which they allude is lost to posterity.

I will only add from Dacier, that this book is an evi-

Our oars we shipp'd : all day the swelling sails  
Full from the guiding pilot catch'd the gales. 10

Now sunk the sun from his aerial height,  
And o'er the shaded billows rush'd the night :  
When lo ! we reach'd old Ocean's utmost bounds,  
Where rocks controul his waves with ever-during mounds.

dence of the antiquity of the opinion of the soul's immortality. It is upon this that the most antient of all divinations was founded, I mean that which was performed by the evocation of the dead. There is a very remarkable instance of this in the holy scriptures, in an age not very distant from that of Homer. Saul consults one of these infernal agents to call up Samuel, who appears, or some evil spirit in his form, and predicts his impending death and calamities. This is a pregnant instance of the antiquity of Necromancy, and that it was not of Homer's invention ; it prevailed long before his days among the Chaldeans, and spread over all the oriental world. Æschylus has a tragedy intitled *Perfæ*, in which the shade of Darius is called up, like that of Samuel, and fortells queen Atossa all her misfortunes. Thus it appears that there was a foundation for what Homer writes ; he only embellishes the opinions of antiquity with the ornaments of poetry.

I must confess that Homer gives a miserable account of a future state ; there is not a person described in happiness, unless perhaps it be Tiresias : the good and the bad seem all in the same condition : whereas Virgil has an hell for the wicked, and an Elysium for the just. Though perhaps it may be a vindication of Homer to say, that the notions of Virgil of a future state were different from those of Homer ; according to whom hell might only be a receptacle for the vehicles of the dead, and that while they were in hell, their  $\phi\epsilon\lambda\psi$  or spirit might be in heaven, as appears from what is said of the  $\epsilon\delta\omega\lambda\omicron\nu$  of Hercules in this 11th book of the *Odyssæy*.

There in a lonely land, and gloomy cells, 15  
The dusky nation of Cimmeria dwells :

v. 15. *There in a lonely land, and gloomy cells,  
The dusky nation of Cimmeria dwells.*]

It is the opinion of many commentators, that Homer constantly in these voyages of Ulysses makes use of a fabulous geography ; but perhaps the contrary opinion in many places may be true : in this passage, Ulysses in the space of one day sails from the island of Circe to the Cimmerians : now it is very evident from Herodotus and Strabo, that they inhabited the regions near the Bosphorus, and consequently Ulysses could not sail thither in the compass of a day ; and therefore, says Strabo, the poet removes not only the Cimmerians, but their climate and darkness, from the northern Bosphorus into Campania in Italy.

But that there really were a people in Italy named Cimmerians is evident from the testimony of many authors. So Lycophron plainly understands this passage, and relates these adventures as performed in Italy. He recapitulates all the voyages of Ulysses, and mentioning the descent into hell and the Cimmerians, he immediately describes the infernal rivers, and adds, (speaking of the Apennine,)

Ἐξ ἕ τὰ πάντα χύτλα, καὶ πᾶσαι μυχᾶν  
Πηγαι, κατ' Ἀυσονίτιν ἔλκονται χθόνα.

That is, 'From whence all the rivers and all the fountains flow through the regions of Italy.' And these lines of Tibullus,

*Cimmerion etiam obscuras accessit ad arces,  
Quis nunquam candente dies apparuit ortu,  
Sive supra terras Phœbus, seu curreret infra,*

are understood by all interpreters to denote the Italian Cimmerians, who dwelt near Baite and the lake Avernus ; and therefore Homer may be imagined not entirely to

The sun ne'er views th' uncomfortable seats,  
 When radiant he advances, or retreats :  
 Unhappy race ! whom endless night invades,  
 Clouds the dull air, and wraps them round in shades. 20

The ship we moor on these obscure abodes ;  
 Dis-bark the sheep, an offering to the gods ;  
 And hell-ward bending, o'er the beach descry  
 The doleful passage to th' infernal sky.  
 The victims, vow'd to each Tartarian pow'r, 25  
 Eurylochus and Perimedes bore.

Here open'd hell, all hell I here implor'd,  
 And from the scabbard drew the shining sword ;  
 And trenching the black earth on ev'ry side,  
 A cavern form'd, a cubit long and wide. 30  
 New wine, with honey-temper'd milk, we bring,  
 Then living waters from the crystal spring ;

follow a fabulous geography. It is evident from Herodotus that these Cimmerians were antiently a powerful nation ; for passing into Asia (says that author in his Clio) they possessed themselves of Sardis, in the time of Ardyes, the son of Gyges. If so, it is possible they might make several settlements in different parts of the world, and call those settlements by their original name, Cimmerians, and consequently there might be Italian, as well as Scythian Cimmerians.

It must be allowed, that this horrid region is well chosen for the descent into hell : it is described as a land of obscurity and horrors, and happily imagined to introduce a relation concerning the realms of death and darkness.

v 31. *New wine, with honey-temper'd milk.*] The word in the original is, μελικρατον, which (as Eustathius observes) the ancients constantly understood to imply a

O'er these was strow'd the consecrated flour,  
And on the surface shone the holy store.

Now the wan shades we hail, th' infernal gods, 35  
To speed our course, and waft us o'er the floods :

So shall a barren heifer from the stall

Beneath the knife upon your altars fall ;

So in our palace, at our safe return

Rich with unnumber'd gifts the pyle shall burn ; 40

mixture of honey and milk ; but all writers who succeeded Homer as constantly used it to signify a composition of water mixed with honey. The Latin poets have borrowed their magical rites from Homer : thus Ovid. *Metam.* 7. 243.

*Haud procul egesta scrobibus tellure duabus  
Sacra facit : cultrosque in guttura velleris atrî  
Conjicit ; et patulas perfundit sanguine fossas,  
Tum super invergens liquidi carchesia Bacchi,  
Æneaque invergens tepidi carchesia lactis, etc.*

Thus also Statius :

—————*Tellure cavata*

*Inclinat Bacchi latices, et munera verni,  
Lactis, et Actæos imbres, etc.*

This libation is made to all the departed shades ; but to what purpose (objects Eustathius) should these rites be paid to the dead, when it is evident from the subsequent relation that they were ignorant of these ceremonies till they had tasted the libation ? He answers from the ancients, that they were merely honorary to the regents of the dead, Pluto and Proserpina ; and used to obtain their leave to have an interview with the shades in their dominions.

So shall a ram, the largest of the breed,  
Black as these regions, to Tiresias bleed.

Thus solemn rites and holy vows we paid  
To all the phantom nations of the dead,  
Then dy'd the sheep; a purple torrent flow'd, 45  
And all the cavern smok'd with streaming blood.  
When lo! appear'd along the dusky coasts,  
Thin, airy shoals of visionary ghosts;

v. 47. *When lo! appear'd along the dusky coasts,  
Thin, airy shoals of visionary ghosts.*]

We are informed by Eustathius, that the ancients rejected these six verses; for, say they, these are not the shades of persons newly slain, but who have long been in these infernal regions: how then can their wounds be supposed still to be visible, especially through their armour, when the soul was separated from the body? Neither is this the proper place for their appearance, for the poet immediately subjoins, that the ghost of Elpenor was the first that he encountered in these regions of darkness. But these objections will be easily answered by having recourse to the notions which the ancients entertained concerning the dead; we must remember that they imagined that the soul, though freed from the body, had still a vehicle, exactly resembling the body; as the figure in a mold retains the resemblance of the mold, when separated from it; the body is but as a case to this vehicle, and it is in this vehicle that the wounds are said to be visible; this was supposed to be less gross than the mortal body, and less subtle than the soul; so that whatever wounds the outward body received when living, were believed to affect this inward substance, and consequently might be visible after separation.

It is true that the poet calls the ghost of Elpenor the first ghost, but this means the first whom he knew: Elpenor was not yet buried, and therefore was not yet receiv-



Fair, pensive youths, and soft enamour'd maids,  
 And wither'd elders, pale and wrinkled shades ; 50

ed into the habitation of the dead, but wanders before the entrance of it. This is the reason why his shade is said to present itself the foremost ; it comes not up from the realm of death, but descends towards it from the upper world.

But these shades of the warriors are said still to wear their armour in which they were slain, for the poet adds that it was stained with blood : how is it possible for these ghosts, which are only a subtle substance, not a gross body, to wear the armour they wore in the other world ? How was it conveyed to them in these infernal regions ? All that occurs to me in answer to this objection is, that the poet describes them suitable to the characters they bore in life ; the warriors on earth are warriors in hell ; and that he adds these circumstances only to denote the manner of their death, which was in battle, or by the sword. No doubt but Homer represents a future state according to the notions which his age entertained of it, and this sufficiently justifies him as a poet, who is not obliged to write truths, but according to fame and common opinions.

But to prove these verses genuine, we have the authority of Virgil : he was too sensible of their beauty not to adorn his poems with them. Georg. 4. 470.

*At cantu commotæ Erebi de sedibus imis*

*Umbrae ibant tenues, simulacraque luce carentum,*

*Matres, atque viri, defunctaque corpora vita*

*Magnanimum heroum, pueri, inuptæque puellæ,*

*Impositique rogis juvenes, etc.*

It must be confessed that the Roman poet omits the circumstance of the armour in his translation, as being perhaps contrary to the opinions prevailing in his age ; but in the sixth book he describes his heroes with arms, hor-

Ghastly with wounds the forms of warriors slain  
 Stalk'd with majestic port, a martial train :  
 These, and a thousand more swarm'd o'er the ground,  
 And all the dire assembly shriek'd around,  
 Astonish'd at the sight, aghast I stood, 55  
 And a cold fear ran shivering through my blood ;  
 Strait I command the sacrifice to haste,  
 Strait the flea'd victims to the flames are cast,  
 And mutter'd vows, and mystic song apply'd  
 To grisly Pluto, and his gloomy bride. 60

Now swift I wav'd my falchion o'er the blood ;  
 Back started the pale throngs, and trembling stood.  
 Round the black trench the gore untasted flows,  
 'Till, awful from the shades Tiresias rose.  
 There, wand'ring thro' the gloom I first survey'd, 65  
 New to the realms of death, Elpenor's shade :  
 His cold remains all naked to the sky  
 On distant shores unwept, unburied lie.  
 Sad at the sight I stand, deep fix'd in woe,  
 And ere I spake the tears began to flow. 70

O say what angry pow'r Elpenor led  
 To glide in shades, and wander with the dead ?  
 How could thy soul, by realms and seas disjoin'd,  
 Out-fly the nimble sail, and leave the lagging wind ?

ses, and infernal chariots ; and in the story of Deiphobus we see his shade retain the wounds in hell, which he received at the time of his death in Troy.

—*Lacerum crudeliter ora  
 Deiphobum vidi, etc.*

v. 73. *How could thy soul, by realms and seas disjoin'd,  
 Out-fly the nimble sail ?*]

The ghost reply'd : To hell my doom I owe, 75  
 Dæmons accurst, dire ministers of woe !

Eustathius is of opinion, that Ulysses speaks pleasantly to Elpenor, for were his words to be literally translated they would be, 'Elpenor, thou art come hither on foot, sooner than I in a ship.' I suppose it is the worthless character of Elpenor that led that critic into this opinion; but I should rather take the sentence to be spoken seriously, not only because such railleries are an insult upon the unfortunate, and levities perhaps unworthy of epic poetry, but also from the general conduct of Ulysses, who at the sight of Elpenor bursts into tears, and compassionates the fate of his friend. Is there any thing in this that looks like raillery? If there be, we must confess that Ulysses makes a very quick transition from sorrow to pleasantry. The other is a more noble sense, and therefore I have followed it, and it excellently paints the surprize of Ulysses at the unexpected sight of Elpenor, and expresses his wonder that the soul, the moment it leaves the body, should reach the receptacle of departed shades.

But it may be asked, what connexion this story of Elpenor has to the subject of the poem, and what it contributes to the end of it? Bossu very well answers, that the poet may insert some incidents that make no part of the fable or action; especially if they be short, and break not the thread of it: this before us is only a small part of a large episode, which the poet was at liberty to insert or omit, as contributed most to the beauty of his poetry: besides, it contains an excellent moral, and shews us the ill effects of drunkenness and debauchery. The poet represents Elpenor as a person of a mean character, and punishes his crime with sudden death, and dishonour.

I will only add that Virgil treads in the footsteps of Homer; and Misenus, in the Æneid, is the Elpenor of the Odyssey: there is indeed some difference; Misenus suffers for his presumption, Elpenor for his debauchery.

My feet thro' wine unfaithful to their weight,  
Betray'd me tumbling from a tow'ry height,

v. 75. ———— *To hell my doom I owe,  
Demons accurst, dire ministers of woe.*]

The words in the original are, Ἄσέ με Δαίμονος αἴσα. The identity of sound in ἄσε and αἴσα may perhaps appear a little inharmonious, and shock the ear. It is a known observation that the nice ears in the court of Augustus could not pardon Virgil for a like similitude of cadence in this verse.

*At regina Pyra*———

But these are rather negligencies than errors; they are indeed to be avoided, but a great genius sometimes overlooks such niceties, and sacrifices sound to sense.

The words of Quintilian are very apposite to this purpose, lib. 8. cap. 3. *Ejusdem verbi aut sermonis iteratio, quanquam non magnopere summis auctoribus vitata, interim vitium videri potest; in quod sæpe incidit etiam Cicero, securus tam parvæ observationis.* He brings an instance of it from his oration for Cluentius, *Non solum igitur illud judicium, judicii simile, judices, not fuit.* It must be confessed, that the sense is not only darkened, but the ear shocked at the repetition of the same word in the same period.

This is a very pregnant instance, that the opinion of an evil Dæmon or genius prevailed in the days of Homer: but this excuse of Elpenor, in ascribing his calamity to a Dæmon, gives great offence to Maximus Tyrius, he being a Stoic philosopher. He says Elpenor is guilty of falsehood in this excuse to Ulysses: for *Demons, parcs,* etc. are nothing but the idle pretext of wicked men, who are industrious to transfer their own follies to the gods, according to those verses in the beginning of the *Odyssæy*.

Why charge mankind on heav'n their own offence,  
And call their woes the crime of providence?

Stagg'ring I reel'd, and as I reel'd I fell,  
Lux'd the neck joint——my soul descends to hell. 80

But lend me aid, I now conjure thee lend,  
By the soft tye and sacred name of friend !

By thy fond confort ! by thy father's cares !

By lov'd Telemachus his blooming years !

For well I know that soon the heavenly pow'rs 85

Will give the back to day, and Circe's shores :

There pious on my cold remains attend,

There call to mind thy poor departed friend,

The tribute of a tear is all I crave,

And the possession of a peaceful grave. 90

But if unheard, in vain compassion plead,

Revere the gods, the gods avenge the dead !

A tomb along the wat'ry margin raise,

The tomb with manly arms and trophies grace,

To shew posterity Elpenor was. 95

There high in air, memorial of my name

Fix the smooth oar, and bid me live to fame.

To whom with tears ; These rites, oh mournful shade,

Due to thy ghost, shall to thy ghost be paid.

Still as I spoke the phantom seem'd to moan, 100

Tear follow'd tear, and groan succeeded groan.

But as my waving sword the blood surrounds,

The shade withdrew, and mutter'd empty sounds.

There as the wond'rous visions I survey'd,

All pale ascends my royal mother's shade : 105

Blind ! who themselves their miseries create,

And perish by their folly, not their fate.

v. 105. *All pale ascends my royal mother's shade.*] The

A queen, to Troy she saw our legions pass;  
 Now a thin form is all Anticlea was!  
 Struck at the sight I melt with filial woe,  
 And down my cheek the pious sorrows flow,  
 Yet as I shook my falchion o'er the blood, 110  
 Regardless of her son the parent stood.

When lo! the mighty Theban I behold;  
 To guide his steps he bore a staff of gold;  
 Awful he trod! majestic was his look!  
 And from his holy lips these accents broke. 115

Why, mortal, wand'rest thou from chearful day,  
 To tread the downward, melancholy way?

behaviour of Ulysses with respect to his mother may appear not sufficiently tender and affectionate; he refrains all manner of address to her, a conduct which may be censured as inconsistent with filial piety; but Plutarch very fully answers this objection, 'It is (says that author) a remarkable instance of the prudence of Ulysses, who, descending into the regions of the dead, refused all conference even with his mother, 'till he had obtained an answer from Tiresias, concerning the business which induced him to undertake that infernal journey.' A wise man is not inquisitive about things impertinent; accordingly Ulysses first shews himself a wise man, and then a dutiful son. Besides, it is very judicious in Homer thus to describe Ulysses: the whole design of the *Odyssey* is the return of Ulysses to his country; this is the mark at which the hero should continually aim, and therefore it is necessary that all other incidents should be subordinate to this; and the poet had been blamable if he had shewed Ulysses entertaining himself with amusements, and postponing the considerations of the chief design of the *Odyssey*. Lucian speaks to the same purpose in his piece upon astrology.

What angry gods to these dark regions led  
Thee yet alive, companion of the dead ?  
But sheath thy ponyard, while my tongue relates 120  
Heav'n's steadfast purpose, and thy future fates.

v. 120. *But sheath thy ponyard.*——] The terror which the shades of the departed express at the sight of the sword of Ulysses has been frequently censured as absurd and ridiculous ; *Risum cui non moveat*, says Scaliger, *cum ensam ait et vulnera metuisse ?* What have the dead to fear from a sword, who are beyond the power of it, by being reduced to an incorporeal shadow ? But this description is consistent with the notions of the ancients concerning the dead. I have already remarked, that the shades retained a vehicle, which resembled the body, and was liable to pain as well as the corporeal substance ; if not, to what purpose are the Furies described with iron scourges, or the vulture tearing the liver of Tityus ?

Virgil ascribes the like fears to the shades in the *Æneis* ; for the Sibyl thus commands *Æneas*,

*Tuque invade viam, vaginaque eripe ferrum.*

And the shades of the Greeks are there said to fly at the sight of his arms.

*At Danaum proceres Agamemnonique phalanges  
Ut videre virum, fulgentiaque arma per umbras  
Ingenti trepidare metu.*

Tiresias is here described consistently with the character before given him by the poet. I mean with a pre-eminence above the other shades ; for (as Eustathius observes) he knows Ulysses before he tastes the ingredients ; a privilege not claimed by any other of the infernal inhabitants. Elpenor indeed did the same, but for another reason ; because he was not yet buried, nor entered the regions of the dead, and therefore his soul was yet intire.

While yet he spoke, the prophet I obey'd,  
 And in the scabbard plung'd the glitt'ring blade :  
 Eager he quaff'd the gore, and then exprest  
 Dark things to come, the counsels of his breast. 125

Weary of light, Ulysses here explores,  
 A prosp'rous voyage to his native shores ;  
 But know——by me unerring fates disclose  
 New trains of dangers, and new scenes of woes ;  
 I see ! I see, thy bark by Neptune tost, 130  
 For injur'd Cyclops, and his eyeball lost !  
 Yet to thy woes the gods decreë an end,  
 If heav'n thou please ; and how to please attend ;  
 Where on Trinacrian rocks the Ocean roars,  
 Graze num'rous herds along the verdant shores ; 135  
 Tho' hunger press, yet fly the dang'rous prey,  
 The herds are sacred to the god of day,  
 Who all surveys with his extensive eye  
 Above, below, on earth and in the sky !  
 Rob not the god, and so propitious gales 140  
 Attend thy voyage, and impell thy sails :  
 But if his herds ye seize, beneath the waves  
 I see thy friends o'erwhelm'd in liquid graves !  
 The direful wreck Ulysses scarce survives !  
 Ulysses at his country scarce arrives ! 145

v. 145. *Ulysses at his country scarce arrives !*] The poet conducts this interview with admirable judgment. The whole design of Ulysses is to engage the Phæacians in his favour, in order to his transportation to his own country : how does he bring this about ? By shewing that it was decreed by the gods that he should be conducted



Strangers thy guides ! nor there thy labours end,  
 New foes arife, domestic ills attend !  
 There foul adult'ers to thy bride refort,  
 And lordly gluttons riot in thy court.  
 But vengeance haftes amain ! Thefe eyes behold 150  
 The deathful fcene, princes on princes roll'd !  
 That done, a people far from fea explore,  
 Who ne'er knew falt, or heard the billows roar,

thither by ftrangers ; fo that the Phæacians immediately conclude, that they are the people deftined by heaven to conduct him home; to give this the greater weight, he puts the fpeech into the mouth of the prophet Tiresias, and exalts his character in an extraordinary manner, to ftrengthen the credit of the prediction: by this method likewise the poet interweaves his epifode into the texture and effence of the poem, he makes this journey into hell contribute to the reftoration of his hero and unites the subordinate parts very happily with the main action.

v. 152. *That done, a people far from fea explore,  
 Who ne'er knew falt.*—]

It is certain that Tiresias fpeaks very obfcurely, after the manner of the oracles ; but the ancients generally underftood this people to be the Epirots. Thus Pausanias in his Attics. *Οἱ μὲν δὲ ἀλάσσης Ἰλίῃ θάλασσαν, μὲν δὲ ἀλάσιν ἠπίσαντιο χρεῖσθαι, μαρτυρεῖ δὲ μοὶ καὶ Ὅμηρος ἔπος ἐν Ὀδυσσεῖα.*

— *Οἱ ἐκ ἴσαντι θάλασσαν.*

That is ; “ The Epirots, even fo lately as after the taking of Troy, were ignorant of the fea, and the ufe of falt, as Homer testifies in his *Odyssey* :

*Who ne'er knew falt, or heard the billows roar.*

So that they who were ignorant of the fea, where like-

Or saw gay vessel stem the wat'ry plain,

A painted wonder flying on the main !

