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The Odyssey Of Homer

Translated from the Greek

Homerus

London, 1726


The Twenty-First Book Of The Odyssey.

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THE
TWENTY-FIRST BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.

The





The ARGUMENT

The bending of Ulyſſes's bow.

Penelope, to put an end to the ſolicitation of Suitors, propoſes to marry the perſon who ſhall firſt bend the bow of Ulyſſes, and ſhoot thro' ringlets. After their attempts have prov'd effectual, Ulyſſes taking Eumæus and Philoetichus apart, diſcovers himſelf to them; then turning, deſires leave to try his ſtrength at bow, which, tho' refus'd with indignation by the Suitors, Penelope and Telemachus conſent to be deliver'd to his hands. He bends it immediately, and ſhoots thro' all the rings. Juſt in the ſame inſtant thunders from Heaven. Ulyſſes accepts the Omen, and gives a ſign to Telemachus, who ſtands ready arm'd at ſide.

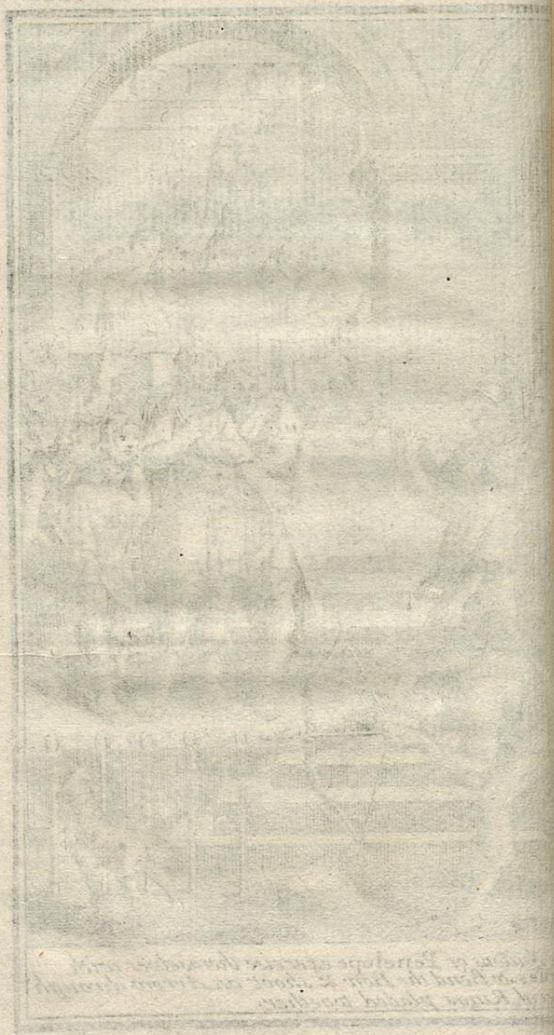
TH





H *The Suitors of Penelope exercise themselves with Ulysses, to Bend the Bow & shoot an Arrow through several Rings placed together.*

P. Fourdrinier sculp.



F.



THE
 TWENTY-FIRST BOOK
 OF THE
 ODYSSEY.

AND *Pallas* now, to raise the rivals fires,
 With her own art *Penelope* inspires:
 Who now can bend *Ulysses* bow, and wing
 The well-aim'd arrow thro' the distant ring,

Sham

NOTES.

This book is entitled *Tige Hori*, or the proposition of the Bow: This action of *Penelope* has given occasion of raillery both to modern and ancient Critics; they insinuate that she propos'd this exercise of the bow to try the strength of her gallants, determining to have regard to that single qualification in the choice of her husband.

*Penelope vires juvenum tentabat in arcu,
 Qui latus argueret, cornus arcus erat.*

Vol. V.

C

They



¶ Shall end the strife, and win th' imperial dame;
But Discord and black Death await the game!

The prudent Queen the lofty stair ascends,
At distance due a virgin-train attends;

They interpret *πρωτὴν ἐπέβηται* into a sense very contrary to the character of *Penelope*. 'Tis true, other Authors have directly charged her with In chastity, and affirm that she had a son named *Pan*, because all the Suitors had a share in him. *Lycophron* call her

Βαστάρα στυμῶς καοσσοῦσαν.

It is the exercise of the Bow that has occasion'd these imputations; for none of *Homer's* Commentators have given the reason why she proposes that exercise in particular; and therefore seeing no reason for it, they have invented a false one, and give the story in a ridiculous air: I flatter my self that a better solution may be found out, and a reason given why *Penelope* proposes this exercise in particular, and preferably to any other.

We are to remember that this day was sacred to *Apollo*; this is evident from the preceding book, where the *Ithacans* offer an Heer tomb in a grove consecrated to that Deity: The diversion suits the day, the exercise of the bow being proper to be practis'd on the festival of that Deity, who is the patron of it. Several of the titles of *Apollo* are derived from it; *Ἐκέρπυος*, *Ἐκατηβόλος*, *Ἄρτεμιος*. It is strange that this necessary observation should escape the notice of all Commentators.