155

wife ignorant of the use of salt, according to Homer : whence it may be conjectured, that the poet knew of no salt but what was made of sea water. The other token of their ignorance of the sea was, that they should not know an oar, but call it a corn-van. This verse was once sarcastically applied to Philip of Macedon by Amerdion a Grecian, who, flying from him, and being apprehended, was asked whither he fled ? he bravely answered, to find a people who knew not Philip.

Εἶσοκέ τ' ἄς ἀφίωμαι, οἳ ἐκ ἴσασι Φίλιππον.

I persuade myself this passage is rightly translated ;  
*Νέας Φοινικοπαρηγας*, and *τὰ τε πτερὰ νευσι πέλονται* ;

*A painted wonder flying on the main ;*

for the wings of the ship signify the sails, as Eustathius remarks, and not the oars, as we might be misled to conclude from the immediate connexion with *ἔρετρα*, or oars. The poet, I believe, intended to express the wonder of a person upon his first sight of a ship, who observing it to move swiftly along the seas, might mistake the sails for wings, according to that beautiful description of Mr. Dryden, upon a like occasion, in his Indian Emperor.

The objects I could first distinctly view,  
 Were tall freight trees which on the waters flew ;  
 Wings on their sides instead of leaves did grow,  
 Which gather'd all the breath the winds could blow ;  
 And at their roots grew floating palaces, *etc.*

Eustathius tells us the reason of this command given to Ulysses, to search out a people ignorant of the sea : it was in honour of Neptune, to make his name regarded by a

Bear on thy back an oar : with strange amaze  
 A shepherd meeting thee, the oar surveys,  
 And names a van : there fix it on the plain,  
 To calm the god that holds the wat'ry reign ;  
 A threefold off'ring to his altar bring, 160  
 A bull, a ram, a boar ; and hail the ocean-king.  
 But home return'd, to each ætherial pow'r  
 Slay the due victim in the genial hour :  
 So peaceful shalt thou end thy blissful days,  
 And steal thyself from life, by slow decays : 165  
 Unknown to pain, in age resign thy breath,  
 When late stern Neptune points the shaft with death :

nation which was entirely a stranger to that deity : and this injunction was laid by way of atonement for the violence offered to his son Polyphemus.

Many critics have imagined that this passage is corrupted ; but, as Eustathius observes, we have the authority of Sophocles to prove it genuine, who alluding to this passage, writes,

*"Ωμοις ἀθηδέεσσαν ἠεργάρον φέρον.*

v. 167. *When late stern Neptune points the shaft with death.*] The death of Ulysses is related variously, but the following account is chiefly credited : Ulysses had a son by Circe, named Telegonus, who being grown to years of maturity, sailed to Ithaca in search of his father ; where, seizing some sheep for the use of his attendants, the shepherds put themselves into a posture to rescue them ; Ulysses, being advertised of it, went, with his son Telemachus to repel Telegonus, who in defending himself wounded Ulysses, not knowing him to be his father. Thus Oppian, Hyginus, and Dictys relate the story. Many poets have brought this upon the stage, and Aristotle, criticizing upon one of these tragedies, gives us the title of

To the dark grave retiring as to rest,  
Thy people blessing, by thy people blest !

Unerring truths, oh man ! my lips relate ; 170  
This is thy life to come, and this is fate.

To whom unmov'd ; if this the gods prepare,  
What heav'n ordains the wife with courage bear.  
But say, why yonder on the lonely strands,  
Unmindful of her son, Anticlea stands ! 175

Why to the ground she bends her downcast eye ?  
Why is she silent, while her son is nigh ?  
The latent cause, oh sacred seer, reveal !

Nor this, replies the seer, will I conceal.  
Know ; to the spectres, that thy bev'rage taste, 180  
The scenes of life recur, and actions past ;

it, which was, *Ulysses wounded*. But if Ulysses thus died, how can Neptune be said to *point the shaft with death* ? We are informed, that the spear with which Telegonus gave the wound, was pointed with the bone of a sea turtle ; so that literally his death came from the sea, or ἐξ ἕλως : and Neptune being the God of the ocean, his death may, without violence, be ascribed to that deity. It is true, some critics read ἕξαλος as one word, and then it will signify, that Ulysses should escape the dangers of the sea, and die upon the continent far from it ; but the former sense is most consonant to the tenor of the poem, through which

Neptune is constantly represented as an enemy to Ulysses.

I will only add the reason why Ulysses is enjoined to offer a bull, a ram, and a boar to Neptune : the bull represents the roaring or the sea in storms ; the ram the milder appearance of it when in tranquillity : the boar was used by the ancients as an emblem of fecundity, to represent the fruitfulness of the ocean. This particular sacrifice of three animals was called τριπίον. Eustathius.

They, seal'd with truth, return the sure reply,  
The rest repell'd, a train oblivious fly.

The phantom prophet ceas'd, and sunk from sight  
To the black palace of eternal night. 185

Still in the dark abodes of death I stood,  
When near *Anticlea* mov'd, and drank the blood.

Strait all the mother in her soul awakes,  
And owning her Ulysses, thus she speaks.

Com'st thou, my son, alive, to realms beneath, 190  
The doleful realms of darkness and of death :

Com'st thou alive from pure, ætherial day ?

Dire is the reigon dismal is the way !

Here lakes profound, there floods oppose their waves,

There the wide sea with all his billows raves ! 195

v. 195. *There the wide sea with all his billows raves.*]

If this passage were literally translated, it would run thus :  
*My son, how didst thou arrive at this place of darkness,  
when so many rivers, and the ocean lie in the midway ?*  
This, says Eustathius, plainly shews that Homer uses a  
fabulous geography ; for whereas the places that are men-  
tioned in these voyages of Ulysses are really situated upon  
the Mediterranean, *Anticlea* here says that they lay in the  
middle of the ocean. But this is undoubtedly an error :  
the whole of the observation depends upon the word  
*μέσσω* ; but why must thus denote the *midway* so exact-  
ly ? Is it not sufficient to say, that *between* Ithaca and this  
infernal region, rivers and the ocean roul ? And that this  
is the real meaning is evident from this book : for Ulysses  
sails, in the space of one day, from the island of Circe to  
the place where he descends : how then could these places  
where Ulysses touches in his voyage lie in the middle of  
the ocean, unless we can suppose he passed half the ocean  
in one day ? The poet directly affirms, that he descends

Or (since to dust proud Troy submits her tow'rs)  
 Com'st thou a wand'rer from the Phrygian shores ?  
 Or say, since honour call'd thee to the field,  
 Hast thou thy Ithaca, thy bride, beheld ?

Source of my life, I cry'd, from earth I fly 200  
 To seek Tiresias in the nether sky,  
 To learn my doom : for tost from woe to woe,  
 In every land Ulysses finds a foe :  
 Nor have these eyes beheld my native shores,  
 Since in the dust proud Troy submits her tow'rs. 205

But, when thy soul from her sweet mansion fled,  
 Say, what distemper gave thee to the dead ?  
 Has life's fair lamp declin'd by slow decays,  
 Or swift expir'd it, in a sudden blaze ?  
 Say, if my sire, good old Laertes, lives ? 210  
 If yet Telemachus, my son, survives ?  
 Say, by his rule is my dominion aw'd,  
 Or crush'd by traitors with an iron rod ?  
 Say, if my spouse maintains her royal trust,  
 Though tempted chaste, and obstinately just ? 215

at the extremity of it ; but this extremity is no more than one day's voyage from the island of Circe, and consequently that island could not lie in the middle of the ocean : therefore this place is no evidence that Homer uses a fabulous geography.

Eustathius very justly observes, that Homer judiciously places the descent into hell at the extremity of the ocean : for it is natural to imagine that to be the only passage to it, by which the sun and the stars themselves appear to descend, and sink into the realms of darkness.

Or if no more her absent lord she wails,  
But the false woman o'er the wife prevails.

Thus I, and thus the parent shade returns.  
Thee, ever thee, thy faithful consort mourns :  
Whether the night descends, or day prevails, 220  
Thee she by night, and thee by day bewails,  
Thee in Telemachus thy realm obeys ;  
In sacred groves celestial rites he pays,  
And shares the banquet in superior state,  
Grac'd with such honours as become the great. 223

v. 218.—*Thus the parent shade returns* ] The questions which Ulysses asks, remarks Eustathius, could not fail of having a very good effect upon his Phæacian audience : by them he very artfully (and, as it seems, undesignedly) lets them into the knowledge of his dignity, and shews the importance of his person ; to induce them to a greater care to conduct him to his country. The process of the whole story is so artfully carried on, that Ulysses seems only to relate an accidental interview, while he tacitly recommends himself, and lets them know the person who asks their assistance is a king. It is observable, that Anticlea inverts the order in her answer, and replies last to the first question. Orators always reserve the strongest argument for the conclusion, to leave it fresh upon the memory of their auditors ; or rather, the poet uses this method to introduce the sorrow of Ulysses for the death of his mother more naturally : he steals away the mind of the reader from attending the main action, to enliven it with a scene of tenderness and affection in those regions of horror.

v. 224. *And shares the banquet in superior state, etc.* ] This passage is fully explained by Eustathius : he tells us, that it was an antient custom to invite kings and legislators to all public feasts ; this was to do them honour ;

Thy fire in solitude foment his care :

The court is joyless, for thou art not there !

No costly carpets raise his hoary head,

No rich embroid'ry shines to grace his bed :

Ev'n when keen winter freezes in the skies, 230

Rank'd with his slaves, on earth the monarch lies :

Deep are his sighs, his visage pale, his dress

The garb of woe, and habit of distress.

And when the autumn takes his annual round,

The leafy honour's scatt'ring on the ground ; 235

Regardless of his years, abroad he lies,

His bed the leaves, his canopy the skies.

Thus cares on care his painful days consume,

And bow his age with sorrow to the tomb !

For thee, my son, I wept my life away ; 240

For thee through hell's eternal dungeons stray :

and the chief feat was always reserved for the chief magistrate. Without this observation, the lines are unintelligible. It is evident, that the words are not spoken of sacrifices or feasts made to the gods, but social entertainments, for they are general, πάντες καλέσσι. "all the people of the realm invite Telemachus to their feasts : " And this seems to have been a right due to the chief magistrate, for ἀλεγύνειν implies it ; which word Eustathius explains by ἐν λόγῳ ποιῆσθαι ; "such an honour as ought not to be neglected," or

*Grac'd with such honours as become the great.*

It gives a very happy image of those ages of the world, when we observe such an intercourse between the king and the subject : the idea of power carries no terror in it, but the ruler himself makes a part of the public joy.



Nor came my fate by ling'ring pains and slow,  
 Nor bent the silver shafted queen her bow ;  
 No dire disease bereav'd me of my breath :  
 Thou, thou my son, wert my disease and death ; 245  
 Unkindly with my love my son conspir'd,  
 For thee I liv'd, for absent thee expir'd,

Thrice in my arms I strove her shade to bind,  
 Thrice through my arms she slipt like empty wind  
 Or dreams, the vain illusions of the mind. 450

v. 248. *Thrice in my arms I strove her shade to bind,  
 Thrice through my arms—*]

This passage plainly shews that the vehicles of the departed were believed by the ancients to be of an aerial substance, and retain nothing of corporeal grossness.

Virgil has borrowed these verses.

*Ter conatus ibi collo dari brachia circum :  
 Ter frustra comprehensa manus effugit imago,  
 Par levibus ventis, volucrique simillima somno.*

Scaliger gives the preference to the Roman poet, because he uses three verses, at a time when the word *ter* occurs in the description, whereas Homer concludes in little more than two lines. But this is not criticising, but trifling : and ascribing to an author what the author himself had no thought of. This puts me in mind of a story in Lucian, where a person of a strong imagination, thinking there was a mystery in  $\mu\tilde{\eta}\nu$ , the first word in the Iliad, is introduced enquiring of Homer in the regions of the dead, why he placed it in the beginning of his poem ? he answers, because it first came into his head. I doubt not but the number of the lines in this place in both poets was equally accidental : Virgil adds nothing to the thought of Homer, though he uses more words.

Wild with despair, I shed a copious tide  
Of flowing tears, and thus with sighs reply'd.

Fly'st thou, lov'd shade, while I thus fondly mourn ?  
Turn to my arms, to my embraces turn !

Is it, ye Pow'rs that smile at human harms ! 255

Too great a bliss to weep within her arms ?

Or has hell's queen an empty image sent,  
That wretched I might ev'n my joys lament ?

O son of woe, the penfive shade rejoin'd,  
Oh most inur'd to grief of all mankind ! 260

'Tis not the queen of hell who thee deceives :

All, all are such, when life the body leaves ;

No more the substance of the man remains,

Nor bounds the blood along the purple veins ;

These the funereal flames in atoms bear, 265

To wander with the wind in empty air,

While the impassive soul reluctant flies

Like a vain dream to these infernal skies.

But from the dark dominion speed thy way,

And climb the steep ascent to upper day ; 270

To thy chaste bride the wond'rous story tell,

The woes, the horrors, and the laws of hell.

v. 256. ——— *A bliss to weep within her arms.*] This is almost a literal translation; the words in the Greek are, *τεταρπάμεσθα γόοιο*, or *that we may delight ourselves with sorrow*, which Eustathius explains by saying, *there is a pleasure in weeping* : I should rather understand the words to signify, that in the instant while he is rejoicing at the sight of his mother, he is compelled to turn his joy into tears, to find the whole scene a delusion.

Thus while she spoke, in swarms hell's empress brings  
 Daughters and wives of heroes and of kings ;  
 Thick, and more thick they gather round the blood, 275  
 Ghost throng'd on ghost (a dire assembly) stood !  
 Dauntless my sword I seize : the airy crew,  
 Swift as it flash'd along the gloom, withdrew ;  
 Then shade to shade in mutual forms succeeds,  
 Her race recounts, and their illustrious deeds. 280

Tyro began : whom great Salmoneus bred ;  
 The royal partner of fam'd Cretheus' bed.

v. 279. *Then shade to shade——succeeds.*] Nothing can better shew the invention of Homer, than his capacity of furnishing out a scene of such great variety in this infernal region. He calls up the heroes of former ages from a state of inexistence to adorn and diversify his poetry. If it be asked, what relation this journey into hell has to the main action of the *Odyssey*? the answer is, It has an episodic affinity with it, and shews the sufferings of Ulysses more than any of his voyages upon the ocean, as it is more horrible and full of terrors. What a treasury of antient history and fables has he opened by this descent ! he lets us into a variety of different characters of the most famous personages recorded in antient story ; and at the same time, lays before us a supplement to the *Iliad*. If Virgil paid a happy piece of flattery to the Romans, by introducing the greatest persons of the best families in Rome, in his descent in the *Æneid* ; Homer no less happily interests the Grecians in his story, by honouring the ancestors of the noblest families who still flourished in Greece, in the *Odyssey* ; a circumstance that could not fail of being very acceptable to a Grecian or Roman reader, but perhaps less entertaining to us, who have no particular interest in these stories.

v. 281. *Tyro——whom great Salmoneus bred.*] Virgil gives a very different character of Salmoneus from

For fair Enipeus; as from fruitful urns

He pours his wat'ry store, the virgin burns;

this of Homer: he describes him as an impious person, who presumed to imitate the thunder of Jupiter, whereas Homer styles him blameless, or ἀμόμων; an argument, says Eustathius, that the preceding story is a fable, invented since the days of Homer. This may perhaps be true, and we may naturally conclude it to be true, from his silence of it, but not from the epithet ἀμόμων; for, in the first book of the *Odyssey*, Jupiter gives the same appellation to Ægypthus, even while he condemns him of murder and adultery. Eustathius adds, that Salmoneus was a great proficient in mechanics, and inventor of a vessel called βροντήιον, which imitated thunder by rowling stones in it, which gave occasion to the fictions of the poets.

v. 283. *For fair Enipeus, as from fruitful urns*

*He pours his wat'ry store, the virgin burns.]*

There are no fables in the poets that seem more bold than these concerning the commerce between women, and river gods; but Eustathius gives a probable solution: I will translate him literally. It was customary for young virgins to resort frequently to rivers to bathe in them; and the ancients have very well explained these fables about the intercourse between them and the water gods: *Receive my virginity, O Scamander!* says a lady; but it is very apparent who this Scamander was: her lover Cimon lay concealed in the reeds. This was a good excuse for female frailty, in ages of credulity: for such imaginary intercourse between the fair sex and deities was not only believed, but esteemed honourable. No doubt the ladies were frequently deceived; their lovers personated the deities, and they took a Cimon to their arms in the disguise of a Scamander.

It is uncertain where this Enipeus flows: Strabo, says Eustathius, imagines it to be a river of Peloponnesus, that disembogues its waters into the Alpheus; for the Thessa-

Smooth flows the gentle stream with wanton pride, 285

And in soft mazes rows a silver tide :

As on his banks the maid enamour'd roves,

The monarch of the deep beholds and loves ;

In her Enipeus' form and borrow'd charms,

The am'rous god descends into her arms : 290

Around a spacious arch of waves he throws,

And high in air the liquid mountain rose ;

Thus in surrounding floods conceal'd he proves'

The pleasing transport, and compleats his loves.

Then softly sighing, he the fair address, 295

And as he spoke, her tender hand he prest.

Hail, happy nymph ! no vulgar births are ow'd

To the prolific raptures of a god :

Lo ! when nine times the moon renews her horn,

Two brother heroes shall from thee be born ; 300

Thy early care the future worthies claim,

To point them to the arduous paths of fame ;

But in thy breast th' important truth conceal,

Nor dare the secret of a god reveal ;

For know, thou Neptune view'st ! and at my nod 305

Earth trembles, and the waves confess their god.

lian river is Enifeus, and not Enipeus: this rises from mount Othrys, and receives into it the Epidanus. The former seems to be the river intended by Homer, for it takes its source from a village called Salmone; and what strengthens this conjecture is the neighbourhood of the ocean (or Neptune in this fable) to that river. Lucian has made this story of Enipeus the subject of one of his dialogues.

He added not, but mounting spurn'd the plain,  
Then plung'd into the chambers of the main.

Now in the time's full process forth she brings  
Jove's dread vicegerents, in two future kings ; 310  
O'er proud Iolcos Pelias stretch'd his reign,  
And godlike Neleus rul'd the Pylian plain :  
Then fruitful, to her Cretheus' royal bed  
She gallant Pheres and fam'd Æson bred :  
From the same fountain Amytheon rose, 315  
Pleas'd with the din of war, and noble shout of foes.