If any thing further were wanting to reconcile us to the conduct of *Penelope* in proposing the Bow, an instance almost parallel to it might be produc'd from History. When *Cambyses* was preparing to make war against *Ethiopia*, the King of that country bent his great bow with two fingers in the presence of the *Persian* Ambassadors, and unbending it again, deliver'd it to them with these words: That when the *Persians* could do the like, they might hope to conquer the *Ethiopians*. There is nothing more absurd in the delivery of the bow to the Suitors by *Penelope*, than in the same act of the *Ethiopian* King to the *Persian* Ambassadors.

A brazen

Book XXI. HOMER's ODYSSEY.

A brazen key she held, the handle turn'd,
 10 With steel and polish'd elephant adorn'd:
 Swift to the inmost room she bent her way,
 Where safe repos'd the royal treasures lay;

v. 9. *A brazen key she held, &c.*] The numerous particularities and digressive Histories crowded together in the beginning of this book have not escaped censure. The Poet very circumstantially describes the key, and the make of it, as likewise the bow and quiver, then tells us who gave it to *Ulysses*; at the mention of the donor's name he starts into a little History of him, and returns not in many lines to his subject; he then no less circumstantially describes the chamber, and the frame of the door, he descends to every particular of *Penelope's* opening it, and every step and motion she takes till she produces the bow before the Suitors. This conduct has been liable to objection, as made up of particulars of small importance, to no propos'd end. But notwithstanding, every circumstance is not without its effect and beauty, and nothing better shews the power of the Poet's diction. So great a Critic as *Vida* admir'd this very passage. *Poetic. lib. 2.*

*Ipse procos etiam ut jussit certare sagittis
 Penelope, optatas promittens callida tadas
 Victori, per quanta mora dispendia mentes
 Suspensas trahit, ante viri quam proferet arcum?*

The Poet adapts his verse to the nature of his subject; the description lingers, to express the studied delay of *Penelope*, and her unwillingness to bring affairs to a decision. However I will not promise that these digressions and ancient histories will please every Reader; the passage is so far from being faulty, that it is really an instance of *Homer's* judgment; yet every thing that is not a fault, is not a beauty. The case is, *Penelope* propoies the tryal of the bow, merely to protract time from the nuptials; she is slow in producing it for the same reason; and *Homer*, to paint this slowness in a lively manner, lets the subject of the Poem stand still, and wanders out of the way, that he may not come too soon to the end of his journey.

There shone high-heap'd the labour'd brass and ore,
And there the bow which great *Ulysses* bore,

15 And there the quiver, where now guileless slept 25
Those winged deaths that many a matron wept.

This gift, long since when *Sparta's* shores he trod,
On young *Ulysses Iphitus* bestow'd:

Beneath *Ortilochus* his roof they meat;

20 One loss was private, one a publick debt: 30

Messena's state from *Ithaca* detains

Three hundred sheep, and all the shepherd swains;

An

v. 21. *Messena's state, &c.*] It has been disputed whether *Messene* here was a city or a country; *Strabo* affirms it to be a country, *lib.* 8. It was a port of *Laconia*, under the dominion of *Menelaus* in the time of the war of *Troy*; and then (continues the Author) the city named *Messene* was not built. *Pausanias* is of the same opinion, *lib.* 4. c. 1. "Before the battle of *Leuctra* betwixt the *Thebans* and *Lacedaemonians*, it is my judgment that there was no City call'd *Messene*; this is evident from the words of *Homer*,"

Τὸ δ' ἐν Μεσσηνί Συμβλήτων ἀλλήλοισι
Ὅμιον ἐν Ὀρτιλόχοιο.

Now *Ortilochus* lived in *Phera*, a city of *Messenia*, and consequently *Ulysses* and *Iphitus* meeting at his Palace in *Messene*, *Homer* must mean the country, not the city. That *Ortilochus* lived in *Phera*, appears from the third *Odyssey*.

Ἐς Φηρὰς δ' ἰκόντο Διοκλῆος ποτὶ δῶμα,
Υἱὸς Ὀρτιλόχοιο.

This *Iphitus* was the son of *Eurytus* mention'd in the eighth book famous for his skill in archery.

V

And to the youthful Prince to urge the laws,
The King and Elders trust their common cause.

25 But *Iphitus* employ'd on other cares,

Search'd the wide country for his wand'ring mares,

And mules, the strongest of the lab'ring kind;

Hapless to search! more hapless still to find!

For journeying on to *Hercules* at length,

30 The lawless wretch, the man of brutal strength,

Deaf to Heav'n's voice, the social rite transgress;

And for the beautiful mares destroy'd his guest.