There mov'd Antiope with haughty charms,  
Who blest th' almighty thund'rer in her arms ;  
Hence sprung Amphion, hence brave Zethus came,  
Founders of Thebes, and men of mighty name ; 320

v. 319. *Hence sprung Amphion*—] The fable of Thebes built by the power of music is not mentioned by Homer, and therefore may be supposed to be of later invention. Homer relates many circumstances in these short histories differently from his successors ; Epicaste is called Jocasta, and the tragedians have entirely varied the story of Oedipus : they tell us he tore out his eyes, that he was driven from Thebes, and being conducted by his daughter Antigone, arrived at Athens, where entering the temple of the Furies, he died in the midst of a furious storm, and was carried by it into hell : whereas Homer directly affirms, that he continued to reign in Thebes after all his calamities.

It is not easy to give a reason why the mother, and not the father, is said to send the Furies to torment Oedipus, especially because he was the murderer of his father Laius : Eustathius answers, that it was by accident that he slew Laius ; but upon the discovery of his wickedness in marrying his mother Jocasta, he used her with more barbarity

Though bold in open field, they yet surround  
 The town with walls, and mound inject on mound;  
 Here ramparts stood, there tow'rs rose high in air,  
 And here through seven wide portals rush'd the war.

There with soft step the fair Alcmena trod, 325  
 Who bore Alcides to the thund'ring god;  
 And Megara, who charm'd the son of Jove,  
 And soften'd his stern soul to tender love.

Sullen and sour with discontented mein  
 Jocasta frown'd, th' incestuous Theban queen: 330  
 With her own son she join'd in nuptial bands,  
 Though father's blood embu'd his murd'rous hands:  
 The gods and men the dire offence detest,  
 The gods with all their furies rend his breast:

and rigour than was necessary, and therefore she pursues him with her vengeance. Jocasta and Dido both die after the same manner by their own hands: I agree with Scaliger, that Virgil has described hanging more happily than Homer.

*Informis Lethi nodum trabe nectit ab alta.*

Ἰνφάρμεινη βρόχον αἰπὸν ἀφ' ὑψηλοῦ μελᾶθερα.

There is nothing like the *informis Lethi nodus* in Homer: and, as that critic observes, *tam atrox res aliquo verborum ambitu studisfius comprehendenda fuit.* The story of Oedipus is this: Laius being informed by the oracle, that he should be slain by his son, caused Oedipus immediately to be expos'd by his shepherds to wild beasts; but the shepherds preserv'd him, and gave him education: when he came to years of maturity he went towards Thebes in search of his father, but meeting Laius by the way, and a quarrel arising, he slew him ignorantly, and married Jocasta his mother. This is the subject of two tragedies in Sophocles.

In lofty Thebes he wore th' imperial crown, 335  
 A pompous wretch ! accurst upon a throne.  
 The wife self-murder'd from a beam depends,  
 And her foul soul to blackest hell descends ;  
 Thence to her son the choicest plagues she brings,  
 And the fiends haunt him with a thousand stings. 340

And now the beauteous Chloris I descry,  
 A lovely shade, Amphion's youngest joy !  
 With gifts unnumber'd Neleus fought her arms,  
 Nor paid too dearly for unequal'd charms ;  
 Great in Orchomenos, in Pylos great, 345  
 He sway'd the sceptre with imperial state.  
 Three gallant sons the joyful monarch told,  
 Sage Nestor, Periclimenus the bold.

v. 341.—*The beauteous Chloris I descry.*] A critic ought not only to endeavour to point out the beauties in the sense, but also in the versification of a poet : Dionysius Halicarnassensis cites these two verses as peculiarly flowing and harmonious.

Καὶ Χλωῆριν εἶδον περικαλλέα, τήν ποτε Νελεὺς  
 Γῆρυ ἐὼν διὰ Κάλλος, ἐπέε πόρε μύρια ἔνδα.

There is not one elision, nor one rough vowel or consonant, but they flow along with the utmost smoothness, and the beauty of the muse equals that of Chloris.

v. 345. *Great in Orchomenos*—] This is a very considerable city lying between Bœotia and Phocis, upon the river Cephissus : Homer calls it the Minyan Orchomenos, because the Minyans an antient people inhabited it ; it was the colony of these Minyans that sailed to Iolcos, and gave name to the Argonauts. Eustathius.

v. 348.—*Periclimenus the bold.*] The reason why Homer gives this epithet to Periclimenus may be learned



And Chromius last; but of the softer race,  
 One nymph alone, a miracle of grace. 350  
 Kings on their thrones for lovely Pero burn,  
 The fire denies, and kings rejected mourn.  
 To him alone the beauteous prize he yields,  
 Whose arm should ravish from Phylacian fields  
 The herds of Iphyclus, detain'd in wrong; 355  
 Wild, furious herds, unconquerably strong!  
 This dares a feer, but nought the feer prevails,  
 In beauty's cause illustriously he fails.

from Hesiod: Neptune gave him the power to change himself into all shapes, but he was slain by Hercules: Periclimenus assaulted that hero in the shape of a bee or fly, who discovering him in that disguise by the means of Pallas, slew him with his club. This is the person<sup>of</sup> whom Ovid speaks, but adds, that he was slain in the shape of an eagle by Hercules.

*Mira Periclimeni mors est, cui posse figuras  
 Sumere quas vellet, rursusque reponere sumptas,  
 Neptunus dederat, etc.*

Euphorion speaks of him in the shape of a bee or fly.

——— "Αλλοτε δ' αὐτε μελισσῶν ἀγλαὰ φυλαε

"Αλλοτε δεινὸς Ὀφίς———

v. 357. *This dares a feer, etc.*] This story is related with great obscurity, but we learn from the 15th book, that the name of this prophet was Melampus. Iphyclus was the son of Deioneus, and uncle to Tyro; he had seized upon the goods of Tyro, the mother of Neleus, among which were many beautiful oxen: these Neleus demands, but is unjustly denied by Iphyclus: Neleus had a daughter named Pero, a great beauty, who was courted

Twelve moons the foe the captive youth detains  
 In painful dungeons, and coercive chains ; 360  
 The foe at last from durance where he lay,  
 His art revering gave him back to day ;  
 Won by prophetic knowledge, to fulfill  
 The stedfast purpose of th' almighty will.

by all the neighbouring princes, but the father refuses her unless to the man who recovers those oxen from Iphyclus : Bias was in love with Pero, and persuades his brother Melampus, a prophet, to undertake the recovery ; he attempts it, but being vanquished, is thrown into prison ; but at last set at liberty, for telling Iphyclus, who was childless, how to procure issue. Iphyclus upon this gave him the oxen for a reward.

Nothing can be more ridiculous than the explanation of this story in Eustathius, which I will lay before the reader for his entertainment. Melampus, after he was made a prisoner, was trusted to the care of a man and a woman ; the man used him with mercy, and the woman with cruelty : one day he heard a low noise, and a family of worms in conference. (He understood the language of all the animal creation, beasts and reptiles.) These worms were discoursing how they had eaten through a great beam that lay over the head of Melampus : he immediately provides for his own safety, feigns a sickness, and begs to be carried into the fresh air : the woman and the man immediately comply with his request : at which instant the beam falling, kills the woman : an account of this is forthwith carried to Iphyclus, who, sending for Melampus, asks who he is ? He tells him, a prophet, and that he came for the oxen of Neleus : Iphyclus commands him to declare how he may have an heir. Melampus kills an ox, and calls all the birds of the air to feast on it ; they all appear except the vulture ; he proposes the case to them, but they give no satisfactory answer ; at last the vulture

With graceful port advancing now I spy'd 365  
 Leda the fair, the godlike Tyndar's bride :  
 Hence Pollux sprung who wields, with furious sway,  
 The deathful gauntlet, matchless in the fray :  
 And Castor glorious on th' embattled plain  
 Curbs the proud steed, reluctant to the rein : 370  
 By turns they visit this ethereal sky,  
 And live alternate, and alternate die :  
 In hell beneath, on earth, in heav'n above  
 Reign the twin-gods, the fav'rite sons of Jove.

appears, and gives Melampus a full information : upon this Iphyclus obtains a child, and Melampus the oxen of Neleus.

v. 364. *The steadfast purpose of th' almighty will.*] These words, *δῖός δ' ἐτελείετο βεβλή*, seem to come in without any connexion with the story, and consequently unnecessarily ; but Homer speaks of it concisely, as an adventure well known in his time, and therefore not wanting a farther explication ; but Apollodorus relates the whole at large, lib. 1. The reason why these words are inserted is, to inform us that there were antient prophecies concerning Iphyclus, that it was decreed by Jupiter he should have no children till he had recourse to a prophet, who explaining these prophecies to him should shew him how to obtain that blessing : in this sense the will of Jupiter may be said to be fulfilled.

v. 372. *And live alternate, and alternate die.*] Castor and Pollux are called *Διόσκουροι*, or *the sons of Jupiter* ; but what could give occasion to this fiction, of their living and dying alternately ? Eustathius informs us, that it is a physical allegory : they represent the two hemispheres of the world ; the one of which is continually enlightened by the sun, and consequently the other is then in darkness : and these being successively illuminated ac-

There Ephimedia trod the gloomy plain, 375.  
 Who charm'd the monarch of the boundless main;  
 Hence Ephialtes, hence stern Otus sprung,  
 More fierce than giants, more than giants strong;  
 The earth o'erburden'd groan'd beneath their weight,  
 None but Orion e'er surpass'd their height: 380  
 The wond'rous youths had scarce nine winters told,  
 When high in air, tremendous to behold,  
 Nine ells aloft they rear'd their tow'ring head,  
 And full nine cubits broad their shoulders spread.

cording to the order of day and night, one of these sons of Jupiter may be said to revive when one part of the world rises into day, and the other to die, when it descends into darkness. What makes this allegory the more probable is, that Jupiter denotes, in many allegories of Homer, the air, or the upper regions of it.

v. 383. *Nine ells aloft they rear'd their head.*] This is undoubtedly a very bold fiction, and has been censured by some critics as monstrous, and praised by others as sublime. It may seem utterly incredible, that any human creatures could be nine ells, that is, eleven yards and a quarter in height, at the age of nine years. But it may vindicate Homer, as a poet, to say, that he only made use of a fable that had been transmitted down from the earliest times of the world; for so early the war between the gods and giants was supposed to be. There might a rational account be given of these apparent incredibilities; if I might be allowed to say what many authors of great name have conjectured, that these stories are only traditional, and all founded upon the ejection of the fallen angels from heaven, and the wars they had with the good angels to regain their stations. If this might be allowed, we shall then have real giants, who endeavoured to take heaven by assault; then nothing can be invented by a poet

Proud of their strength and more than mortal size, 385  
The gods they challenge, and affect the skies;

so boldly, as to exceed what may justly be believed of these beings: then the stories of heaping mountain upon mountain will come within the bounds of credibility. But without having recourse to this solution, Longinus brings this passage as an instance of true sublimity, chap. 6. He is proving that the sublime is sometimes found without the pathetic, for some passions are mean, as fear, sadness, sorrow, and consequently incapable of sublimity; and on the other hand, there are many things great and sublime, in which there is no passion; of this kind is what Homer says concerning Otus and Ephialtes, with so much boldness.

*The gods they challenge, and affect the skies.*

And what he adds concerning the success of these giants is still bolder.

*Had they to manhood grown, the bright abodes  
Of heav'n had shook, and gods been heap'd on gods.*

Virgil was of the opinion of Longinus, for he has imitated Homer.

*Hic et Alcidas geminos immania vidi  
Corpora, qui manibus magnum rescindere cæcum  
Aggressi, superisque Jovem detrudere regnis.*

Macrobius, lib. 5. Saturn. cap. 13. judges these verses to be inferior to Homer's in majesty; in Homer we have the height and breadth of those giants, and he happily paints the very size of their limbs in the run of his poetry; two words, ἐννέωροι, and ἐννεαπύγγοι, almost make one verse, designedly chosen to express their bulk in the turn of words; but Virgil says only *immania corpora*, and makes

Heav'd on Olympus tott'ring Ossa stood ;

On Ossa, Pelion nods with all his wood :

no addition concerning the giants, omitting entirely the circumstance of their size : Homer relates the piling hill upon hill, Virgil barely adds, that they endeavoured to storm the heavens.

Scaliger is firm and faithful to Virgil, and vindicates his favourite in the true spirit of criticism. I persuade myself he glances at Macrobius, for he cavils at those instances which he produces as beauties in Homer ; I give his answer in his own words. *Admirantur Græculi pueriles mensuras ; nimis sæpe cogor exclamare, aliud esse Græculum circulatorum, aliud regie orationis auctorem ; indignam censuit sua majestate Virgilius hanc minutam superstitionem, etc.*

Eustathius remarks, that the ancients greatly admired the exact proportion of these giants, for the body is of a due symmetry, when the thickness is three degrees less than the height of it. According to this account these giants grew one cubit every year in bulk, and three in height. Homer says, that they fell by the shafts of Apollo, that is, they died suddenly ; but other writers relate, that as they were hunting, Diana sent a stag between them, at which both at once aiming their weapons, and she withdrawing the stag, they fell by their own darts. Eustathius.

v. 387. — [On Olympus tott'ring Ossa stood, etc.] Strabo takes notice of the judgment of Homer, in placing the mountains in this order ; they all stand in Macedonia ; Olympus is the largest, and therefore he makes it the basis upon which Ossa stands, that being the next to Olympus in magnitude, and Pelion being the least is placed above Ossa, and thus they rise pyramidically. Virgil follows a different regulation,

*Ter sunt conati imponere Pelion Ossa,*

*Scilicet atque Ossa frondosum imponere Olympum.*

Such were the youths ! had they to manhood grown,  
Almighty Jove had trembled on his throne. 390

But ere the harvest of the beard began  
To bristle on the chin, and promise man,  
His shafts Apollo aim'd ; at once they sound,  
And stretch the giant-monsters o'er the ground.

There mournful Phædra with sad Procris moves, 395  
Both beauteous shades, both hapless in their loves ;  
And near them walk'd, with solemn pace and slow,  
Sad Ariadne, partner of their woe ;  
The royal Minos Ariadne bred,  
She Theseus lov'd ; from Crete with Theseus fled ; 400  
Swift to the Dian isle the hero flies,  
And towards his Athens bears the lovely prize ;

Here the largest mountain is placed uppermost, not so naturally as in the order of Homer. There is a peculiar beauty in the former of these verses, in which Virgil makes the two vowels in *conati imponere* meet without an elision, to express the labour and straining of the giants in heaving mountain upon mountain. I appeal to the ear of every reader, if he can pronounce these two words without a pause and stop ; the difficulty in the flow of the verse excellently represents the labour of the giants straining to shove Pelion upon Ossa. Dacier remarks that Virgil follows the situation of the mountains without regarding the magnitude ; thus Pelion lies first on the north of Macedonia. Ossa is the second, and the third Olympus ; but she prefers Homer's method as most rational.

v. 402. *And towards his Athens bears the lovely prize.*] Homer justifies Theseus from any crime with relation to Ariadne ; he is guilty of no infidelity as succeeding poets affirm ; she died suddenly in Dia, or Naxos (an island lying between Thera and Crete.) Diana slew her

There Bacchus with fierce rage Diana fires,  
The goddess aims her shaft, the nymph expires.

There Clymene and Mæra I behold 405  
There Eriphyle weeps, who loofely fold  
Her lord, her honour for the lust of gold.  
But should I all recount, the night would fail,  
Unequal to the melancholy tale:  
And all-composing rest my nature craves, 410  
Here in the court, or yonder on the waves ;

at the instigation of Bacchus, who accused her to that goddess, for prophaning her temple by too free an intercourse with Theseus ; this Homer calls *μαρτυρίη Διονύσου*. Clymene was a daughter of Mynias, Mæra of Prætus and Antæa, who having made a vow to Diana of perpetual virginity, broke it ; and therefore fell by that goddess. Phædra was wife to Theseus, and fell in love with her son Hippolytus. Eriphyle was the daughter of Talauus and Lysimache, wife of the prophet Amphiaraus ; who being bribed with a collar of gold by Polynices, obliged her husband to go to the war of Thebes, though she knew he was decreed to fall before that city : she was slain by her son Alcæon. Eustathius.

Ulysses when he concludes, says it is time to repose

*Here in the court, or yonder on the waves.*

To understand this, the reader must remember, that in the beginning of the eighth book all things were prepared for his immediate voyage, or, as it is there expressed,

————— *Ev'n now the gales*

*Call thee aboard, and stretch the swelling sails.*

So that he desires to repose in the ship, that he may begin his voyage early in the morning.



In you I trust, and in the heav'nly pow'rs,  
To land Ulysses on his native shores.

He ceas'd: but left so charming on their ear  
His voice, that list'ning still they seem'd to hear. 415

'Till rising up, Arete silence broke,  
Stretch'd out her snowy hand, and thus she spoke:

What wond'rous man heav'n sends us in our guest!  
Through all his woes the hero shines confest:

His comely port, his ample frame express 420  
A manly air, majestic in distress.

v. 414. *He ceas'd: but left so charming on their ear  
His voice———]*

I cannot tell whether this pause, or break in the narration of Ulysses, has a good effect or not; whether it gives a relief to the reader, or is an unexpected disappointment of the pursuit of the story: but certainly what is inserted during this short interruption, is particularly well chosen; it unites the episode with the main action, and shews how it contributes to the end of the *Odyssey*, in influencing the Phæacians not only to restore Ulysses, but restore him with wealth and honour, which is the aim of the whole poem.

v. 416. — *Arete silence broke.*] Eustathius observes, that the two motives which the queen uses to move the Phæacians to liberality, is the relation Ulysses has to her, as her peculiar guest (for Nausicaa first recommended him to the queen's protection) and their own wealth: (for so he renders ἕκαστος δ' ἐμμοχὸν τιμῆς. And Dacier follows his interpretation:;) I have adventured to translate it differently, in this sense: "It is true, he is my peculiar guest, but you all share in the honour he does us, and therefore it is equitable to join in his assistance;" then she closes her speech with reminding them of their abilities; which in the other sense would be tautology.

He, as my guest, is my peculiar care,  
 You share the pleasure,——then in bounty share:  
 To worth in misery a reverence pay,  
 And with a gen'rous hand reward his stay; 425  
 For since kind heav'n with wealth our realm has blest;  
 Give it to heav'n, by aiding the distress.

Then sage Echeneus, whose grave, rev'rend brow  
 The hand of time had silver'd o'er with snow,  
 Mature in wisdom rose: Your words, he cries, 430  
 Demand obedience, for your words are wise.  
 But let our king direct the glorious way  
 To gen'rous acts; our part is to obey.

While life informs these limbs, the king reply'd,  
 Well to deserve, be all my cares employ'd: 435  
 But here this night the royal guest detain,  
 'Till the sun flames along th' ethereal plain:

v. 425.—*With a gen'rous hand reward his stay.*] This, I am persuaded, is the true meaning of the passage; Ulysses had shewed a desire immediately to go aboard; and the queen draws an argument from this to induce the Phæacians to a greater contribution, and Ulysses to a longer stay; she persuades them to take time to prepare their presents, which must occasion the stay of Ulysses till they are prepared. They might otherways, observes Dacier, have pretended to comply with the impatience of Ulysses, and immediately dismissed him with a small gratuity, under the pretext of not having time to prepare a greater. It must be confessed, to the reproach of human nature, that this is but too just a picture of it: self-interest makes the great very ready to gratify their petitioners with a dismissal, or to comply with them to their disadvantage.

Be it my task to send, with ample stores,  
 The stranger from our hospitable shores :  
 Tread you my steps ! 'tis mine to lead the race, 440  
 The first in glory, as the first in place.

To whom the prince : This night with joy I stay,  
 O monarch great in virtue as in sway !  
 If thou the circling year my stay controul,  
 To raise a bounty noble as thy soul ; 445  
 The circling year I wait, with ampler stores  
 And sifter pomp to hail my native shores :

v. 444. *If thou the circling year, etc.*——] This speech of Ulysses has been condemned by the critics, as avaricious ; and therefore Eustathius judges it to be spoken artfully and complimentally ; Didymus, with a well-bred urbanity, or *καρίεντος* : I see nothing mean in it ; what Ulysses speaks proceeds from the gratitude of his soul ; the heart of a brave man is apt to overflow while it acknowledges an obligation. Spondanus imagines that Ulysses may possibly speak jocosely, and asks if it is probable that he could be induced to stay from his country out of a mean consideration of a few presents, who had already preferred it to immortality ? But in truth, Ulysses never behaves with levity ; and it would give us an ill idea of that hero, should he return the united kindness of the peers of Phæacia with scorn and derision : besides, Ulysses values these presents no otherwise than as they contribute to his re-establishment in his country ; for he directly says,

*So by my realms due homage should be paid,  
 A wealthy prince is loyally obey'd.*

This is an evidence, that the words of Ulysses flow not from so base a fountain as avarice, but that all his thoughts and actions center upon his country.

Then by my realms due homage would be paid ;  
For wealthy kings are loyally obey'd !

O king ! for such thou art, and sure thy blood 450  
Through veins, he cry'd, of royal fathers flow'd ;  
Unlike those vagrants who on fallhood live,  
Skill'd in smooth tales, and artful to deceive,  
Thy better soul abhors the liar's part,  
Wife is thy voice, and noble is thy heart. 455

v. 454. *Thy better soul abhors the liar's part,  
Wife is thy voice——* ]

This is an instance of the judgment of Homer in sustaining his characters: the Phæacians were at first described as a credulous people, and he gives us here an instance of their credulity, for they swallow all these fables as so many realities. The verse in the original is remarkable.

Σοὶ δ' ἐπὶ μὲν μορφῇ ἐπέων ἐπὶ δὲ φρενὲς ἐσθλαί.

Which Eustathius thinks were used by Alcinous, to tell Ulysses that his fables were so well laid together as to have the appearance of truth; Dacier follows him, and, as usual, delivers his opinion as her own sentiment. But this cannot be Homer's intention for it supposes Alcinous to look upon these relations as fables, contrary to the universal character of their ignorant credulity; I therefore am persuaded, that *μορφῇ ἐπέων*, signifies the pleasantness or beauty of his relation, and *φρενὲς ἐσθλαί*, the integrity of his heart, in opposition to the character of a liar, or perhaps his wisdom in general: and this excellently agrees with his resembling him to a musician (who always was a poet in those ages, and sung the exploits of heroes, *etc.* to the lyre.) In this view the sweetness of the music represents the agreeableness of the narration, and the subject of the musician's song the story of his adventures.

Thy words like music every breast controul,  
Steal through the ear, and win upon the soul;  
Soft, as some song divine, thy story flows,  
Nor better could the muse record thy woes.

But say, upon the dark and dismal coast,  
Saw'st thou the worthies of the Grecian host?

450

The godlike leaders who, in battle slain,  
Fell before Troy, and nobly prest the plain?

And lo! a length of night behind remains,  
The evening stars still mount th' ethereal plains.

455

Thy tale with raptures I could hear thee tell,  
Thy woes on earth, the wond'rous scenes in hell,  
'Till in the vault of heav'n the stars decay,  
And the sky reddens with the rising day.

O worthy of the pow'r the gods assign'd,  
Ulysses thus replies, a king in mind!

470

Since yet the early hour of night allows  
Time for discourse, and time for soft repose,  
If scenes of misery can entertain,

Woes I unfold, of woes a dismal train.

475

Prepare to hear of murder and of blood;

Of godlike heroes who uninjur'd stood  
Amidst a war of spears in foreign lands,

Yet bled at home, and bled by female hands.

Now summon'd Proserpine to hell's black hall  
The heroine shades; they vanish'd at her call;

480

When lo! advanc'd the forms of heroes slain  
By stern Ægythus, a majestic train,  
And high above the rest, Atrides prest the plain.

}

He quaff'd the gore; and strait his soldier knew, 485  
 And from his eyes pour'd down the tender dew;  
 His arms he stretch'd; his arms the touch deceive,  
 Nor in the fond embrace, embraces give:  
 His substance vanish'd, and his strength decay'd,  
 Now all Atrides is an empty shade. 490

Mov'd at the sight, I for a space resign'd  
 To soft affliction all my manly mind,  
 At last with tears——O what relentless doom,  
 Imperial phantom, bow'd thee to the tomb?  
 Say, while the sea, and while the tempest raves, 495  
 Has fate oppress'd thee in the roaring waves,  
 Or nobly seiz'd thee in the dire alarms  
 Of war and slaughter, and the clash of arms?

The ghost returns: O chief of humankind  
 For active courage and a patient mind; 500  
 Nor while the sea, nor while the tempest raves,  
 Has fate oppress'd me on the roaring waves!  
 Nor nobly seiz'd me in the dire alarms,  
 Of war and slaughter, and the clash of arms.  
 Stab'd by a murd'rous hand Atrides dy'd, 505  
 A foul adult'rer, and a faithless bride;  
 Ev'n in my mirth and at the friendly feast,  
 O'er the full bowl, the traitor stab'd his guest:  
 Thus by the goary arm of slaughter falls  
 The stately ox, and bleeds within the stalls. 510  
 But not with me the direful murder ends,  
 These, these expir'd! their crime, they were my friends;  
 Thick as the boars which some luxurious lord  
 Kills for the feast, to crown the nuptial board.

Book XI. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 255

When war has thunder'd with its loudest storms, 515

Death thou hast seen in all her ghastly forms ;

In duel met her, on the lifted ground,

When hand to hand they wound return for wound ;

But never have thy eyes astonish'd view'd

So vile a deed, so dire a scene of blood. 520

Ev'n in the flow of joy, when now the bowl

Glow in our veins, and opens ev'ry soul,

We groan, we faint ; with blood the dome is dy'd,

And o'er the pavement floats the dreadful tide——

Her breast all gore, with lamentable cries, 525

The bleeding innocent Cassandra dies !

Then though pale death froze cold in ev'ry vein,

My sword I strive to wield, but strive in vain ;

Nor did my traitress wife these eye-lids close,

Or decently in death my limbs compose. 530

O woman, woman, when to ill thy mind

Is bent, all hell contains no fouler fiend :

And such was mine ! who basely plung'd her sword

Through the fond bosom where she reign'd ador'd !

Alas ! I hop'd, the toils of war o'ercome, 535

To meet soft quiet and repose at home ;

Delusive hope ! O wife, thy deeds disgrace

The perjur'd sex, and blacken all the race ;

And should posterity one virtuous find,

Name Clytemnestra, they will curse the kind, 540

v. 539. *And should posterity one virtuous find,*

*Name Clytemnestra, they will curse the kind.]*

There cannot be a greater satire upon the fair sex than

this whole conference between Ulysses and Agamemnon. Terence has fallen into the sentiment with Homer.

*Ædepol, næ nos æque sumus omnes invisa viris  
Propter paucas, quæ omnes faciunt dignæ ut videamur  
malo.*

But how is this to be reconciled to justice? and why should the innocent suffer for the crimes of the guilty? We are to take notice, that Agamemnon speaks with anger, an undistinguishing passion, and his words flow from resentment, not reason; it must be confessed that Agamemnon had received great provocation, his wife had dishonoured his bed, and taken his life away; it is therefore no wonder if he flies out into a vehemence of language; a poet is obliged to follow nature, and give a fierceness to the features, when he paints a person in such emotions, and add a violence to his colours.

It has been objected, that Homer, and even Virgil, were enemies to the fairest part of the creation; that there is scarce a good character of a woman in either of the poets: but Andromache in the Iliad, and Penelope, Arete, and Nausicaa in the Odyssey, are instances to the contrary. I must own I am a little at a loss to vindicate Ulysses in this place; he is speaking before Arete and Nausicaa, a queen and her daughter; and entertains them with a satire upon their own sex, which may appear unpolite, and a want of decency; and be applied by Alcinous as a caution to beware of his spouse, and not to trust her, in matters of importance, with his secrets; for this is the moral that is naturally drawn from the fable. Madam Dacier gives up the cause, and allows the advice of not trusting women to be good; it comes from her indeed a little unwillingly; with *I will not say but the counsel may be right*. I, for my part, will allow Ulysses to be in an hundred faults, rather than lay such an imputation upon the ladies; Ulysses ought to be considered as having suffered twenty years calamities for that sex in the cause of Helen, and this possibly may give a little a-



O injur'd shade, I cry'd, what mighty woes  
 To thy imperial race from woman rose !  
 By woman here thou tread'st this mournful strand,  
 And Greece by woman lies a desert land.

Warn'd by my ills beware, the shade replies, 545  
 Nor trust the sex that is so rarely wise ;  
 When earnest to explore thy secret breast,  
 Unfold some trifle, but conceal the rest.  
 But in thy consort cease to fear a foe,  
 For thee she feels sincerity of woe : 550  
 When Troy first bled beneath the Grecian arms  
 She shone unrival'd with a blaze of charms,  
 Thy infant son her fragrant bosom prest,  
 Hung at her knee, or wanton'd at her breast ;  
 But now the years a num'rous train have ran ; 555  
 The blooming boy is ripen'd into man ;  
 Thy eyes shall see him burn with noble fire,  
 The fire shall bless his son, the son his fire ;  
 But my Orestes never met these eyes,  
 Without one look the murder'd father dies ; 560

crimony to his language. He puts it indeed in the mouth of Agamemnon ; but the objection returns, why does he chuse to relate such a story before a queen and her daughter ? In short, I think they ought to have torn him to pieces, as the ladies of Thrace served Orpheus.

v. 541. ———— *What mighty woes*

*To thy imperial race from woman rose ?*

Ulysses here means Aerope the wife of Atreus, and mother of Agamemnon, who being corrupted by Thyestes, involved the whole family in the utmost calamities. Eustathius.

Then from a wretched friend this wisdom learn,  
 E'en to thy queen disguis'd, unknown, return ;  
 For since of womankind so few are just,  
 Think all are false, nor ev'n the faithful trust.

But say, resides my son in royal port, 565  
 In rich Orchomenos, or Sparta's court ?  
 Or say in Pyle ? for yet he views the light,  
 Nor glides a phantom through the realms of night.

Then I: thy suit is vain, nor can I say 570  
 If yet he breathes in realms of chearful day :  
 Or pale or wan beholds these nether skies ?  
 Truth I revere: for wisdom never lies.

Thus in a tide of tears our sorrows flow,  
 And add new horror to the realms of woe ;  
 'Till side by side along the dreary coast 575  
 Advanc'd Achilles' and Patroclus' ghost,

v. 565. *But say, resides my son*—] Eustathius gives us the reason why Agamemnon mentions Pyle, Sparta, and Orchomenos, as places where Orestes might make his residence: Sparta was under the dominion of his brother Menelaus: Pyle, of his old friend and faithful counsellor Nestor; and Orchomenos was a city of great strength, and therefore of great security. We may evidently gather from this passage what notions the ancients had concerning a future state: namely, that persons, after death, were entirely strangers to the affairs of this world; for Orestes his son had slain his murderer Ægisthus, and reigned in peaceable possession of his dominions; when Agamemnon is ignorant of the whole transaction, and desires Ulysses to give him information.

v. 576. — *Achilles' and Patroclus' ghost.*] Homer lets no opportunity pass of celebrating his hero Achilles, he cannot fail of awakening our attention to hear the sto-

A friendly pair! near these the Pylian \* stray'd,  
 And tow'ring Ajax, an illustrious shade!  
 War was his joy, and pleas'd with loud alarms,  
 None but Pelides brighter shone in arms. 580

Through the thick gloom his friend Achilles knew,  
 And as he speaks, the tears descend in dew.

Com'st thou alive to view the Stygian bounds,  
 Where the wan spectres walk eternal rounds;  
 Nor fear'st the dark and dismal waste to tread, 585  
 Throng'd with pale ghosts, familiar with the dead?

To whom with sighs: I pass these dreadful gates  
 To seek the Theban, and consult the fates:  
 For still distress'd I rove from coast to coast,  
 Lost to my friends, and to my country lost. 590

But sure the eye of time beholds no name  
 So blest as thine in all the rolls of fame;  
 Alive, we hail'd thee with our guardian gods,  
 And, dead thou rul'st a king in these abodes.

Talk not of ruling in this dol'rous gloom, 595  
 Nor think vain words, he cry'd, can ease my doom;

\* Antilochus.

ry of this great man after death, of whom alive we saw such wonders. Besides, the poet pays an honour to true friendship: the person whom Achilles best loved on earth, is his chief companion in the other world: a very strong argument to cultivate friendship with sincerity. Achilles here literally fulfills what he promised in the Iliad.

If in the melancholy shades below  
 The flames of friends, and lovers cease to glow,  
 Yet mine shall sacred last; mine undecay'd  
 Burn on through death, and animate my shade.

Rather I chuse laboriously to bear

A weight of woes, and breathe the vital air,

A slave to some poor hind that toils for bread.

Than reign the scepter'd monarch of the dead. 600

v. 599. *A slave to some poor hind who toils for bread,  
Than reign the scepter'd monarch of the dead.]*

Nothing sure can give us a more disadvantageous image of a future state, than this speech which Homer puts into the mouth of so great a hero as Achilles. If the poet intended to shew the vanity of that destructive glory which is purchased by the sword, and read a lecture to all the disturbers of mankind, whom we absurdly honour as heroes, it must be allowed he has done it effectually: if this was not his design, the remark of Plato, 3. Repub. is not without foundation; he there proscribes this whole passage as dangerous to morals, and blames the poet for making Achilles say he prefers misery and servitude to all the honours which the dead are capable of enjoying. For what, says he, can make death more terrible to young persons? and will it not dispose them to suffer all calamities to avoid it, deter them from exposing themselves to danger, even in defence of their country, and teach them to be cowards and slaves? Lucian was of Plato's opinion, for he mentions this passage, and ridicules it in his dialogues. Dacier gives a different turn to it, and endeavours to shew that there is no danger of such consequences, as Plato draws from it: 'Achilles, adds she, speaks directly contrary to his declared sentiments and actions; and therefore there is no danger he should persuade mankind to prefer servitude before death, when he himself died rather than not revenge his friend Patroclus. Such words; which are contradicted both by the sentiments and actions of him that speaks, have on the contrary, a very good effect.' But I cannot come into her opinion; I will let Achilles answer for himself out of Lucian; 'In the other world, I was ignorant, says he,

But say, if in my steps my son proceeds,  
 And emulates his godlike father's deeds?  
 If at the clash of arms, and shout of foes,  
 Swells his bold heart, his bosom nobly glows?  
 Say, if my fire, the rev'rend Peleus reigns 605  
 Great in his Pthia, and his throne maintains;  
 Or weak and old, my youthful arm demands,  
 To fix the scepter steadfast in his hands?  
 O might the lamp of life rekindled burn,  
 And death release me from the silent urn! 610  
 This arm that thunder'd o'er the Phrygian plain,  
 And swell'd the ground with mountains of the slain,  
 Should vindicate my injur'd father's fame,  
 Crush the proud rebel, and assert his claim.

Illustrious shade, I cry'd, of Peleus' fates 615  
 No circumstance the voice of fame relates:  
 But hear with pleas'd attention the renown,  
 The wars and wisdom of thy gallant son:

'of the state of the dead, I had not experienced the difference between the two states, when I preferred a little empty glory to life.' This is an answer to what Dacier advances; for Achilles speaks with experience, and yet prefers miseries and life before glory and death. I know not how to vindicate Homer, unless it be a vindication to say, that he wrote according to the opinions that antiently prevailed in the world; or that, like Hercules, while the vehicle of Achilles is in this state of horror, his soul may be in heaven; especially since he received divine honours after death, as well as Hercules. Tull. Nat. Deor. 3. *Achilles sanctissime colit, qui se Deus est, et Orpheus, etc.*

With me from Scyros to the field of fame  
 Radiant in arms the blooming hero came : 620  
 When Greece assembled all her hundred states  
 To ripen counsels, and decide debates,  
 Heav'ns ! how he charm'd us with a flow of sense,  
 And won the heart with manly eloquence !  
 He first was seen of all the peers to rise, 625  
 The third in wisdom where they all were wise ;  
 But when to try the fortune of the day,  
 Host mov'd tow'rd host in terrible array,

v. 626. *The third in wisdom*——] I have not ventured to render the Greek literally ; Ulysses says that Neoptolemus was so wise, that only he himself and Nestor were wiser ; a truth that would appear more graceful, if spoken by any other person than Ulysses. But perhaps the poet puts these words into his mouth, only because he is speaking to the Phæacians, who loved themselves to boast, and were full of vain-glory ; and consequently they could not think self-praise a crime in Ulysses ; on the contrary it could not fail of having a very good effect, as it sets him off as a person of consummate wisdom.

The poet excellently sustains the character of Achilles in this interview : in the Iliad he is described a dutiful son, and always expressing a tender affection for his father Peleus ; in the Odyssey he is drawn in the same soft colours : In the Iliad, he is represented as a man of strong resentment ; in the Odyssey, he first imagines that his father suffers, and upon this imagination he immediately takes fire, and flies into threats and fury.

Didstys, lib. 6. relates, that Peleus was expelled from his kingdom by Acastus, but that Pyrrhus the son of Achilles afterwards revenged the injury.

Before the van, impatient for the fight,  
 With martial port he strode, and stern delight ; 630  
 Heaps strow'd on heaps beneath his faulchion groan'd,  
 And monuments of dead deform'd the ground.  
 The time would fail should I in order tell  
 What foes were vanquish'd, and what numbers fell  
 How, lost through love, Eurypylus was slain, 635  
 And round him bled his bold Cetæan train.

v. 635. *How, lost through love, Eurypylus was slain.*]

It must be owned that this passage is very intricate: Strabo himself complains of its obscurity: the poet, says that author, rather proposes an ænigma, than a clear history: for who are these Cetæans, and what are these *resents of women*? and adds, that the grammarians darken, instead of clearing the obscurity. But it is no difficulty to solve these objections from Eustathius.

It is evident from Strabo himself, that Eurypylus reigned near the river Caicus, over the Mysians, and Pliny confines it to Teuthrany; this agrees with what Ovid writes, *Metam.* 2.

— — — *Teuthrantæusque Caicus.*

And Virgil shews us that Caicus was a river of Mysia: *Georg.* 4.

*Saxosumque sonans Hypanis, Mysusque Caicus.*

But what relation has Caicus to the Cetæans? Hesychius informs us, that they are a people of Mysia, so called from the river Cetium, which runs through their country; Κήτεροι, γένος Μυσῶν, ἀπὸ τῆ παρρέοντος ποταμοῦ Κήτερος. This river discharges itself into the Caicus, and consequently the Cetæans were Mysians, over whom Eurypylus reigned. It would be endless to transcribe the different opinions of writers cited by Eustathius; some read the verse thus:

Κήτεροι κλένοιο γυναικῶν, ἔνεκα δάεον.

To Troy no hero came of nobler line,  
Or if of nobler, Memnon, it was thine.

When Ilion in the horse receiv'd her doom,  
And unseen armies ambush'd in its womb;

640

Then the meaning will be, *How they fell far from their wives, for the sake of a reward*; that is, for their pay from Hector, who, as it appears from the Iliad, taxed the Trojans to pay the auxiliaries, one of whom was Eurypylus. Others think the word signifies, *great of stature*, and in this sense we find it used in the first line of the 4th Odyssey.

——— Δακεδαίμονα Κητώεσσαν.

But I have followed the first opinion, as appearing most probable and natural.

But how are we to explain the second objection, or *γυναικῶν ἔνεκεν δάξων*? Some, says Eustathius, understand the expression as applied to Neoptolemus, and not Eurypylus; namely, Eurypylus and his soldiers fell by means of the *gifts of women*; that is, Neoptolemus was led to the war by the promise of having Hermione in marriage, the daughter of Menelaus, which promise occasioned the death of Eurypylus, by bringing Neoptolemus to the siege of Troy. Others understand it to be spoken of a golden vine, sent by Priam to his sister Astyoche the mother of Eurypylus, to induce her to persuade her son to undertake this expedition to Troy where he was slain by the son of Achilles; this vine was said to be given to Troas the father of Priam by Jupiter, as a recompence for his carrying away his son Ganymede to be his cup-bearer; but this is too much a fable to be followed. Others more probably assert, that Priam had promised one of his daughters to Eurypylus, to engage his assistance in the war; and this agrees very well with Homer's manner of writing in many places of the Iliad; and there is a great resemblance between Eurypylus in the Odyssey, and Othryoneus in the Iliad, lib. 13. 460.