He

*Vain Eurytus! whose art became his crime,
Swept from the earth, he perish'd in his prime.
Sudden th' irreparable way he trod,
Who boldly durst defy the Bowyer God.*

So that even this digression is not foreign to the purpose; The Poet largely describes the bow, being to make great use of it in the sequel of the *Odyssey*: he shews it was originally in the possession of *Eurytus*, the most famous archer in the world: Nay, this very digression may appear to be absolutely necessary; it being requisite to describe that bow, as of no common excellence and strength, which was not to be drawn by any of the Suitors; and at the same time it sets off the strength of the Heroe of the Poem, who alone is able to bend it.

v. 22. *Three hundred sheep, &c.*] It has been observ'd in a former annotation, that such ravages or pyracies were not only lawful but honourable amongst the Antients; why then is *Ulysses* here sent to redemand the spoils made by the *Misivians*? *Dacier* answers that such inroads were not allowable except in open War; the means between *Greeks* and *Greeks*; - for they themselves exercis'd such pyracies with impunity against other nations.

v. 31. *Deaf to Heav'n's voice, the social rite transgress.*] *Homer* very solemnly condemns this action of *Hercules* in slaying *Iphitus*; and

He gave the bow; and on *Ulysses'* part
 Receiv'd a pointed sword and missile dart:
 35 Of luckless friendship on a foreign shore
 Their first, last pledges! for they met no more.
 The bow, bequeath'd by this unhappy hand,
Ulysses bore not from his native land,

some Authors (remarks *Eustathius*) defend him by saying, he was seiz'd with madness, and threw *Iphitus* down from the top of his Palace; but this is contrary to *Homer*, and to the sentiment of those who write that *Hercules* was deliver'd as a slave to *Omphale*, for the expiation of the murder of *Iphitus*.

But what chiefly wants explication is the expression

Ἠδὲ τραπεζᾶν
 Ἠδέουτ.

That is, he paid no reverence to his Table. The Table was held sacred by the Antients, by means of which, honour was paid to the God of Friendship and Hospitality: it was therefore a crime to dishonour it by any indecent behaviour. To this purpose *Juvenal*:

Hic verbis nullus pudor, aut reverentia mensæ.

The statutes of the Gods were rais'd upon the tables, they were consecrated by placing on them salt, which was always esteem'd holy, and by offering libations to the Gods from them: the Table therefore is call'd in *Plutarch* *πίναξ ὁσίων βασιάν, καὶ ἑστία*, the altar of the Gods of Friendship and Hospitality; and therefore to have eaten at the same table, was esteem'd an inviolable obligation of friendship: And *τραπεζᾶν παραβαίνειν*, to transgress against the table, a breach of the laws of hospitality, and the blackest of crimes. I will only add that it was customary upon making an alliance of hospitality to give mutual Tokens; thus *Ulysses* here presents *Iphitus* with a sword and spear; *Iphitus* *Ulysses* with a bow. And the producing these tokens was a recognition of the covenant of hospitality, between the persons themselves, and their descendents in following generations.

Nor

- Nor in the front of battle taught to bend,
 40 But kept, in dear memorial of his friend,
 Now gently winding up the fair ascent,
 By many an easy step, the matron went;
 Then o'er the pavement glides with grace divine,
 (With polish'd oak the level pavements shine)
 45 The folding gates a dazzling light display'd,
 With pomp of various architrave o'erlay'd.
 The bolt, obedient to the silken string,
 Forsakes the staple as she pulls the ring;
 The wards respondent to the key turn round;
 50 The bars fall back; the flying valves resound;
 Loud as a bull makes hill and valley ring,
 So roar'd the lock when it releas'd the spring.
 She moves majestic thro' the wealthy room,
 Where treasur'd garments cast a rich perfume;
 55 There from the column where aloft it hung,
 Reach'd, in its splendid case, the bow unstrung:

v. 51. *Loud as a bull makes hill and valley ring.*] This description presents us with a noble image; Homer introduces it to shew the largeness and strength of the door, which resounds as it opens. This exalts a trifling circumstance into sublimity and dignity, and renders a common action poetical; not unlike that in the 24th of the *Iliad*.

*Wide as appears some palace-gate display'd,
 So broad his pinions stretch'd their ample shade.*

- Across her knees she lay'd the well-known bow,
 And pensive fate, and tears began to flow.
 To full satiety of grief she mourns,
 60 Then silent, to the joyous hall returns;
 To the proud Suitors bears in pensive state
 Th' unbended bow, and arrows wing'd with Fate;
 Behind, her train the polish'd coffer brings,
 Which held th' alternate brass and silver rings,
 65 Full in the portal the chaste Queen appears,
 And with her veil conceals the coming tears:
 On either side awaits a virgin fair;
 While thus the matron, with majestic air,
 Say you, whom these forbidden walls inclose,
 70 For whom my victims bleed, my vintage flows;
 If these neglected, faded charms can move?
 Or is it but a vain pretence, you love?
 If I the prize, if me you seek to wife,
 Hear the conditions, and commence the strife.

v. 57. *Across her knees she laid the well-known bow,
 And pensive fate, and tears began to flow.*]

The Bow recalls to her mind the thought of her husband, and this
 raises her sorrows. The least trifle that once belong'd to a be-
 lov'd person, is sufficient to cast a cloud over the soul, which
 naturally falls in a show'r of tears: And no doubt the exercise
 which the Suitors are to practise with the Bow, upon which her
 future fate depends, aggravates her sorrows; she weeps not only
 for the loss of *Ulysses*, but at the thought that she is ready to en-
 ter upon second nuptials, contrary to her inclinations,

Who

75 Who first *Ulysses'* wond'rous bow shall bend,
 And thro' twelve ringlets the fleet arrow send,
 Him will I follow, and forsake my home,
 For him forsake this lov'd, this wealthy dome,
 Long, long the scene of all my past delight,

80 And still to last, the vision of my night!
 Graceful she said, and bade *Eupeus* show
 The rival peers the ringlets and the bow.
 From his full eyes the tears unbidden spring,
 Touch'd at the dear memorials of his King.

85 *Philatus* too relents, but secret shed
 The tender drops. *Antinous* saw, and said.

Hence to your fields, ye rusticks! hence away,
 Nor stain with grief the pleasures of the day;
 Nor to the royal heart recall in vain

90 The sad remembrance of a perish'd man.
 Enough her precious tears already flow—
 Or share the feast with due respect, or go
 To weep abroad, and leave to us the bow:
 No vulgar task! Ill suits this courtly crew

95 That stubborn horn which brave *Ulysses* drew.
 I well remember (for I gaz'd him o'er
 While yet a child) what majesty he bore!



And still (all infant as I was) retain
 The port, the strength, the grandeur of the man!
 100 He said, but in his soul fond joys arise,
 And his proud hopes already win the prize.
 To speed the flying shaft thro' every ring,
 Wretch! is not thine: the arrows of the King
 Shall end those hopes, and fate is on the wing!
 105 Then thus *Telemachus*. Some God I find
 With pleasing phrenzy has possess'd my mind;

v. 105. *Then thus Telemachus. Some God I find, &c.*] This speech is not without greater obscurity than is usual in so clear a writer as *Homer*. *M. Dacier* has done it justice, and clearly opened the sense of it in her paraphrase. "Surely, says *Telemachus*, *Jupiter* has disorder'd my understanding: I see my mother wise as she is, preparing to leave the palace, and enter upon a second marriage; and yet in these melancholy circumstances, I think of nothing but diverting my self, and being an idle spectator of this exercise of the Bow: No, no, this is not to be suffer'd: You (the Suitors) use your utmost efforts to rob me of *Penelope*, I will therefore use mine to retain her: A woman the most excellent in any nation. But why do I praise her? you know her worth; use therefore no pretext to defer the trial of the Bow, that we may come to an issue; I will try the Bow with you; and if I succeed, then I will retain her as the prize of the conquest; then she shall not be obliged to second nuptials: Nor will *Penelope* abandon a son, who emulating his father, is (like him) able to bear the prize from so many Antagonists."

This is the true meaning of the words of *Telemachus*; the diction indeed is somewhat embarrass'd, and the connections a little obscure; but this is done by the Poet, to express the disorder and hurry of mind in *Telemachus*, who fears for the fate of *Penelope*: Therefore the connection of the Periods is interrupted, to represent *Telemachus* starting thro' eagerness of spirit from thought to thought, without order or regularity.

When

When a lov'd mother threatens to depart,
 Why with this ill-tim'd gladness leaps my heart?
 Come then ye Suitors! and dispute a prize

10 Richer than all th' *Achaian* state supplies,
 Than all proud *Argos*, or *Mycana* knows,
 Than all our Isles or Continents enclose:
 A woman matchless, and almost divine,
 Fit for the praise of ev'ry tongue but mine.

15 No more excuses then, no more delay;
 Haste to the tryal!—Lo! I lead the way;
 I too may try, and if this arm can wing
 The feather'd arrow thro' the destin'd ring,
 Then if no happy'r Knight the conquest boast,

20 I shall not sorrow for a mother lost;
 But blest in her, possess these arms alone,
 Heir of my Father's strength, as well as throne.

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

25 A trench he open'd; in a line he plac'd
 The level axes, and the points made fast.
 (His perfect skill the wond'ring gazers ey'd,
 The game as yet unseen, as yet untry'd.)

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

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



Three times; with beating heart, he made essay;
 Three times, unequal to the task gave way:
 A modest boldness on his cheek appear'd;
 And thrice he hop'd, and thrice again he fear'd.
 135 The fourth had drawn it. The great Sire with joy
 Beheld, but with a sign forbade the boy.
 His ardour strait th' obedient Prince suppress,
 And artful, thus the Suitor-train address,

v. 135. *The fourth had drawn it. The great Sire with joy
 Beheld; but with a sign forbade*

It is not apparent at the first view why *Ulysses* prohibits *Telemachus* from drawing the Bow; but *Hysfathius* gives sufficient reason for this conduct: It would have defeated his whole design, and render'd the death of the Suitors impracticable; for *Telemachus* had declar'd that he would retain *Penelope*, if he succeeded in the exercise of the Bow; and this of necessity would create an immediate contest between that Heroe and the Suitors, and bring matters unseasonably to extremity. The same Author assigns a second reason; *Ulysses* fears lest *Telemachus* by bending the Bow should make it more supple and flexible, and therefore commands him to desist, lest it should be drawn by the Suitors; besides, if he had drawn it: it would have rais'd an emulation amongst them, and they would have apply'd the utmost of their abilities not to be outdone by so young a person as *Telemachus*; but his despair to effect it, makes them less solicitous, the tryal being equally unsuccessful to them all.