Greece gave her latent warriors to my care,  
 'Twas mine on Troy to pour the imprison'd war:  
 Then when the boldest bosom beat with fear,  
 When the stern eyes of heroes dropp'd a tear;  
 Fierce in his look his ardent valour glow'd, 645  
 Flush'd in his cheek, or faly'd in his blood;  
 Indignant in the dark recess he stands,  
 Pants for the battle, and the war demands;  
 His voice breath'd death, and with a martial air  
 He grasp'd his sword, and shook his glitt'ring spear. 650  
 And when the gods our arms with conquest crown'd,  
 When Troy's proud bulwarks smoak'd upon the ground,  
 Greece to reward her soldier's gallant toils  
 Heap'd high his navy with unnumber'd spoils.

Thus great in glory from the din of war 655  
 Safe he return'd, without one hostile fear;  
 Though spears in iron tempests rain'd around,  
 Yet innocent they play'd, and guiltless of a wound.

While yet I spoke, the shade with transport glow'd,  
 Rose in his majesty, and noblier trod: 660  
 With haughty stalk he fought the distant glades  
 Of warrior kings, and join'd th' illustrious shades.

*Cassandra's love he sought, with boasts of pow'r,  
 And promis'd conquest was the profer'd dow'r.*

Spondanus cites a passage from Dictys, lib. 4. that very well explains these difficulties: *Inter quæ tam læta, (nimirum mortem Achillis, etc.) Priamo supervenit nuncius Eurypylum Telephi filium ex Mysia adventare, quem rex multis antea illectum præmiis, ad postremum oblatione Cassandræ confirmaverat, addiderat etiam auream vitem, et ob id per populos memorabilem.*

Now without number ghost by ghost arose,  
All wailing with unutterable woes.

Alone, apart, in discontented mood 665

A gloomy shade, the fallen Ajax stood ;

For ever sad with proud disdain he pin'd,

And the lost arms for ever stung his mind ;

Though to the contest Thetis gave the laws,

And Pallas, by the Trojans, judg'd the cause. 670

v. 669. *Though to the contest Thetis gave the laws,  
And Pallas, by the Trojans, judg'd the cause.*]

There are two particulars which want explication in these verses : how did Thetis give the law to the contest between Ajax and Ulysses ? and how could the Trojans be made judges to determine between two Grecian heroes ? Thetis the mother of Achilles was a goddess, and out of honour to her, the chiefs of the Grecian army proposed the arms of her son as a reward to the most worthy ; and poetry, to give a magnificence to the story, introduces the goddess as acting in person what is done upon her account. Thetis may properly be said to be desirous that the memory of her son should be honoured ; and Homer, to express this desire poetically, tells us it was the act of that goddess, to propose the arms of Achilles as a reward to the most worthy of the Grecian heroes.

The second difficulty is fully explained by Eustathius : Agamemnon finding it an invidious affair to give the preference to any one of the Grecian heroes, and being willing to avoid the reproach of partiality, commanded the Trojan prisoners to be brought before the whole army, and asked from which of the two heroes, Ajax or Ulysses, they had received the greater detriment ; they immediately replied, from Ulysses ; thus the Trojans adjudged the cause. The poet adds, that this was done by Minerva ; that is, the affair was conducted with wisdom, the result of which, in poetry, is usually ascribed to the goddess of

O why was I victorious in the strife;  
 O dear-bought honour with so brave a life!  
 With him the strength of war, the soldiers pride,  
 Our second hope to great Achilles dy'd!  
 Touch'd at the sight from tears I scarce refrain, 675  
 And tender sorrow thrills in ev'ry vein;  
 Pensive and sad I stand, at length accost,  
 With accents mild, th' inexorable ghost.

Still burns thy rage? and can brave souls resent  
 Ev'n after death? relent, great shade, relent! 680  
 Perish those arms which by the gods decree  
 Accurs'd our army with the loss of thee!  
 With thee we fell; Greece wept thy hapless fates;  
 And shock astonish'd through her hundred states;  
 Not more, when great Achilles prest the ground, 685  
 And breath'd his manly spirit through the wound.  
 O deem thy fall not ow'd to man's decree,  
 Jove hated Greece, and punish'd Greece in thee!  
 Turn then, oh peaceful turn! thy wrath controul,  
 And calm the raging tempest of thy soul. 690

it; and no doubt but the goddess of wisdom must always prefer wisdom to mere valour, or an Ulysses to an Ajax. This decision is related in a very different manner by other poets, in particular, by Ovid in his *Metamorphosis*; but Lucian, in his dialogues, agrees with Homer in every point very circumstantially; and consequently, with some obscurity; but what I have here said, fully explains that dialogue of Lucian, as well as this passage of Homer.

While yet I speak, the shade disdains to stay,  
In silence turns, and sullen stalks away.

Touch'd at his four retreat, through deepest night;  
Through hell's black bounds I had pursu'd his flight.

v. 691. — *The shade disdains to stay,*

*In silence turns, and sullen stalks away.*]

This silence of Ajax was very much admired by the ancients, and Longinus proposes it as an instance of the true sublimity of thought, which springs from an elevation of soul, and not from the diction; for a man may be truly sublime without speaking a word: thus in the silence of Ajax there is something more noble, than in any thing he could possibly have spoken. Monsieur Rapin agrees with Longinus: the stubborn untractable Ajax, says that author, could not have made a better return to the compliments full of submission which were paid him by Ulysses, than by a disdainful and contemptuous silence: Ajax has more the air of grandeur and majesty, when he says nothing, than when the poet makes him speak. Virgil was sensible of the beauty of it, and paints Dido in the attitude of Ajax. Fraguier infinitely prefers the silence of Dido to that of Ajax; she was a woman disappointed in love, and therefore no wonder if she was greatly passionate, and sunk under the weight of the calamity; but Ajax was a hero, and ought to have freed himself by his courage from such an unworthy degree of resentment. But to me there appears no weight in this objection, we must remember what an hero Ajax is, a four, stubborn, untractable hero; and, upon all occasions, given to taciturnity; this is his universal and notorious character through the whole Iliad: the poet, therefore, adapts his description to it, and he is the same Ajax in the Odyssey as he was in the Iliad. Had this been spoken of any other hero, the criticism had been more just; but, in Ajax, this stubborn silence is proper and noble.

And forc'd the stubborn spectre to reply ; 695

But wond'rous visions drew my curious eye,

High on a throne tremendous to behold,

Stern Minos waves a mace of burnish'd gold ;

Around ten thousand thousand spectres stand

Through the wide dome of Dis, a trembling band. 700

Still as they plead, the fatal lots he rolls,

Absolves the just, and dooms the guilty souls.

There huge Orion of portentous size,

Swift through the gloom a giant-hunter flies :

v. 701. *Still as they plead*—] The expression in the Greek is remarkable, "Ἡμεῖοι, ἑσάκτεσ τε; that is, *standing and sitting*: this is to be referred to different persons; the ἑσάκτεσ were the *συνδικασαί*, or persons who pleaded the cause of the guilty or innocent before the infernal judges; the Ἡμεῖοι. were the persons for whom they pleaded, or those who were about to receive judgment. I doubt not but this was a custom observed in the courts of judicature in the days of Homer. Eustathius.

v. 703. — *Orion of portentous size,*

*Swift through the gloom a giant-hunter flies.*]

The diversion of this infernal hunter may seem extraordinary in pursuing the shades of beasts; but it was the opinion of the ancients, that the same passions to which men were subject on earth continued with them in the other world; and their shades were liable to be affected in the same manner as their bodies: thus we frequently see them shedding tears, and Sisyphus sweats, in rolling the stone up the mountain. Virgil.

*Stant terra defixæ hastæ, passimque soluti  
Per campos pascuntur equi, quæ cura nitentes  
Pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repostos.*

A pond'rous mace of brass with direful sway 705

Aloft he whirls, to crush the savage prey ;

Stern beasts in trains that by his truncheon fell,

Now grisly forms, shoot o'er the lawns of hell.

There Tityus large and long, in fetters bound,

O'er spreads nine acres of infernal ground ; 710

And again,

———*Cura non ipsa in morte relinquunt.*

I cannot but be of opinion that Milton has far surpassed both the Greek and the Roman poet, in the description of the employment of the fallen angels in hell, as the ideas are more noble and suitable to the characters he describes.

Part on the plain, or in the air sublime

Upon the wing, or in swift race contend,

As at th' Olympian games, or Pythian fields :

Part curb the fiery steeds, or shun the goal

With rapid wheels, or fronted brigades form.

Others with vast Typhæan rage more fell

Rend up both rocks, and hills, and ride the air

In whirlwind : hell scarce holds the wild uproar.

———others more mild

Retreated in a silent valley, sing,

With notes angelical to many an harp,

Their own heroic deeds———

The song was partial, but the harmony.

Suspended hell, and took with ravishment

The thronging audience, *etc.*

v. 709. *There Tityus*———] It is needless to mention that Virgil has adorned his descent into hell with most of these fables borrowed from Homer ; it is equally unnecessary to relate what antiquity says of these fabled

Two rav'nous vultures furious for their food  
 Scream o'er the fiend, and riot in his blood,  
 Incessant gore the liver in his breast;  
 Th' immortal liver grows, and gives th' immortal feast:  
 For as o'er Panope's enamel'd plains  
 Latona journey'd to the Pythian fanes,  
 With haughty love th' audacious monster strove  
 To force the goddess, and to rival Jove.

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persons, and their histories; but the moral of them all is observed by Eustathius, and fully explained by Lucretius, which I will lay together from Mr. Dryden's translation.

———The dismal tales that poets tell  
 Are verify'd on earth, and not in hell;  
 No Tantalus looks with a fearful eye,  
 Or dreads th' impending rock to crush him from on high:  
 No Tityus, torn by vultures, lies in hell,  
 Nor could the lobs of his rank liver swell  
 To that prodigious mass, for their eternal meal.  
 But he's the Tityus, who, by love oppress'd,  
 Or tyrant passion preying on his breast,  
 And ever anxious thoughts, is robb'd of rest.  
 The Syfiphus is he, whom noise and strife  
 Seduce from all the soft retreats of life,  
 To vex the government, disturb the laws;  
 Drunk with the fumes of popular applause,  
 He courts the giddy croud to make him great,  
 And sweats and toils in vain to mount the sov'reign seat,  
 For still to aim at pow'r, and still to fail,  
 Ever to strive, and never to prevail,  
 What is it, but in reason's true account,  
 To heave the stone against the rising mount?

There Tantalus along the Stygian bounds:  
 Pours out deep groans; (with groans all hell resounds)  
 Ev'n in the circling floods refreshment craves, 721  
 And pines with thirst amidst a sea of waves:  
 When to the water he his lip applies,  
 Back from his lip the treach'rous water flies.  
 Above, beneath, around his hapless head, 725  
 Trees of all kinds delicious fruitage spread;  
 There figs sky-dy'd, a purple hue disclose,  
 Green looks the olive, the pomegranate glows,  
 There dangling pears exalted scents unfold,  
 And yellow apples ripen into gold; 730

I will only add the reason from Eustathius, why Tityus was fabled to be the son of the earth; it was from his being immersed in worldly cares, and from his centring all his affections upon the earth, as if he had sprung from it; this is alluded to by the expression *κέκμενον ἐν δαπέδῳ*. Spondanus gives us another reason; Elara being pregnant by Jupiter, he, to avoid the jealousy of Juno, concealed her in a cavern of the earth, where Tityus being born, is fabled to be the son of the earth: he adds that the fiction of his covering nine acres, arose from that space of ground which was enclosed for his place of burial. Perhaps the story of Tantalus was invented solely to paint the nature of a covetous person, who starves amidst plenty, like Tantalus in the midst of water. Thus Horace applies it, Sat. I. ver. 70.

*Tantalus a labris sitiens fugientia captat  
 Flumina: quid rides? mutato nomine de te  
 Fabula narratur: congestis undique saccis  
 Indormis inhians, et tanquam parcere sacris  
 Cogaris*—————



The fruit he strives to seize : but blasts arise,  
Toss it on high, and whirl it to the skies.

I turn'd my eye, and as I turn'd survey'd  
A mournful vision ! the Sisyphian shade ;  
With many a weary step, and many a groan, 733  
Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone ;

v. 736. *Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone*] This is a very remarkable instance of the beauty of Homer's versification ; it is taken notice of by Eustathius, but copiously explained by Dionysius Halicarnassæus, in his treatise of placing of words.

Λᾶαν βασάζοντα πελώριον ἀμφοτέρῃσιν,  
Ἦτοι ὁ μὲν σκηριπτόμενος χερσίν τε ποσίν τε,  
Λᾶαν ἀνω ᾗθεσκε————

Here, says Dionysius, we see in the choice and disposition of the words the fact which they describe ; the weight of the stone, and the striving to heave it up the mountain : to effect this, Homer clogs the verse with spondees, or long syllables, and leaves the vowels open, as in *λᾶαν*, and *ἀνω ᾗθεσκε*, which two words it is impossible to pronounce without hesitation and difficulty ; the very words and syllables are heavy, and as it were make resistance in the pronunciation, to express the heaviness of the stone, and the difficulty with which it is forced up the mountain. To give the English reader a faint image of the beauty of the original in the translation, I have loaded the verse with monosyllables, and these almost begin with aspirates.

*Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone.*

Homer is no less happy in describing the rushing down of the stone from the top of the mountain.

Αὐτίς ἔπειτα πέδονδε κυλίνθητο λᾶας ἀναιδῆς.

The huge round stone, resulking with a bound,  
 Thunders impetuous down, and smokes along the ground.  
 Again the restless orb his toil renews,  
 Dust mounts in clouds, and sweat descends in dews. 74●

Now I the strength of Hercules behold,  
 A tow'ring spectre of gigantic mold,

Is it not evident, continues Dionysius, that the swiftness of the verse imitates the celerity of the stone in its descent; nay, that the verse runs with the greater rapidity? What is the cause of this? It is because there is not one monosyllable in the line, and but two dissyllables, ten of the syllables are short, and not one spondee in it, except one that could not be avoided at the conclusion of it; there is no hiatus or gape between word and word, no vowels left open to retard the celerity of it: the whole seems to be but one word, the syllables seem to melt into one another, and flow away with the utmost rapidity in a torrent of dactyles. I was too sensible of the beauty of this not to endeavour to imitate it, though unsuccessfully: I have therefore thrown it into the swiftness of an Alexandrine, to make it of a more proportionable number of syllables with the Greek.

I refer the reader for a fuller explication of these verses to Dionysius.

v. 743.—*Hercules,——a shadowy form.*] This is the passage formerly referred to in these annotations, to prove that Hercules was in heaven, while his shade was in the infernal regions; a full evidence of the partition of the human composition into three parts: the body is buried in the earth; the image, or *εἰδωλον*, descends into the regions of the departed; and the soul, or the divine part of man, is received into heaven: thus the body of Hercules was consumed in the flames, his image is in hell, and his soul in heaven. There is a beautiful moral couched in the fable of his being married to Hebe, or *youth*, after death; to imply, that a perpetual youth, or a reputation

A shadowy form ! for high in heav'n's abodes  
 Himself resides, a god among the gods ;  
 There in the bright assemblies of the skies, 745  
 He nectar quaffs, and Hebe crowns his joys.  
 Here hovering ghosts, like fowl, his shade surround,  
 And clang their pinions with terrific sound ;  
 Gloomy as night he stands, in act to throw  
 Th' aerial arrow from the twanging bow. 750  
 Around his breast a wond'rous zone is rowl'd,  
 Where woodland monsters grin in fretted gold,  
 There fullen lions sternly seem to roar,  
 The bear to growl, to foam the tusky boar,  
 There war and havoc and destruction stood, 755  
 And vengeful murder red with human blood.  
 Thus terribly adorn'd the figures shine,  
 Inimitably wrought with skill divine.

which never grows old, is the reward of those heroes, who, like Hercules, employ their courage for the good of humankind.

v. 758. *Inimitably wrought with skill divine.*] This verse is not without obscurity; Eustathius gives us several interpretations of it.

Μὴ τέχνησάμενος, μὴ δ' Ἄλλό τι τεχνήσεται.

The negative *μὴ*, by being repeated, seems to be redundant; and this in a great measure, occasions the difficulty; but, in the Greek language, two negatives more strongly deny; this being premised, we may read the verse as if the former *μὴ* were absent, and then the meaning will be, *He that made this zone, never made any thing equal to it*; as if we should say, that Phidias who made the statue of Jupiter never made any other statue

The mighty ghost advanc'd with awful look,  
And turning his grim visage, sternly spoke. 760

O exercis'd in grief ! by arts refin'd !  
O taught to bear the wrongs of base mankind !  
Such, such was I ! still tost from care to care,  
While in your world I drew the vital air ;  
Ev'n I who from the lord of thunders rose, 765  
Bore toils and dangers, and a weight of woes ;  
'To a base monarch still a slave confin'd,  
(The hardest bondage to a gen'rous mind !)

like it ; that is, he employed the whole power of his skill upon it. Others understand the verse as an execration : *Oh never, never may the hand that made it, make any thing again so terrible as this zone* : and this will give some reason for the repetition of the negative particles. Dacier approves of this latter explication, and moralizes upon it : it proceeds, says she, from a tender sentiment of humanity in Ulysses, who wishes that there may never more be occasion for such a design, as the artist executed in this belt of Hercules : that there may be no more giants to conquer, no more monsters to tame, or no more human blood be shed. I wish that such a pious and well-natured explication were to be drawn from the passage ! But how is it possible that the artist who made this zone, should ever make another, when he had been in the grave some centuries ? (for such a distance there was between the days of Hercules and Ulysses ; ) and consequently it would be impertinent to wish it. I have therefore followed the former interpretation. I will only add, that this belt of Hercules is the reverse of the girdle of Venus ; in that, there is a collection of every thing that is amiable, in this, a variety of horrors ; but both are master-pieces in their kind.

Down to these worlds I trod the dismal way,  
 And dragg'd the three-mouth'd dog to upper day; 770  
 Ev'n hell I conquer'd, through the friendly aid  
 Of Maia's offspring and the martial maid.

Thus he, nor deign'd for our reply to stay,  
 But turning stalk'd with giant strides away.

Curious to view the kings of antient days, 772  
 The mighty dead that live in endless praise,  
 Resolv'd I stand; and haply had survey'd  
 The godlike Theseus, and Perithous' shade;

v. 769. *Down to these worlds I trod the dismal way*] Nothing can be more artfully inserted than the mention of this descent of Hercules into the regions of the dead: Ulysses shews by it, at least, that it was a vulgar opinion, and consequently within the degrees of poetical probability; a poet being at liberty to follow common fame: in particular, it could not fail of having a full effect upon his Phæacian auditors, not only as it in some measure sets him upon a level with Hercules, but as it is an example of a like undertaking with this which he has been relating, and therefore a probable method to gain their belief of it. Eustathius.

v. 777.—*And haply had survey'd  
 The godlike Theseus—*]

Plutarch, in his life of Theseus, informs us, that this verse has been thought not genuine; but added to the *Odyssey* in honour of the Athenians by Pisistratus.

The poet shews us, that he had still a noble fund of invention, and had it in his power to open new scenes of wonder and entertainment; but that this infernal episode might not be too long, he shifts the scene: the invention of the Gorgon, which terrifies him from a longer abode in these realms of darkness, gives a probable reason for his immediate return. Eustathius informs us from Athenæus,

But swarms of spectres rose from deepest hell,  
 With bloodless visage, and with hideous yell, 780  
 They scream, they shriek; sad groans and dismal sounds  
 Stun my scar'd ears, and pierce hell's utmost bounds.  
 No more my heart the dismal din sustains,  
 And my cold blood hangs shiv'ring in my veins;  
 Lest Gorgon rising from th' infernal lakes, 785  
 With horrors arm'd, and curls of hissing snakes,  
 Should fix me, stiffen'd at the monstrous sight,  
 A stony image, in eternal night. †

that Alexander the Mydian writes in his history of animals, that there really was a creature in Lybia, which the Nomades called a Gorgon; it resembled a wild ram, or, as some affirm, a calf; whose breath was of such a poisonous nature, as to kill all that approached it: in the same region the Catoblepton is found, a creature like a bull, whose eyes are so fixed in the head as chiefly to look downward; Pliny calls it Catoblepas, lib. 8. cap. 21. which is likewise supposed to kill with its eyes: the Gorgon, proceeds Athenæus, has its hair hanging over its eyes down from the forehead, of such thickness that it scarce is able to remove it, to guide itself from danger; but it kills not by its breath, but with emanations darted from its eyes: the beast was well known in the time of Marius, for certain of his soldiers seeing it, mistook it for a wild sheep, and pursued to take it; but the hair being removed by the motion of its flying, it flew all upon whom it looked: at length the Nomades, who knew the nature of the beast, destroyed it with darts at a distance, and carried it to the general Marius. Howsoever little truth there may be in this story, it is a sufficient ground for poetical fictions, and all the fables that are ascribed to the Gorgon.