It may also be observ'd that there is a very happy address made to *Telemachus* by *Homer*; He shews us that he could have drawn it, but desists in obedience to *Ulysses*: Thus the Poet has found out a way to give *Telemachus* the Honour of the Victory without obtaining it; and at the same time shews the superior wisdom of *Ulysses*, who restrains his son in the heat of his attempt; and makes him by a happy presence of mind at once foresee the danger, and prevent it.

Oh lay the cause on youth yet immature!

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

How shall this arm, unequal to the bow,

Retort an insult, or repel a foe?

But you! whom heav'n with better nerves has blest,

Accept the trial, and the prize contest.

45 He cast the bow before him and apart

Against the polish'd quiver propt the dart.

Resuming then his seat, *Epiheus'* son

The bold *Antinous* to the rest begun.

" From where the goblet first begins to flow,

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

" And

v. 149. *From where the Goblet first begins to flow,
From right to left, &c.*

Antinous makes this proposition, that every person may try his skill without confusion. Perhaps it is propos'd by *Antinous* by way of Omen, the right hand being reckon'd fortunate: But however that be, it is very evident that in the entertainments of the Antients the cup was deliver'd towards the right hand: hence *δξίαισι* came to signify to drink towards the right hand, and *Athenians* thus interprets this passage in the first of the *Iliad*.

Διδοχατ' ἀλλήλους χρυσίαις δευδεσσαι

Which, remarks that author, signifies *ἑδξίαισι προτινόντες ἑαυτοῖς ταις δεξίαις*. And there is express mention made of this practice, *Lib. 1. v. 597.* of the *Iliad*.

Ἐταῖς ἐδξίαι πασιν

That is, *beginning from the right hand*, as the scholiast rightly interprets it, *Vulcan deliver'd the bowl to all the Gods*.

This observation explains various passages in many antient authors



“ And prove your several strengths—The Princes heard,
And first *Leoides*, blameless priest, appear'd:

The eldest born of *Oenops*' noble race,
Who next the goblet held his holy place:

155 He, only he of all the Suitor-throng, 65
Their deeds detested, and abjur'd the wrong.

With tender hands the stubborn horn he strains,

The stubborn horn resisted all his pains!

Already in despair he gives it o'er;

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

thors, as well as in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*: The Custom indeed is not of any great importance, but it is at least a curiosity, and valuable because antient. I doubt not but the bowl out of which these persons drank, would by Antiquaries be thought inestimable; and the possession of an antient bowl is not quite so valuable as the knowledge of an antient custom.

v. 152. ———— [*Leoides, blameless Priest.*] The word in the original is *Ἰσοκίδος*, a person who makes predictions from victims or from the smoke of the sacrifice. This *Leoides*, the Poet tells us, sat next to the bowl; the reason of it, saith *Eustathius*, was because the Suitors fear'd lest poison should be mix'd in it, and they thought themselves safe thro' his care and inspection; but it may perhaps be a better reason to say, that he sat there in discharge of his office as a prophet, to make libations to the Gods; as was customary at the beginning and end of all entertainments.

The Poet adds that this Prophet was placed at the extremity of the apartment; the reason may be because he was an enemy to the insolence of the Suitors, and therefore withdrew from their conversation; or perhaps the word is inserted only to shew that his place was the first (for *Eustathius* explains *μυσθράτος* by *πρώτος* and *ἐνθράτος*) and therefore he was the most proper person to begin the experiment, that the rest might make tryal according as they were seated, successively; and what makes this the most probable is, that the propination always began from the most honourable person.

What num'rous deaths attend this fatal bow?

What Souls and Spirits shall it send below?

Better indeed to die, and fairly give

Nature her debt, than disappointed live,

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

Yet still to-morrow falser than to-day.

How long in vain *Penelope* we fought?

This bow shall ease us of that idle thought,

v. 161. *What num'rous deaths attend this fatal bow?*

What Souls, and Spirits, &c.]