Strait from the direful coast to purer air  
 I speed my flight, and to my mates repair. 790  
 My mates ascend the ship; they strike their oars;  
 The mountains lessen, and retreat the shores;  
 Swift o'er the waves we fly; the freshning gales  
 Sing through the shrouds, and stretch the swelling sails.

v. 789.———*To purer air*  
*I speed my flight.*——]

It may not probably be unpleasant to the reader, to observe the manner how the two great poets Homer and Virgil close the scene of their infernal adventures, by restoring their heroes to the earth. Ulysses returns by the same way he descended, of which we have a plain description in the beginning of this book: Virgil takes a different method, he borrows his conclusion from another part of Homer; in which he describes the two gates of sleep; the one is ivory, the other of horn: through the ivory gate, issue falsehoods, through the gate of horn, truths: Virgil dismisses Æneas through the gate of falsehood: now, what is this, but to inform us, that all that he relates is nothing but a dream, and that dream a falsehood? I submit it to the critics who are more disposed to find fault than I am, to determine whether Virgil ought to be censured for such an acknowledgment, or praised for his ingenuity?





T H E

O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XII.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The Sirens, Scylla, and Charybdis.

*He relates, how after his return from the shades, he was sent by Circe on his voyage, by the coast of the Sirens, and by the streight of Scylla and Charybdis: the manner in which he escaped those dangers: how being cast on the island Trinacria, his companions destroyed the oxen of the sun: the vengeance that followed; how all perished by shipwreck except himself, who, swimming on the mast of the ship, arrived on the island of Calypso. With which his narration concludes.*

**T**HUS o'er the rolling surge the vessel flies,  
'Till from the waves th'Ææan hills arise.  
Here the gay Morn resides in radiant bow'rs,  
Here keeps her revels with the dancing Hours;

We are now drawing to a conclusion of the episodic narration of the *Odyſſey*; it may therefore not be unentertaining to ſpeak ſomething concerning the nature of it, before we diſmiſs it.

There are two ways of relating paſt ſubjects: the one, ſimply and methodically by a plain rehearſal, and this is the province of hiſtory; the other artificially, where the author makes no appearance in perſon, but introduces ſpeakers, and this is the practice of epic poetry. By this

Here Phœbus rising in th' ethereal way, 5  
 Through heav'n's bright portals pours the beamy day.

method the poet brings upon the stage those very persons who performed the action he represents : he makes them speak and act over again the words and actions they spoke or performed before, and in some sort transports his auditors to the time when, and the places where, the action was done. This method is of so great use, it prevents the poet from delivering his story in a plain simple way like an historian, it makes the auditors witnesses of it, and the action discovers itself. Thus, for instance, it is not Homer, but Ulysses who speaks ; the poet is withdrawn, and the hero, whose story we hear, is, as it were raised from the grave, and relates it in person to the audience. Aristotle observes, that the epic poem ought to be dramatic, that is, active ; Homer, says that author, ought to be especially commended for being the only poet who knew exactly what to do ; he speaks little himself, but introduces some of his persons, a man or a woman, a god or a goddess ; and this renders his poem active or dramatic. Narration is the very soul that animates the poem, it gives an opportunity to the poet to adorn it with different episodes ; it has, as it were, the whole world for its stage, and gives him liberty to search through the creation for incidents or adventures for the employment of his heroes. Thus, for instance, he was at liberty to ascribe the several dangers of Scylla and Charybdis, of Polypheme and Antiphates, to Ulysses, though that hero had been as unacquainted with those dangers, as Æneas was in reality with Dido ; the choice of the episodes being not essential, but arbitrary.

In short, it is from this episodic narration that the poet could at all find room to place these episodes in the *Odyssey*. Aristotle, I confess, has set no precise limits to the time of the action, but the critics in general confine it to one campaign ; at least, they affirm this to be the most

At once we fix our haulsers on the land,  
At once descend, and press the desert sand;

perfect duration, according to the model of the Iliad and Odyssey. Now this episodic narration gives the poet an opportunity to relate all that is contained in four books without breaking in upon the time of the action; for all that we read between the eighth book and the thirteenth comprehends only the space of one evening; namely, the evening of the thirty-third day. The poet inserts all the adventures that happened to Ulysses in almost ten years from his departure from Troy, into the compass of one evening by way of narration, and so maintains the unity both of the time and action.

I speak not of [the narration in general; concerning which the curious may consult Bossu, or Dryden's preface to the translation of the *Æneis*.

v. 1. *Thus o'er the rolling surge—*] The words in the original are *ποταμοῦ ῥέαν ἁλιαναις*, which Strabo judges to mean no more than a part of the ocean, for if it be otherwise understood, it will be a tautology; and who would write that *he went out of the ocean into the ocean*, as it must be rendered if *ποταμὸς* be the same with *θάλασσα* in the next line? But it is perhaps better to understand the passage literally and plainly, only to denote the place from whence Ulysses returned from his infernal voyage; that is, from the extremity of the ocean. It is usual for the waves of the sea to bear violently and rapidly upon some shores, the waters being pent up by the nearness of the land, and therefore form a current, or *ῥέον*. So that the expression means no more than Ulysses surmounted this current, and then gained the wide ocean.

It is likewise evident from the beginning of this book, that Ulysses passed only one night in hell; for he arrived at the Cimmerians in one day, saw the visions of hell in the following night, and in the space of the next day returned from the Cimmerians in the evening to Circe's

There worn and wasted, lose our cares in sleep  
To the hoarse murmurs of the rowling deep,

island, as appears from his going to repose immediately upon his landing.

It may be further proved, that this was a nocturnal interview, from the nature of the magical incantations which were always performed by night; all sacrifices were offered by night to the infernal powers, the offering itself was black, to represent the kingdom of darkness: thus also in other poets the moon is said to turn pale at these magical rites, or, as Virgil expresses it,

*Carmina vel coelo possunt deducere lunam.*

And indeed, as Eustathius observes (from whom this note is chiefly translated) it would have been absurd to have represented the realms of darkness surveyed by the light of the day.

v. 3. *Hère the gay morn resides in radiant bow'rs,  
Here keeps her revels———*]

This passage is full of obscurity: for how is it possible to suppose this island of Circe to be the residence of the morning; that is, for the day to rise immediately upon it, when it is known to lie in a western situation? Some have imagined that this is spoken solely with respect to Ulysses, who returning from the shades, might properly say that he arrived at the place where the day resides, that is, to a place enlightened by the sun. Others understand it comparatively, with respect to the Cimmerians, or rather to the realms of death, which Homer places in the west; with regard to these, *Ææa* may be said to lie in the east, or in the poetical language, to be the residence of the morning. Besides, the Circean promontory is of an extraordinary altitude, and consequently the beams at sun-rising may fall upon it; nay, it is said to be illustrated by the sun even by night. Others have conjectured, that what is here said, implies no more than that

Soon as the morn restor'd the day, we pay'd  
Sepulchral honours to Elpenor's shade.

Ulysses landed upon the eastern parts of the island; and lastly, others not improbably, refer the whole to the word *ocean* in the former line, and the whole passage will be clear, and agree with the fable of the sun's rising and setting in the ocean. This is what Eustathius remarks, who adds, that the ancients understood *χοροί* not to signify *dances*, but *χοροί* the *regions of the morning*. I have translated it in the former sense, according to the consent of most interpreters: and I am persuaded it is used to denote the pleasure and gaiety which the sun restores to the whole creation, when dispelling the melancholy darkness, he restores light and gladness to the earth; which is imagined to us by the playing or dancing of the first beams of the sun; or rather of Aurora, who properly may be said to dance, being a goddess. Dacier renders *χοροί*, *dances*; but judges that Homer here follows a fabulous geography, and that as he transported the Cimmerians with all their darkness from the Bosphorus to Campania; so likewise he now removes *Ææa* with all its light from Chelchis into Italy: and therefore the poet gives the properties and situation to the island of Circe, which are only true of the eastern Chelchis.

It is very evident, continues she, that Homer was perfectly acquainted with the Phœnician story; he tells us that Elpenor was buried upon the promontory on the sea-shores, and that it was called by his name, Elpenor. Now the Phœnicians, who endeavoured to naturalize all names in their own language, affirmed, according to Bochart, that this promontory was not so called from Elpenor, but from their word *hilbinor*, which signifies, *ubi albescit lux matutina*; that is, *where the dawning of the day begins to appear*. This promontory being of great height, the rays of the morning might fall upon it; and this tradition might furnish Homer with his fiction of the bowers, and dances of it.

Now by the axe the rushing forest bends,  
 And the huge pile along the shore ascends.  
 Around we stand, a melancholy train, 15  
 And a loud groan re-echoes from the main.  
 Fierce o'er the pyre, by fanning breezes spread,  
 The hungry flame devours the silent dead,  
 A rising tomb, the silent dead to grace,  
 Fast by the roarings of the main we place; 20  
 The rising tomb a lofty column bore,  
 And high above it rose the tapering oar.

Mean-time the \* Goddess our return survey'd  
 From the pale ghosts, and hell's tremendous shade.  
 Swift she descends: a train of nymphs divine 25  
 Bear the rich viands and the generous wine:

What may seem to confirm Dacier's opinion of the transportation of Cholchis into Italy, is the immediate mention the poet makes of Jason, and Æetes king of Cholchis: besides the ancients believed Phasis, a river of Cholchis, to be the bounds of the habitable oriental world: and Ææa being the capital of it, lying upon the Phasis, it might very rationally be mistaken for the place where the sun rose; thus Mimnermus writes,

Ἀιήτασ πόλιν τόθι τ' ὠκεὸς ἠλείοιο.

Ἀκτῖνες χρυσέω κέαται ἐν θαλάμῳ.

Ὠκεανῷ παρὰ χεῖλισ' ἰν' ὄχετο θεῖος Ἴησων.

That is, 'the city of Æetes, where the rays of the sun  
 'appear in a bed of gold, above the margin of the ocean,  
 'where the divine Jason arrived.' This is an evidence  
 that the poet was well acquainted with antiquity, and  
 that, as Strabo judges, his astonishing fictions have truth  
 for their foundation.

\* Circe.

In act to speak the † Pow'r of magic stands,  
And graceful thus accosts the lift'ning bands.

O sons of woe! decreed by adverse fates  
Alive to pass through hell's eternal gates! 30

All, soon or late, are doom'd that path to tread;  
More wretched you! twice number'd with the dead!

This day adjourn your cares; exalt your souls,  
Indulge the taste, and drain the sparkling bowls:  
And when the morn unveils her saffron ray, 35

Spread your broad sails, and plow the liquid way:

Lo I this night, your faithful guide, explain

Your woes by land, your dangers on the main.

The goddess spoke; 'in feasts we waste the day,  
'Till Phoebus downward plung'd his burning ray; 40

Then sable night ascends, and balmy rest

Seals ev'ry eye, and calms the troubled breast.

Then curious she commands me to relate

The dreadful scenes of Pluto's dreary state.

She sat in silence while the tale I tell, 45

The wond'rous visions, and the laws of hell.

Then thus: The lot of man the gods dispose;

These ills are past; now hear thy future woes.

O prince attend! some fav'ring pow'r be kind,

And print th'important story on thy mind! 50

Next, where the Sirens dwell, you plow the seas;

Their song is death, and makes destruction please.

† Circe.

v. 51. *Next, where the Sirens dwell*—] The critics have greatly laboured to explain what was the foun-

Unblest the man, whom music wins to stay  
Nigh the curst shore, and listen to the lay;

elation of this fiction of the Sirens. We are told by some, that the Sirens were queens of certain small islands, named Sirenaeæ, that lie near Capreae in Italy, and chiefly inhabited the promontory of Minerva, upon the top of which that goddess had a temple, as some affirm, built by Ulysses, according to this verse of Seneca, Epist. 77.

*Alta procelloso speculatur vertice Pallas.*

Here, there was a renowned academy in the reign of the Sirens, famous for eloquence and the liberal sciences, which gave occasion for the invention of this fable of the sweetness of the voice, and attracting songs of the Sirens. But why then are they fabled to be destroyers, and painted in such dreadful colours? We are told, that at last the students abused their knowledge, to the colouring of wrong, the corruption of manners, and subversion of government; that is, in the language of poetry, they were feigned to be transformed into monsters, and, with their music, to have enticed passengers to their ruin, who there consumed their patrimonies, and poisoned their virtues with riot and effeminacy. The place is now called Massa. In the days of Homer the Sirens were fabled to be two only in number, as appears from his speaking of them in the dual, as ὄπα Σερήνοισιν, νῆσον Σερήνοισιν; their names, adds Eustathius, were Thelxiepeæ, and Aglaophone. Other writers, in particular Lycophron, mention three Sirens, Ligæa, Parthenope, and Leucosia. Some are of opinion, continues the same author, that they were ψαλτρῆες καὶ ἑταιρίδες; that is, *singing women and harlots*, who, by the sweetness of their voices, drew the unwary to ruin their health and fortune. Others tell us of a certain bay contracted within winding streights and broken cliffs, which, by the singing of the winds, and beating of the waters, returns a delightful harmony; that all-



No more that wretch shall view the joys of life, 55  
 His blooming offspring, or his beauteous wife ?  
 In verdant meads they sport, and wide around  
 Lie human bones, that whiten all the ground ;

lures the passenger to approach, who is immediately thrown against the rocks, and swallowed up by the violent eddies.

But others understand the whole passage allegorically, or as a fable containing an excellent moral, to shew that if we suffer ourselves to be too much allured by the pleasures of an idle life, the end will be destruction : thus Horace moralizes it ;

— *Vitanda est improba Siren*

*Desidia* —————

But the fable may be applied to all pleasures in general, which, if too eagerly pursued, betray the uncautious into ruin ; while wise men, like Ulysses, making use of their reason, stop their ears against their insinuations.

v. 57. ————— *Around*

*Lie human bones, that whiten all the ground.*]

There is a great similitude between this passage and the words of Solomon in the Proverbs, where there is a most beautiful description of an harlot, in the eighth and ninth chapters.

“ I beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among  
 “ the youths, a young man void of understanding ; and  
 “ behold there met him a woman with the attire of an  
 “ harlot, and subtle of heart, *etc.* With her much fair  
 “ speech she caused him to yield, she forced him with  
 “ the flattering of her lips ; he goeth after her straight-  
 “ way, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, but he knoweth  
 “ not that the dead are there, and her guests are in the  
 “ depths of hell.”

This may serve for a comment upon Homer, and it is

The ground polluted floats with human gore,  
And human carnage taints the dreadful shore. 60

Fly swift the dangerous coast; let ev'ry ear  
Be stop'd against the song! 'tis death to hear!  
Firm to the mast with chains thyself be bound,  
Nor trust thy virtue to th'enchanting sound.

If mad with transport, freedom thou demand, 65  
Be every fetter strain'd, and added band to band.

These seas o'erpass'd, be wise! but I refrain  
To mark distinct thy voyage o'er the main:  
New horrors rise! let prudence be thy guide,  
And guard thy various passage through the tide. 70

High o'er the main two rocks exalt their brow,  
The boiling billows thund'ring roll below;

an instance, that without any violence the nature of harlots may be concealed under the the fable of the Sirens.

v. 71. *High o'er the main two rocks*—] There is undoubtedly a great amplification in the description of Scylla and Charybdis; it may not therefore be unnecessary to lay before the reader, what is truth and what fiction.

Thucydides, lib. 4. thus describes it. 'This strait is the sea that flows between Rhegium and Messene, where at the narrowest distance, Sicily is divided from the continent; and this is that part of the sea which Ulysses is said to have passed, and it is called Charybdis: this sea, by reason of the straits, and the course of the Tyrrhene and Sicilian seas breaking violently into it, and there raising great commotions, is with good reason called *καταπνη*, or *destructive*.' Charybdis stands on the coast of Sicily; Scylla on the coast of Italy.

Mr. Sandys examined these rocks and seas with a particular view to the descriptions of the poets: speaking of Charybdis, he writes, 'When the winds begin to ruffle, especially from the south, it forthwith runs round with violent eddies, so that many vessels miscarry by it. The stream through the strait runs toward the Ionian, and part of it sets into the haven, which turning about, and meeting with other streams, makes so violent an encounter, that ships are glad to prevent the danger by coming to an anchor. Scylla, adds he, is seated in the midst of a bay, upon the neck of a narrow mountain, which thrusts itself into the sea, having at the uppermost end, a steep high rock, so celebrated by the poets, and hyperbolically described by Homer as unaccessible. The fables are indeed well fitted to the place, there being divers little sharp rocks at the foot of the greater: These are the dogs that are said to bark there, the waters by their repercussion from them make a noise like the barking of dogs; and the reason why Scylla is said to devour the fishes, as Homer expresses it.

When stung with hunger she embroils the flood,  
 The sea-dog and the dolphin are her food;  
 She makes the huge Leviathan her prey,  
 And all the monsters of the wat'ry way.

'The reason of this is, because these rocks are frequented by lamprons, and greater fishes, that devour the bodies of the drowned. But Scylla is now without danger, the current not setting upon it; and I much wonder at the proverb,

*Incidit in Scyllam qui vult vitare Charybdim,*

'when they stand twelve miles distant: I rather conjecture, adds he, that there has been more than one Charybdis, occasioned by the recoiling streams: as one there is between the south end of this bay of Scylla,

Through the vast waves the dreadful wonders move,  
Hence nam'd Erratic by the gods above.

' and the opposite point of Sicily ; there the waves jutting  
' make a violent eddy, which, when the winds are rough,  
' more than threaten destruction to ships, as I have heard  
' from the Scyllians, when seeking perhaps to avoid the  
' then more impetuous turning, they have been driven by  
' weather upon the not far distant Scylla.'

Strabo, as Eustathius remarks, speaking of the Leontines, says, that they were an inhospitable people, Cyclopeans and Læstrigons : and adds, that Scylla and Charybdis were inhabited by robbers and murderers. From the terrible situation of those rocks, and the murders and depredations of the robbers, these fictions might arise : they might murder six of the companions of Ulysses, and throw them into the sea from Scylla, which may be expressed in their being said to be swallowed up by that monster.

Bochart judges the names of Scylla and Charybdis are of Phœnician extract, the one derived from *Sool*, which signifies *loss* and *ruin* ; the other from *Chorobdam*, which implies the *abyss of destruction*.

It is highly probably that these rocks were more dangerous formerly than at these times, the violence of the waters may not only have enlarged their channel by time, but by throwing up banks and sands have diverted their course from bearing upon these rocks with the same violence as antiently ; add to this, that men by art may have contributed to render these seas more safe, being places of great resort and navigation. Besides, the unskilfulness of the ancients in sea affairs, and the smallness and form of their vessels, might render those seas very dangerous to them, which are safe to modern navigators.

v. 74. *Hence nam'd Erratic*—] It will reconcile the reader in some measure to the boldness of these fictions, if he considers that Homer, to render his poetry more marvellous, joins what has been related of the Symple-

No bird of air, no dove of swiftest wing 75  
That bears ambrosia to th' ætherial king,

gades, to the description of Scylla and Charybdis: such a fiction of the jutting of these rocks could not be shocking to the ears of the ancients, who had before heard of the same property in the Symplegades. The whole fable is perhaps grounded upon appearance: navigators looking upon these rocks at a distance, might in different views, according to the position of the ship, sometimes see them in a direct line, and then they would appear to join, and after they had passed a little further they might look upon them obliquely, and then they would be discovered to be at some distance; and this might give occasion to the fable of their meeting and recoiling alternately. Strabo agrees, that Homer borrowed his description of Scylla and Charybdis from the Symplegades; Homer, says he, describes these like the Cyanean rocks; he continually lays the foundation of his fables upon some well known history: thus he feigns these rocks to be full of dangers and horrors, according to the relations of the Cyanean, which, from their jutting, are called Symplegades.

v. 75. — *No dove of swiftest wing.*

*That bears ambrosia to th' ætherial king.]*

What might give Homer this notion, might be what is related of the Symplegades. Phineus being asked, by Jason, if he could pass those rocks with safety, he desires to know how swift the vessel was; Jason answers, as swift as a dove; then, said Phineus, send a dove between the rocks, and if she escapes, you may pass in safety: Jason complies, and the pigeon, in her passage, lost only her tail; that hero immediately sets sail, and escapes with the loss only of his rudder: this story being reported of the Symplegades, might give Homer the hint of applying the crushing of the doves to Scylla and Charybdis. You may find in Eustathius several far fetched notions upon this passage, but I shall pass them over in silence. Longinus blames it, and

Shuns the dire rocks : in vain she cuts the skies,  
 The dire rocks meet, and crush her as she flies ;  
 Not the fleet bark, when prosp'rous breezes play,  
 Plows o'er that roring surge its desperate way ; 80  
 O'erwhelm'd it sinks : while round a smoke expires,  
 And the waves flashing seem to burn with fires.  
 Scarce the fam'd Argo pass'd these raging floods,  
 The sacred Argo, fill'd with demigods !  
 Ev'n she had sunk, but Jove's imperial bride 85  
 Wing'd her fleet sail, and push'd her o'er the tide.

High in the air the rock its summit shrouds,  
 In brooding tempests, and in rouling clouds ;  
 Loud storms around and mists eternal rise,  
 Beat its bleak brow, and intercept the skies. 90  
 When all the broad expansion bright with day  
 Glows with th' autumnal or the summer ray,  
 The summer and the autumn glows in vain,  
 The sky for ever lours, for ever clouds remain.

I have ventured in the translation to omit that particular which occasioned his censure.

v. 85. — *Jove's imperial bride*  
*Wing'd her fleet sail* — ]

A poet should endeavour to raise his images and expressions, as far as possible above meanness and vulgarity : in this respect no poet was ever more happy than Homer : this place is an instance of it ; it means no more than that while Jason made his voyage, he had favourable winds and serene air. As Juno is frequently used in Homer to denote the air, he ascribes the prosperous wind to that goddess, who presides over the air : thus in poetry, Juno

*Wing'd her fleet sail, and push'd her o'er the tide.*

Eustathius.

Impervious to the step of man it stands, 95  
 Tho' born by twenty feet, tho' arm'd with twenty hands;  
 Smooth as the polish of the mirror rise  
 The slippery sides, and shoot into the skies.  
 Full in the centre of this rock display'd,  
 A yawning cavern casts a dreadful shade: 100  
 Nor the fleet arrow from the twanging bow,  
 Sent with full force, could reach the depth below.  
 Wide to the west the horrid gulph extends,  
 And the dire passage down to hell descends.  
 O fly the dreadful sight! expand thy sails, 105  
 Ply the strong oar, and catch the nimble gales;  
 Here Scylla bellows from her dire abodes,  
 Tremendous pest! abhorr'd by men and gods,  
 Hideous her voice, and with less terrors roar  
 The whelps of lions in the midnight hour. 110

v. 104. *And the dire passage down to hell descends.*] Homer means by hell, the regions of death, and uses it to teach us that there is no passing by this rock without destruction, or in Homer's words, it is a sure passage into the kingdom of death. Eustathius.

v. 109.—*With less terrors roar  
 The whelps of lions—*]

The words in the original are, σκύλακος νεογιλῆς, which, in the proper and immediate sense, do not confine it to the whelps of a lion, but to whelps in general, and perhaps chiefly of the canine kind: νεογιλὸν Eustathius interprets νεωστὶ γινόμενον, or *newly whelped*, and in the latter sense the passage is understood by that author; for he writes, φωνὴ σκύλακος ὀλίγη Σκύλλη δὲ μεγάλη καλὸν; that is, *the voice of a whelp is low, but Scylla is described as an huge monster*; and the poet uses it as we do this expression; *The voice of a wicked man is soft, but his deeds are*

Twelve feet deform'd and foul the fiend dispreads ;  
 Six horrid necks she rears, and six terrific heads ;  
 Her jaws grin dreadful with three rows of teeth ;  
 Jaggy they stand, the gaping den of death :  
 Her parts obscene the raging billows hide ; 115  
 Her bosom terribly o'erlooks the tide.  
 When stung with hunger she embroils the flood,  
 The sea-dog and the dolphin are her food ;

*mischievous and abominable.* I have adventured to translate the words in the other sense, after most interpreters, for Homer expresses the voice of Scylla by *Λεινὸν λελακκῦϊα*; or *uttering a dreadful noise*: now, what he calls her voice, is nothing but the roaring of the waves in storms when they beat against that rock; and this being very loud, is better represented by the roaring of a lion, than the complaining of a young whelp. Chapman follows Eustathius.

*For here the whuling Scylla shrouds her face,  
 That breathes a voice, at all parts, no more base  
 Than are a newly-kitten'd kittling's cries.*

Which is really burlesque enough. Dacier renders the words by *rugissement d'un jeune lion, or the roarings of a young lion.*

v. 118. *The sea-dog and the dolphin are her food.*] Polybius (as Strabo remarks) contends, that Homer, in all his fictions, alludes to the customs of antiquity: for instance, Scylla was a famous fishery for taking such fishes as Homer mentions: this was the manner of taking the sea-dog; several small boats went out only with two men in each, the one rowed, the other stood with his instrument ready to strike the fish; all the boats had one speculator in common, to give notice when the fish approached, which usually swam with more than half of the body above



She makes the huge leviathan her prey,  
 And all the monsters of the wat'ry way ; 120  
 The swiftest racer of the azure plain  
 Here fills her sails and spreads her oars in vain ;  
 Fell Scylla rises, in her fury roars,  
 At once six mouths expands, at once six men devours.  
 Close by, a rock of less enormous height 125  
 Breaks the wild waves, and forms a dang'rous streight ;  
 Full on its crown a fig's green branches rise,  
 And shoot a leafy forest to the skies ;

water : Ulysses is this speculator, who stands armed with his spear ; and it is probable, adds Polybius, that Homer thought Ulysses really visited Scylla, since he ascribes to Scylla that manner of fishing which is really practised by the Scyllians.

v. 127. *Full on its crown a fig's green branches rise.*] These particularities, which seem of no consequence, have a very good effect in poetry, as they give the relation an air of truth and probability. For, what can induce a poet to mention such a tree, if the tree were not there in reality ? Neither is this fig-tree described in vain, it is the means of preserving the life of Ulysses in the sequel of the story. The poet describes the fig-tree loaded with leaves ; even this circumstance is of use, for the branches would then bend downward to the sea by their weight, and be reached by Ulysses more easily. It shews likewise, that this shipwreck was not in winter, for then the branches are naked. Eustathius.

Dacier gathers from hence, that the season was autumn, meaning the time when Ulysses arrived among the Phœacians ; but this is a mistake, for he was cast upon the Ogygian coast by this storm, and there remained with Calypso many years. The branch with which Ulysses girds

Beneath, Charybdis holds her boist'rous reign  
 'Midst roaring whirlpools, and absorbs the main, 130

Thrice in her gulphs the boiling seas subside,

Thrice in dire thunders she refunds the tide.

Oh if thy vessel plow the direful waves

When seas retreating roar within her caves,

Ye perish all! though he who rules the main 135

Lend his strong aid, his aid he lends in vain.

Ah shun the horrid gulph! 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

his loins in the sixth book is described with leaves, and that is indeed a full proof that he was thrown upon the Phæacian shores before the season in which trees shed their leaves, and probably in the autumn.

v. 131. *Thrice in her gulphs the boiling seas subside,  
 Thrice in dire thunders she refunds the tide.*]

Strabo quotes this passage to prove, that Homer understood the flux and reflux of the ocean. 'An instance, says he, of the care that poet took to inform himself in all things, is what he writes concerning the tides, for he calls the reflux ἀψορρόν, or the *revolution of the waters*: he tells us, that Scylla (it should be Charybdis) thrice swallows, and thrice refunds the waves; this must be understood of regular tides.' There are indeed but two tides in a day, but this is the error of the librarians, who put τρις for δις. Eustathius solves the expression of the three tides differently, it ought to be understood of the νυκθήμερος, or the space of the night and day, and then there will be a regular flux and reflux thrice in that time, or every eight hours periodically.

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 dire 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, tremendous 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 flight.

If but to seize thy arms thou make delay,

Again the Fury vindicates her prey,

Her six mouths yawn, and six are snatch'd away.

From her foul womb Cratæis gave to air

156

This dreadful pest! to her direct thy pray'r,

v. 142. *Or if I rise in arms, can Scylla bleed?*] This short question excellently declares the undaunted spirit of of this hero; Circe lays before him the most affrighting danger; Ulysses immediately offers to encounter it, to revenge the death of his friends, and the poet artfully at the same time makes that goddess launch out into the praise of his intrepidity; a judicious method to exalt the character of his hero. Dacier.

v. 156. ——— *Cratæis gave to air*

*This dreadful pest*———]

It is not evident who this Cratæis is whom the poet makes the mother of Scylla: Eustathius informs us that it is Hecate, a goddess very properly recommended by Circe; she, like Circe, being the president over sorceries and enchantments. But why should she be said to be the mother of Scylla? Dacier imagines that Homer speaks enig-

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 ;

matically, and intends to teach us that these monsters are merely the creation or offspring of magic, or poetry.

v. 161. *Where graze thy herds*——] This fiction concerning the immortal herds of Apollo, is bold, but founded upon truth and reality. Nothing is more certain than that in ancient times whole herds of cattle were consecrated to the gods, and were therefore sacred and inviolable : these being always of a fixed number, neither more nor less than at the first consecration, the poet feigns that they never bred or increased : and being constantly supplied upon any vacancy, they were fabled to be immortal, or never to decay ; (for the same cause one of the most famous legions of antiquity was called immortal.) Eustathius informs us, that they were labouring oxen employed in tillage, and it was esteemed a particular profanation to destroy a labouring ox, it was criminal to eat of it, nay, it was forbid to be offered even in sacrifices to the gods ; and a crime punishable with death by the laws of Solon : so that the moral intended by Homer, in this fable of the violation of the herds of Apollo, is, that in our utmost necessity we ought not to offend the gods. As to the flocks of sheep, Herodotus informs us, that in Apollonia along the Ionian gulph, flocks of sheep were consecrated to that deity, and were therefore inviolable.

Lampetie fair, and Phaethusa young,  
 From Phœbus and the bright Neæra sprung :  
 Here warchful o'er the flocks, in shady bow'rs  
 And flow'ry meads they waste the joyous hours. 170  
 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 talk bark, and rush'd into the main ;

v. 179. *Swift to her dome the goddess held her way.* ]  
 It is very judicious in the poet not to amuse us with repeating the compliments that passed between these two lovers at parting : the commerce Ulysses held with Circe was so far from contributing to the end of the *Odyssey*, that it was one of the greatest impediments to it ; and therefore Homer dismisses that subject in a few words, and passes on directly to the great sufferings and adventures of his hero, which are essential to the poem. But it may not be unnecessary to observe how artfully the poet connects this episode of Circe with the thread of it ; he makes even the goddess, who detains him from his country, contribute to his return thither, by the advice she gives him how to escape the dangers of the ocean, and how to behave in the difficult emergencies of his voyages : it is true, she detains him out of fondness, but yet this very fondness is of use to him, since it makes a goddess his instructor, and as it were, a guide to his country.

Then bending to the stroke, their oars they drew  
 To their broad breasts, and swift the galley flew.  
 Up sprung a brisker breeze; with freshning 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 dangerous 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 dæmon calm'd the air, and smooth'd the deep,  
 Hush'd the loud winds, and charm'd the waves to sleep.  
 Now every 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 every ear I barr'd against the strain,  
 And from access of Phrenzy lock'd the brain.  
 Now round the mast my mates the fetters 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!

v. 222. *O stay, oh pride of Greece! Ulysses stay!*] There are several things remarkable in this short song of the Sirens: one of the first words they speak is the name of Ulysses, this shews that they had a kind of omniscience; and it could not fail of raising the curiosity of a wise man, to be acquainted with persons of such extensive knowledge: the song is well adapted to the character of Ulysses; it is not pleasure or dalliance with which they tempt that hero, but a promise of wisdom, and a recital of the war of Troy and his own glory. Cicero was so pleased with these verses, that he translated them, lib. 5. de finibus bon. et mal.

*O Decus Argolicum, quin puppim flectis Ulysses,  
 Auribus ut nostros possis agnoscere cantus?  
 Nam nemo hæc unquam est transvectus cæcula cursu,  
 Quin prius adstiterit vocum dulcedine captus;  
 Post, variis avido satiatus pectore musis,  
 Doctior ad patrias lapsus pervenerit oras.  
 Nos grave certamen belli, clademque tenemus  
 Græcia quam Trojæ divino numine vexit,  
 Omniaque elatis rerum vestigia terris.*

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 tremendous scenes unfold ; 240  
 Thunder'd the deeps, the smoking billows roll'd !

Homer saw, says Tully, that his fable could not be approved, if he made his hero to be taken with a mere song: the Sirens therefore promise knowledge, the desire of which might probably prove stronger than the love of his country: to desire to know all things, whether useful or trifles, is a faulty curiosity; but to be led from the contemplation of things great and noble, to a thirst of knowledge, is an instance of greatness of soul.

v. 241.—*The smoking billows roll'd.*] What is to be understood by the smoke of the billows? Does the poet mean a real fire arising from the rocks? Most of the critics have judged that the rock vomited out flames; for Homer mentions in the beginning of this book,



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 drop'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.

I have taken the liberty to translate both these passages in a different sense ; by the smoke I understand the mists that arise from the commotion and dashing of the waters ; and by the *storms of fire*, as Homer expresses it, the reflexions the water casts in such agitations that resembles flames ; thus in storms literally

———*Ardescunt ignibus undæ.*

Scylla and Charybdis are in a continual storm, and may therefore be said to emit flames. I have softened the expression in the translation by inserting the word *seem*.

Ulysses continues upon one of these rocks several hours ; that is, from morning till noon, as appears from the conclusion of this book ; for leaping from the float, he laid hold upon a fig-tree that grew upon Charybdis ; but both the fig-tree and Ulysses must have been consumed, if the rock had really emitted flames.

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

Plutarch excellently explains this passage in his Dissertation, *How a man may praise himself without blame or envy* : ‘ Ulysses, says that author, speaks not out of vanity ; he saw his companions terrified with the noise, tumult, and smoke of the gulphs of Scylla and Charybdis ; he therefore, to give them courage, reminds them

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

‘ them of his wisdom and valour, which they found had  
 ‘ frequently extricated them from other dangers : this is  
 ‘ not vain-glory or boasting, but the dictate of wis-  
 ‘ dom ; to infuse courage into his friends, he engages his  
 ‘ virtue, prowess, and capacity for their safety, and shews  
 ‘ what confidence they ought to repose in his conduct.’  
 Virgil puts the words of Ulysses in the mouth of Æneas.

*O socii, neque enim ignari sumus ante malorum,*

*O passi graviora; dabit deus his quoque finem.*

*Vos et Scyllæam rabiem penitusque sonantes*

*Accestitis scopulos : vos et Cyclopea saxa*

*Experti, revocate animos, mæstumque timorem*

*Mittite. Forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit.*

It must be allowed, that Virgil has improved what he borrows ; it tends more to confirm the courage of his friends than what Ulysses speaks : Macrobius is of this opinion ; Saturn. lib. 5. cap. 11. Ulysses lays before his companions only one instance of his conduct in escaping dangers, Æneas mentions a second : there is something more strong in.

—*Forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit,*

than in *καὶ πστῶν μνήσεσθαι δῖω* ; not only as it gives them hope to escape, but as it is an assurance that this very danger shall be a pleasure, and add to their future happiness : it is not only an argument of resolution but consolation. Scaliger agrees with Macrobius, *Ex ipsis periculis proponit voluptatem : nihil enim jucundius ea memoria quæ periculorum evasionem, victoriamque recodatione repræsentat.*

If from yon jutting 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 javelins lighten in my hand;

v. 268. ——— *Forgetful of the voice divine,  
 All dreadful bright my limbs in armour shine.*]

This seemingly small circumstance is not without a good effect: it shews that Ulysses even by the injunctions of a goddess, cannot lay aside the hero. It is not out of a particular care of his own safety that he arms himself, for he takes his stand in the most open and dangerous part of the vessel. It is an evidence likewise that the death of his companions is not owing to a want of his protection; for it is plain that, as Horace expresses it,

*Dum sibi, dum sociis reditum parat, aspera multa  
 Pertulit*—————

By this conduct we see likewise, that all the parts of the Odyssey are consistent, and that the same care of his companions, which Homer ascribes to Ulysses in the first lines of it, is visible through the whole poem.

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 labouring eyes I roll'd; 275  
 In vain! the dismal dungeon dark as night  
 Veils the dire monster, and confounds the fight.

Now through the rocks, appal'd with deep dismay,  
 We bend our course, and stem the desp'rate way;  
 Dire Scylla there a scene 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 tofs, 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;

v. 283. *The rough rock roars*——] I doubt not every reader who is acquainted with Homer, has taken notice in this book, how he all along adapts his verses to the horrible subject he describes, and paints the roarings of the ocean in words as sonorous as that element. Δεινὸν ἀνεπρόσβδησε——τρεῖς ἀναγοιβδέει——ἀναβροῦζειε——βόμβησεν, etc. *Subjicit rem oculis, et aurium nostrarum dominus est*, says Scaliger. It is impossible to preserve the beauty of Homer, in a language so much inferior; but I have endeavoured to imitate what I could not equal. I have clogged the verse with the roughness and identity of a letter, which is the hardest our language affords; and clogged it with monosyllables, that the concurrence of the rough letters might be more quick and close in the pronunciation, and the most open and sounding vowel occur in every word.

When in her gulphs the rustling seas subsides,  
 She dreins the ocean with the reflux tides :  
 The rock rebellows with a thund'ring found ; 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 quivering 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 overhangs the flood, 300  
 The silent fisher casts the insidious food,  
 With fraudulent care he waits the finny prize,  
 And sudden lifts it quivering 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 !

v. 300. *As from some rock that overhangs the flood,  
 The silent fisher———]*

These tender and calm similitudes have a peculiar beauty, when introduced to illustrate such images of terror as the poet here describes: they set off each the other by an happy contrast, and become both more strong by opposition. Eustathius remarks, that there is always a peculiar sweetness in allusions that are borrowed from calm life, as fishing, hunting, and rural affairs.

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 herd along the main  
To low the ox, to bleat the woolly train ;  
Strait to my anxious thought 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 begun.

O friends ! oh ever exercis'd in care !  
Hear heav'n's commands, and rev'rence 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 }  
Through ev'ry breast, and spread from man to man, }  
'Till wrathful thus Eurylochus began.

O cruel thou ! some fury sure has steel'd  
That stubborn soul, by toil untaught to yield !

v. 314. *To Sol's bright isle*—] This isle is evidently Sicily ; for he has already informed us, that these herds were on Trinacria (so antiently called from the three promontories of Lilybæum, Pelorus ; and Pachynus.)

v. 332. *'Till wrathful thus Eurylochus began.*] Ho-

From sleep debarr'd, we sink from woes to woes ; 335

And cruel, enviest thou a short repose ?

Still 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,

Though gods descend from heav'n's aerial 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 every bosom rose ;

So will'd some dæmon, 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'ns, and call the gods to hear :

Content, an innocent repast display,

By Circe giv'n, and fly the dang'rous prey.

mer has found out a way to turn reproach into praise. What Eurylochus speaks in his wrath against Ulysses as a fault, is really his glory ; it shews him to be indefatigable, patient in adversity, and obedient to the decrees of the gods. And what still heightens the panygyric, is, that it is spoken by an enemy, who must therefore be free from all suspicion of flattery. Dacier.