There is in these words a full and clear prediction of the destruction of the Suitors by the Bow of *Ulysses*: but what follows, when the Prophet comes to explain himself, renders it ambiguous. *Better indeed to die, &c.* The next line is very remarkable for the distinction it makes between *Ψυχοι* and *Ψυχη*, soul and spirit: The Reader may turn to the note on *Lib. 23. v. 92, 122.* of the *Iliad*; and that on *Lib. 11. v. 743.* of the *Odyssey*, where an account is given of the notion of the Antients concerning this division. I shall only here add a passage in *St. Paul* to the *Hebrews*, which did not then occur to me, that remarkably falls in with it. *The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of Soul and Spirit.* *Heb. iv. 12.*

This *Leiodes* falls by the sword of *Ulysses* in the next book; but is it not injustice to take away the life of a Person who is here describ'd as a man of virtue, detesting the actions of the Suitors, and dignify'd with Prophecy? It is easy to answer this objection; he is one of the Suitors to *Penelope*, as appears from his trying the Bow amongst the rest of them, in order to obtain her in marriage, and consequently he is involv'd in the general crime: This distinguishes his case from that of *Medon* and *Phemius*, whom *Ulysses* spares, it appearing that they made no pretensions to the bed of *Penelope*, whereas *Leiodes* endeavours to marry the Queen, which single act would exclude *Ulysses* from his own bed and dominions. Besides, if we would escape the punishment of wicked men, we must not only detest their crimes, but conversation.

And

- And send us with some humbler wife to live,
 170 Whom gold shall gain, or destiny shall give.
 Thus speaking on the floor the bow he plac'd,
 (With rich inlay the various floor was grac'd)
 At distance far the feather'd shaft he throws,
 And to the seat returns from whence he rose.
 175 To him *Antinous* thus with fury said,
 What words ill omen'd from thy lips have fled?
 Thy coward function ever is in fear;
 Those arms are dreadful which thou canst not bear.
 Why should this bow be fatal to the brave?
 180 Because the Priest is born a peaceful slave.
 Mark then what others can——He ended there,
 And bade *Melanthus* a vast pyle prepare;
 He gives it instant flame: then fast beside
 Spreads o'er an ample board a bullock's hide.
 185 With melted lard they soak the weapon o'er,
 Chafe ev'ry knot, and supple ev'ry pore.

v. 186. *Chafe ev'ry knot, and supple ev'ry pore.*] This passage has been egregiously misunderstood, and it has been imagin'd that this unguent is to anoint the limbs of the Suitors to make them more supple, after the manner of the Wrestlers who observ'd the custom; but it is very evident that *αἴνον* is to be understood in the Greek, and that it is the Bow, not the Limbs of the Suitors that is to be anointed. *Enslathius* thus fully explains it: The lard is brought to make the Bow pliant, they chafe it before the fire that the particles of it may enter the pores of the Bow and re-

Vain all their art, and all their strength as vain;
 The bow inflexible resists their pain.
 The force of great *Eurymachus* alone
 And bold *Antinous*, yet untry'd, unknown:
 Those only now remain'd; but those confess
 Of all the train the mightiest and the best.
 Then from the hall, and from the noisy crew,
 The Masters of the herd and flock withdrew.

The
 der it flexible. But *Eustathius* falls into an error about the feat that is brought by *Melanobius*: he imagines the Suitors fate while they drew the Bow, that they might be upon a level with the ringlets which were fix'd upon the ground; whereas in reality the feat is brought, that they may sit while they chafe the Bow. *Homer* himself says, when *Leiodes* endeavours to draw it, that he flood up, ἀνίστατο, and again,

He flood, and stepping forward try'd the bow.

Στῆ δ' ἄρ' ἐπ' ἔδεν ἰὼν, καὶ τὸξ' ἐπαράτηξεν

But how is this to be reconcil'd with the conduct of *Ulysses*, who is directly affirm'd to sit while he draws it?

ἔβλεν πύρην γλυφιδάσας
 ἄντ' ἔθεν ἐκ δίφρου καθήμενος

That circumstance is insert'd to shew the great strength and dexterity of *Ulysses*, who is able to draw it in that disadvantageous posture: the Poet in every incident maintains his superiority.

v. 193. *Then from the hall, and from the noisy crew*

The masters of the herd and flock withdrew.

It is wonderful how exactly the Poet observes the distribution of time; he distinctly marks the action of every day, and allots a proper space to every action. In this place the Poem goes forward while *Ulysses* withdraws to engage the assistance of *Philoetes* and *Enmaus*. The Suitors are amus'd and employ'd about the Bow, while

- 195 The King observes them: he the hall forfakes,
 And, past the limits of the Court, o'ertakes.
 Then thus with accent mild *Ulysses* spoke:
 Ye faithful guardians of the herd and flock!
 Shall I the secret of my breast conceal,
 200 Or (as my soul now dictates) shall I tell?
 Say, shou'd some fav'ring God restore again
 The lost *Ulysses* to his native reign?
 How beat your hearts? what aid wou'd you afford?
 To the proud Suitors, or your antient Lord?
 205 *Philetus* thus. Oh were thy word not vain!
 Wou'd mighty *Jove* restore that man again!

while *Ulysses* steals away from their observation, and returns without raising their jealousy. The Poet likewise manages the time of the discovery of *Ulysses* very judiciously; tho' he knew the fidelity of *Eumæus* and *Philetus*, yet he trusts them with the knowledge of his Person, till the very hour of execution; agreeable to the general character of his cautious nature and profound secrecy. But then is not this an imputation to *Penelope* that he should chuse to discover himself to these two persons, rather than to his Queen? The answer is, There was a necessity for his discovery to the former, but none to the latter; he was their assistance in the future engagement, and makes good use of it; whereas a discovery made to the Queen could have been no advantage, and might possibly have prov'd detrimental; besides this is a season that requires expedition; and we find *Ulysses* complies with it, and is very concise in the discovery and interview with *Philetus* and *Eumæus*. The Poet therefore reserves the discovery of *Ulysses* to *Penelope* to a time of more leisure, that he may dwell upon it more largely, and beautify his Poem with an essential an ornament with greater solemnity.

The

These aged sinews with new vigor strung
 In his blest cause shou'd emulate the young.
 With equal vows *Eumæus* too implor'd

○ Each pow'r above, with wishes for his Lord.

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

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

All else have cast him from their very thought,
 Ev'n in their wishes, and their pray'rs, forgot!

Hear then, my friends! If *Jove* this arm succeed,

○ And give yon' impious Revellers to bleed,
 My care shall be, to bless your future lives
 With large possessions and with faithful wives;

Fast by my palace shall your domes ascend,
 And each on young *Telemachus* attend,

5 And each be call'd his brother, and my friend.

To give you firmer faith, now trust your eye:

Lo! the broad scar indented on my thigh,

When with *Autolyclus*'s sons, of yore,

On *Parnass*' top I chac'd the tusky boar.

His



230 His ragged vest then drawn aside disclos'd
The sign conspicuous, and the scar expos'd:

Eager

v. 231. ———— and the scar expos'd.] *Aristotle* treating of the different sort of Remembrances, Chap. 17. of his *Poetics*, divides them into two kinds, *natural* or *adventitious*; the former sort is simple and without art, which Poets use for want of invention; as for instance, when they bring about the discovery of a person by some natural mark or token upon the body: The latter are either marks upon the body, or scars occasion'd by some accident, or tokens distinct from the body, such as the Casket, &c. which *Plautus* and *Terence* use in the discovery of several persons in their Comedies: Of this latter kind is this scar of *Ulysses*; (continues *Aristotle*) may be used with more or less art: Thus in the case of this wound of *Ulysses*, it is us'd by *Homer* in a different way: *Enryclea*, Lib. 19. describes it accidentally; *Ulysses* here shew it to *Enmaus* and *Philatius* voluntarily; and it is certain that all those marks which a Poet designedly and deliberately uses to establish any verity, have less ingenuity than those which produce their effects undesignedly and casually, and consequently the remembrance in the nineteenth *Odyssey* is more ingenious than the second discovery. The reason is, it shews no ingenuity to have recourse to such marks, when we have an intention to make the discovery; it causes no surprize nor variety, neither is it produc'd by any art or invention: On the contrary, the other in the nineteenth book arises from the subject, and not from the fancy of the Poet only. But, says *Dacier*, when *Aristotle* affirms that this present remembrance wants ingenuity, we are not yet to imagine that he condemns it; for it is a remembrance made by necessity. *Ulysses* has not opportunity to wait till the discovery is made accidentally, as in the nineteenth Book; he is absolutely compelled to make it designedly, to engage *Enmaus* and *Philatius* in his cause, by plainly proving to them that he was the real *Ulysses*. If therefore that Heroe shews less art in the manner of the remembrance, he shews more wisdom in accommodating his conduct to the opportunity, and using the present conjuncture advantageously, to bring about his own re-establishment. I will only further observe the judgment of *Homer* in making this discovery with the utmost brevity, concluding it in the compass of two verses: he had before enlarg'd upon the wound, and the reader is already fully instructed in the story: There is likewise another reason that requires conciseness; the

Eager they view'd; with joy they stood amaz'd;
 With tear-full eyes o'er all their master gaz'd:
 Around his neck their longing arms they cast,
 His head, his shoulders, and his knees embrac'd:
 Tears followed tears; no word was in their pow'r,
 In solemn silence fell the kindly show'r.
 The King too weeps, the King too grasps their hands,
 And moveless, as a marble fountain, stands.
 Thus had their joy wept down the setting sun,
 But first the wise-man ceas'd, and thus begun.
 Enough—on other cares your thought employ,
 For danger waits on all untimely joy.
 Full many foes, and fierce, observe us near:
 Some may betray, and yonder walls may hear.
 Re-enter then, not all at once, but stay
 Some moments you, and let me lead the way.
 To me, neglected as I am, I know
 The haughty Suitors will deny the bow;

the urgency of the time demands it, for *Ulysses* and *ÆNEIAS* could not be long in conference without observation, and raising the jealousy of the Suitors.

v. 252. *At ev'ry portal, &c.*] This is a very necessary injunction: *Ulysses* fears not only lest any of the Suitors should make his escape but also lest any of the women who were friends to the Suitors should give information to their partisans abroad, and introduce them to their assistance. *Enfashins.*