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

v. 363.—*And now (their hunger fled)*

*Sigh for their friends devour'd, and mourn the dead.*] This conduct may seem somewhat extraordinary; the companions of Ulysses appear to have forgot their lost friends, they entertain themselves with a due refreshment, and then find leisure to mourn; whereas a true sorrow would more probably have taken away all appetite. But the practice of Ulysses's friends is consonant to the customs of antiquity: it was esteemed a prophanation and a piece of ingratitude to the gods, to mix sorrow with their entertainments: the hours of repast were allotted to joy, and thanksgiving to heaven for the bounty it gave to man by sustenance. Besides, this practice bears a secret instruction, viz. that the principal care is owing to the living; and when that is over, the dead are not to be neglected. Æneas and his friends are drawn in the same attitude by Virgil:

*Postquam exempta fames epulis, mensaque remota,  
 Amisos longo socios sermone requirunt;  
 Præcipue pius Æneas, nunc acris Oronti,  
 Nunc Amyci casum genit, etc.*



The moon, the stars, the bright ætherial 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 lilt'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 through 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 meagre 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 ;

v. 395. *Pensive and pale from grove to grove I stray'd.*] It was necessary, remarks Eustathius, for the poet to invent some pretext to remove Ulysses ; if he had been present, his companions dared not to have disobeyed

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 Eurylochus 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 Pow'rs 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 Phœbus shrines shall rise, and altars burn.

him openly ; or if they had, it would have shewd a want of authority, which would have been a disparagement to that hero. Now what pretext could be more rational than to suppose him withdrawn to offer up his devotions to the gods ? his affairs are brought to the utmost extremity, his companions murmur, and hunger oppresses. The poet, therefore, to bring about the crime of these offenders by probable methods, represents Ulysses retiring to supplicate the gods ; a conduct which they ought to have imitated : besides, there is a poetical justice observed in the whole relation, and by the piety of Ulysses, and the guilt of his companions, we acknowledge the equity when we see them perish, and Ulysses preserved from all his dangers.

v. 412. *To Phœbus shrines shall rise*—] Eurylochus puts on an air of piety to persuade his companions to commit sacrilege : *Let us sacrifice, says he, to the gods :*

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 bees 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' ætherial train,  
Slay the selected bees, 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.

as if obedience were not better than sacrifice. Homer understood the nature of man, which is studious to find excuses to justify our crimes ; and we often offend, merely through hopes of a pardon. Dacier.

The word in the original is ἀγάλματα, which does not signify statues, but ornaments, ἀναθήματα, hung up, or reposed in the temples ; such as,

——— Ἀγλαίης ἔνεκα κομώσιν ἄνακτις,

or, as it is expressed in the Iliad,

——— Βασιλῆϊ κέεται ἀγαλμα.

Hesychius interprets ἀγαλμα to be πᾶν ἐφ' ᾧ τις ἀγάλλεται, ἐκ ὧς συνηθεία ζόανον ; that is, ἀγαλμα signifies every ornament with which a person is delighted or adorned ; not a statue, as it is understood by the generality. Dacier, Eustathius.

The thighs thus offer'd, and the entrails drest,  
They roast the fragments, and prepare the feast. 430

'Twas 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 writen brand! 445  
Slain are those herds which I with pride survey,  
When through the ports of heav'n I pour the day,  
Or deep in ocean plunge the burning ray. }  
Vengeance, ye gods! or I the skies forgo, 450  
And bear the lamp of heav'n to shades below.

v. 451. *And bear the lamp of heaven to shades below* ] This is a very bold fiction, for how can the sun be imagined to illuminate the regions of the dead; that is, to shine within the earth, for there the realm of Pluto is placed by Homer? I am persuaded the meaning is only that he would no more rise, but leave the earth and heavens in perpetual darkness. Erebus is in the west, where the sun sets, and consequently when he disappears he may

To whom the thund'ring Pow'r : O source of day !  
 Whose radiant lamp adorns the azure way,  
 Still may thy beams thro' 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.

be said to be sunk into the realms of darkness or Erebus.

Perhaps the whole fiction might be founded really upon the observation of some unusual darkness of the sun, either from a total eclipse or other causes, which happened at the time when some remarkable crime was committed, and gave the poets liberty to feign that the sun withdrew his light from the view of it. Thus at the death of Cæsar the globe of the sun was obscured, or gave but a weak light, says Plutarch, a whole year; and Plin lib. 2. 80. *fiunt prodigiosi et longiores solis defectus, totius pæne anni pallore continuo.* This Virgil directly applies to the the horror of the sun, conceived at the death of Cæsar, Georg. 1.

*Ille etiam extincto miseratus Cesare Roman,  
 Cum caput obscura nitidum ferrugine textit,  
 Impiæque æternam timuerunt secula noctem.*

And if Virgil might say that the sun withdrew his beams at the impiety of the Romans, why may not Homer say the same, concerning the crime of the companions of Ulysses? Dacier imagines that Homer had heard of the sun's standing still at the voice of Joshua; for if, says she, he could stand still in the upper region, why may not he do the same in the contrary hemisphere, that is, in the language of Homer, *bear his lamps to shades below?* But this seems to be spoken without any foundation, there being no occasion to have recourse to that miraculous event for a solution.

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

Mean-time from man to man my tongue exclaims, 460  
My wrath is kindled, and my soul in flames.  
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;

v. 458. *To fair Calypso, from the bright abodes,*

*Hermes convey'd these councils of the gods.]*

These lines are inserted, as Eustathius observes, solely to reconcile the story to credibility; for, how was it possible for Ulysses to arrive at the knowledge of what was done in heaven, without a discovery made by some of the deities? The persons by whom these discourses of the gods are discovered are happily chosen; Mercury was the messenger of heaven, and it is this god who descends to Calypso, in the fifth of the *Odyssey*; so that there was a correspondence between Calypso and Mercury; and therefore he is a proper person to make this discovery to that goddess, and she, out of affection, to Ulysses.

v. 464. *Now heav'n gave signs of wrath; along the  
ground*

*Crept the raw hides——]*

This passage, says Eustathius, gave an occasion of laughter to men disposed to be merry, *λάβας γελοιασµὸς δέδωκε τοῖς παιζέειν ἐδέλκσι.* He adds, that the terrors of a guilty conscience drove the companions of Ulysses into these imaginations: guilt is able to create a phantom in a moment, so that these appearances were nothing but the illusions of disturbed imagination. He cites a passage

The seventh arose, and now the fire of gods  
Rein'd the rough storms, and calm'd the tossing floods :

from the Calliope of Herodotus to vindicate Homer : Artayctes a Persian general had plundered a temple in which was the tomb of Protefilaus, where great riches were deposited ; afterwards he was besieged in Sestus, and taken prisoner : one day, one of his guards was boiling salted fishes (τάριχοι) : and they leaped, and moved as if they had been alive, and newly taken out of the water : divers persons crouded about the place, and wondered at the miracle ; when Artayctes said, ' Friends, you are not at all concerned in this miracle : Protefilaus, though dead, admonishes me by this sign, that the gods have given him power to revenge the injury I offered to his monument in Eleus.' But this is justifying one fable by another ; and this looks also like the effects of a guilty conscience.

This is not among the passages condemned by Longinus ; and indeed it was no way blameable, if we consider the times when it was spoken, and the persons to whom it is related : I mean the Phæacians, who were delighted with such wonders. What was said injudiciously by a great writer, may very properly be applied to these people, *credo, quia impossibile est*. But we need not have recourse to their credulity for a vindication of this story : Homer has given us an account of all the abstruse arts, such as necromancy, witchcraft, and natural portents ; here he relates a prodigy, the belief of which universally prevailed among the ancients : let any one read Livy, and he will find innumerable instances of prodigies, equally incredible as this, which were related by the wise, and believed, at least by the vulgar. Thus we read of speaking oxen, the sweating of the statues of the gods, in the best Roman histories. If such wonders might have a place in history, they may certainly be allowed room in poetry, whose province is fable : it signifies nothing whether a

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.

story be true or false, provided it be established by common belief, or common fame; this is a sufficient foundation for poetry. Virgil, Georg. I. 475.

———*Pecudesque locute*

*Infandum! sistunt amnes, etc.*

The days of wonder are now over, and therefore a poet would be blameable to make use of such impossibilities in these ages: they are now almost universally disbelieved, and therefore would not be approved as bold fictions, but exploded as wild extravagancies.

v. 477. ——— *And now out flies*

*The gloomy west, etc.]*

Longinus, while he condemns the *Odyssey* as wanting fire, through the decay of Homer's fancy, excepts the descriptions of the tempests, which he allows to be painted with the boldest and strongest strokes of poetry. Let any person read that passage in the 5th book, and he will be convinced of the fire of Homer's fancy.

ὦς ἔειπὼν σὺναγεν νεφέλας ἐτάραξε δὲ πόντον  
Χερσὶ τρίαιναν ἔλων, πάσας δ' ὀρόθυεν ἀέλλας  
Πηνελόων ἀνέμων, σὺν δὲ νεφέεσσι χάλυψε  
Γαῖαν οὐκ καὶ πόντον. ὀρώρει δ' ἐξανόθεν νύξ.

The two last lines are here repeated; and Scaliger, a second Zoilus of Homer, allows them to be *omnia pulchra*,



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.

*plena, gravia*, p. 469. There is a storm in the very words, and the horrors of it are visible in the verses.

Virgil was a master of too much judgment, not to embellish his *Æneid* with this description.

*Incubuerè mari, totumque a sedibus imis  
 Una Eurùsque Notusque ruunt, creberque procellis  
 Africus, et vastos volvunt ad littora fluctus,  
 Eripiunt subito nubes cœlumque diemque  
 Teucrorum ex oculis : ponto nox incubit atra.*

These are almost literally translated from the above-mentioned verses of Homer, and these following ;

Σὺν δ' Εὐρος τε Νότος τ' ἔπεσε, Ζεφυρός τε δυσσαΐης  
 Καὶ Βορέης ἀιθηγενέτης, μέγα κῦμα κυλίνθων.

Scaliger calls the verses of Homer, *divina oratio*, but prefers those of Virgil. *Totumque a sedibus imis*, is stronger than ἐτάραξε πόντον, etc. and Ἀιθηγενέτης is an ill chosen epithet to be used to describe a storm, for it carries an image of serenity. But that is to be understood of the general nature of that wind : as a river may be said to be gentle, though capable to be swelled into a flood. But I leave the preference to the reader's judgment.

v. 483. *The pilot by the tumbling ruin slain.*] There is a great similitude between this passage and some verses in Virgil, in which, as Scaliger judges, and perhaps with reason, the preference is to be given to the Roman poet.

Then Jove in anger bids his thunder roll, 485  
 And fork'y lightnings flash from pole to pole;  
 Fierce at our heads his deadly bolt he aims,  
 Red with uncommon wrath, and wrapt in flames:  
 Full on the bark it fell; now high, now low,  
 Tofs'd and retofs'd, it reel'd beneath the blow; 490

*Tenuissima*, says that critic, *et levisima ulitur narratione  
 Homerus.*

Πλῆξε χυθιερνήτεω κεφαλὴν, σὺν δ' ὀσεία ἀραξε  
 Πάντ' ἀμυθδὶς κεφαλῆς, ὃ δ' ἀρνευτῆρι εἰοικυς  
 Κάπεσι——

And again,

——πετον δ' ἐκ νηὸς ἐτραῖροι  
 Ὅι δὲ κορώνησιν, ἴκελοι περὶ νῆα μέλαιναν.  
 Κύμασιν ἐμφορέοντο.

——*Ingens a vertice pontus*

*In puppim ferit; excutitur, pronuspue magister  
 Volvitur in caput.*

——*Ast illam ter fluctus ibidem*

*Torquet agens circum, et rapidus vorat æquore vortex, 1  
 Apparent vari nantes in gurgite vasto*

There is certainly better versification in these lines of Virgil, than in those of Homer: there is better colouring, and they set the thing they describe full before our eyes. Virgil has omitted the two short similitudes of the diver, and the sea-mews, despairing perhaps to make them shine in the Roman language. There is a third simile in Homer of the bat or bird of night Νύκτερις, which is introduced to represent Ulysses clinging round the fig-tree. It is true the whole three are taken from low subjects, but they very well paint the thing they were intended to illustrate.

At once into the main the crew it shook :

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,

Snapt 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 gulphs 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 pendent round it clasps his leathern wings.

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 wave 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 reflux waves.  
 Swift from the tree, the floating mast to gain,  
 Sudden I drop'd amidst the flashing main;

v. 519. *What time the judge forsakes the noisy bar  
 To take repast———*]

This passage has been most egregiously misunderstood by Mons. Perrault. Ulysses being carried, says that author, on his mast towards Charybdis, leaps from it, and clings like a bat round a fig-tree, waiting till the return of the mast from the gulph of it; and adds, that when he saw it, he was as glad as a judge when he rises from his seat to go to dinner, after having tried several causes. But Boileau fully vindicates Homer in his reflections on Longinus: before the use of dials or clocks, the ancients distinguished the day by some remarkable offices or stated employments: as from the dining of the labourer;

———*What time in some sequester'd vale  
 The weary woodman spreads his sparing meal.*

Iliad XI. ver. 119. See the annotation; so here, from the rising of the judges, and both denote the mid day, or noontide hour. Thus it is used by Hippocrates, who, speaking of a person wounded with a javelin in the liver, says he died *πρὶν ἀγορὴν λυθῆναι*, a little before the breaking up of the assembly, or before the judge rises from his tribunal: or, as some understand it, a little before the finishing of the market: there is a parallel expression in Xenophon, *καὶ ἤδη τε ἀμφὶ ἀγορὴν πλήθεσαν*. This rising of the judge, Perrault mistakes for a comparison, to express the joy which Ulysses conceived at the sight of the return of his mast; than which nothing can be more distant from Homer's sentiment.

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.

From this description we may precisely learn the time that passed while Ulysses clung round the fig-tree.

————— *At the dawn of day*

*Fast by the rocks I plow'd the desp'rate way.*

So that at morning he leaped from his float, and about noon recovered it: now, Eustathius affirms, that in the space of twenty-four hours there are three tides, and dividing that time into three parts, Ulysses will appear to have remained upon the rock eight hours. The exact time when the judge rose from his tribunal is not apparent: Boileau supposes it to be about three o'clock in the afternoon, Dacier about two; but the time was certain among the ancients, and is only dubious to us, as we are ignorant of the hour of the day when the judge entered his tribunal, and when he left it.

v. 132. *When the tenth sun descended to the main.*] This account is very extraordinary. Ulysses continued upon the mast ten days, and consequently ten days without any nourishment. Longinus brings this passage as an instance of the decay of Homer's genius, and his launching out into extravagant fables. I wonder Eustathius should be silent about this objection; but Dacier endeavours to vindicate Homer, from a similar place in the *Acts of the Apostles*, chap. xxvii. ver. 33. where St. Paul says of the sailors, *This is the fourteenth day that ye have*

There in Calypso's ever fragrant bow'rs  
Refresh'd I lay, and joy beguil'd the hours.

*carried, and continued fasting, having taken nothing.* Now, if the sailors in the *Acts* could fast fourteen days, why might not Ulysses fast ten? But this place by no means comes up to the point. The words are *τεσσαρεσκαίδεκάτην σήμερον ἡμέραν προσδοκῶντες*, that is, expecting the fourteenth day (which is to-day) you continue without eating; so the meaning is, they had taken no food all that day; the danger was so great that they had no leisure to think of hunger. This is the literal construction of the word, and implies, that out of expectation of the fourteenth day (which they looked upon as a critical time when their danger would be at the highest) they had forgot to take their usual repast: and not that they had fasted fourteen days. But if any person thinks, that the fasting is to be applied to the whole fourteen days, it must be in that latitude wherein interpreters expound Hesiod.

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which signifies, not that they eat no meat at all, but that they had not leisure through their danger to observe the usual and stated hours of repast: they eat in their arms, with their hands fouled with blood. But I take the former sense to be the better. Besides, it is impossible to make this place of any service to Homer; for, if these men continued so long fasting, it was a miraculous fast; and how can this be applied to Ulysses, who is not imagined to owe his power of fasting to any supernatural assistance? But it is almost a demonstration that the sailors in the *Acts* eat during the tempest: why should they abstain? It was not for want of food; for at St. Paul's injunction they take some sustenance: now, it is absurd to imagine a miracle to be performed, when common and

My following fates to thee, oh king, are known, 535  
 And the bright partner of thy royal throne.  
 Enough: in misery can words avail?  
 And what so tedious as a twice-told tale?

easy means were at hand to make such a supernatural act unnecessary. If they had been without food, then indeed a miracle might have been supposed to supply it. If they had died through fasting, when meat was at hand, they would have been guilty of starving themselves. If therefore we suppose a miracle, we must suppose it to be wrought to prevent men from being guilty of wilful self-murder, which is an absurdity.

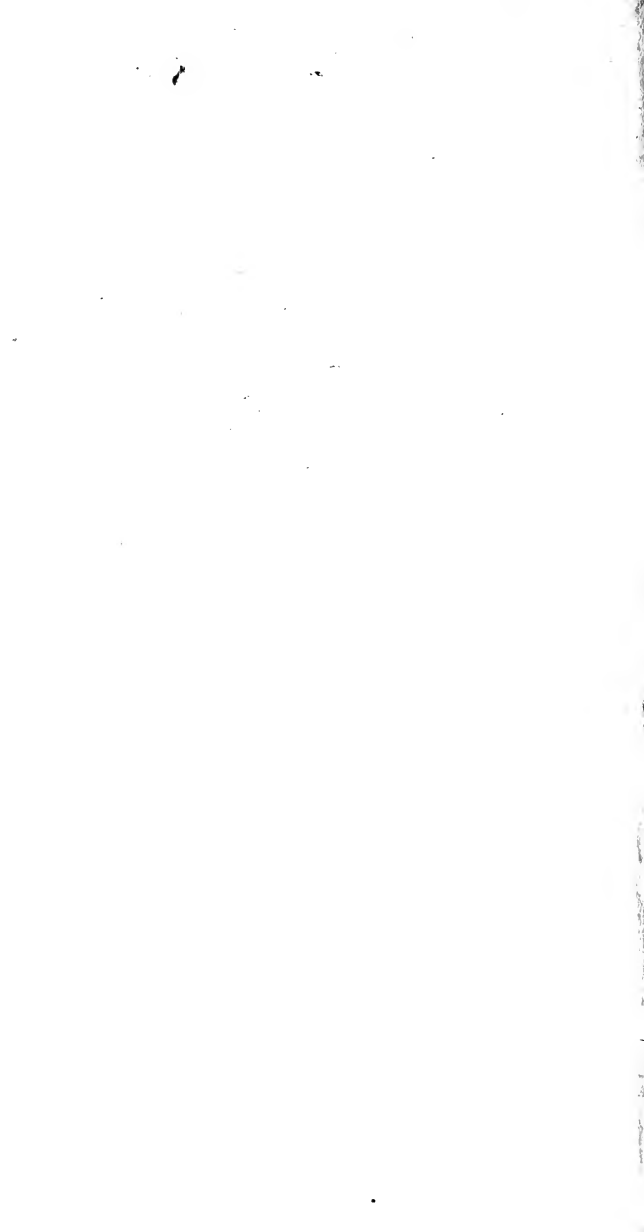
Besides, the word *ἀσιτος* is used to denote a person who takes no food for the space of one day only, as *μονόσιτος* signifies a person who eats but one meal in the compass of one day; this therefore is an evidence, that the sailors in the *Ætis* had not been without sustenance fourteen days.

In short, I am not in the number of those who think Homer has no faults; and unless we imagine Ulysses to have fasted ten days by the assistance of the gods, this passage must be allowed to be extravagant: it is true, Homer says, the gods guided him to the Ogygian shores; but he says not a word to soften the incredibility of the fasting of Ulysses, through any assistance of the gods. I am therefore inclined to subscribe to the opinion of Longinus, that this relation is faulty; but say with Horace,

—————*Non ego paucis*

*Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,*

*Aut humana parum cavit natura.*





5/2/36