But



- 250 But thou, *Eumæus*, as 'tis born away,
 Thy master's weapon to his hand convey.
 At ev'ry portal let some matron wait,
 And each lock fast the well-compacted gate:
 Close let them keep, whate'er invades their ear;
 255 Tho' arms, or shouts, or dying groans they hear.
 To thy strict charge, *Philæus*! we consign
 The court's main gate: To guard that pass be thine.
 This said, he first return'd: the faithful swains
 At distance follow, as their King ordains.
 260 Before the flame *Eurymachus* now stands,
 And turns the bow, and chafes it with his hands:
 Still the tough bow unmov'd. The lofty man
 Sigh'd from his mighty soul, and thus began:
 I mourn the common cause; for, oh my friends!
 265 On me, on all, what grief, what shame attends?
 Not the lost nuptials can affect me more,
 (For *Greece* has beauteous dames on ev'ry shore)

v. 266. *Not the lost nuptials*——] No doubt but *Eurymachus* misrepresents his real sentiments, when he makes the loss of *Penelope* of little importance; but his conduct is an exact picture of human nature: When we have us'd our utmost endeavours to obtain our desires, and have fail'd in the attempt, the object immediately loses its value, and we would be thought to despise it. To be easy under any disappointment is the result of reason; but to seem to despise what we have been very desirous

But baffled thus! confess'd so far below
Ulysses' strength, as not to bend his bow!

70 How shall all ages our attempt deride?

Our weakness scorn? *Antinous* thus reply'd.

Not so, *Eurymachus*: That no man draws

The wond'rous bow, attend another cause.

Sacred to *Phœbus* is the solemn day,

75 Which thoughtless we in games would waste away:

Till

ous to obtain, arises from the pride of our natures, which persuades us to endeavour to cheat the world into an opinion that we have not been disappointed: The remedy for this disease of our minds, is a regular conduct, and to hold the balance even in all our affairs, that the scale be not rais'd too high or depress'd too low.

v. 274. *Sacred to Phœbus is the solemn day.*] *Antinous* in this reply, speaks, as well as *Eurymachus*, with dissimulation; he is unwilling to give a true reason, and therefore invents a false one: The true reason why he defers the trial of the Bow is, because he fears his inability to draw it: The feign'd reason is a pretended piety paid to the day: it was a day to be observ'd religiously, and he insinuates that all sports upon it are a profanation of it; and consequently, *Apollo* being provok'd, disables them from drawing the Bow, of which he is the patron. This is the reason why he proposes to offer a libation, to atone for the abuse of the day by their diversions. But perhaps the reason why *Antinous* defers the exercise of the Bow to the following day, is not because he thought it unlawful to proceed in it on the festival of *Apollo*; for why should an exercise which was instituted in honour of that Deity, be thought a profanation of the day? I should therefore rather conclude, that the impiety intended by *Antinous*, was their omission in not offering a sacrifice to that God before they begun the trial, that he might prosper their endeavours: The conclusion of his speech makes this opinion probable: "Let us now defer the experiment, and offer sacrifice in the morning to *Apollo*, that he may give us success in drawing the Bow," which implies that

- 'Till the next dawn this ill-tim'd strife forgoe; and
 And here leave fixt the ringlets in a rowe. 295
 Now bid the Sew'r approach, and let us join
 In due libations, and in rites divine,
 280 So end our night: Before the day shall spring,
 The choicest offerings let *Melantheus* bring;
 Let then to *Phœbus*' name the fatted thighs
 Feed the rich smokes, high-curling to the skies; 300
 So shall the patron of these arts bestow
 285 (For his the gift) the skill to bend the bow.
 They heard well-pleas'd: the ready heralds bring
 The cleansing waters from the limpid spring: 305
 The goblet high with rose wine they crown'd,
 In order circling to the peers around.
 290 That right compleat, up-rose the thoughtful man,
 And thus his meditated scheme began. 310
 If what I ask your noble minds approve,
 Ye peers and rivals in the royal love!

that they were unsuccessful because they had forgot to sacrifice
 I will only add that *Antinous* mentions a goat as an offering
Apollo; we have before seen bulls, sheep and bullocks offered
 that Deity; the reason why a goat is a proper victim, I suppose
 is because he is a rural God, and patron of shepherds, and there-
 fore all kinds of beasts were offer'd to him promiscuously. 315

Chief, if it hurt not great *Antinous*' ear,
 295 (Whose sage decision I with wonder hear)
 And if *Eurymachus* the motion please;
 Give heav'n this day, and rest the bow in peace.
 To-morrow let your arms dispute the prize,
 And take it He, the favour'd of the skies!
 300 But since 'till then, this tryal you delay,
 Trust it one moment to my hands to-day:
 Fain would I prove, before your judging eyes,
 What once I was, whom wretched you despise;
 If yet this arm its antient force retain;
 305 Or if my woes (a long-continu'd train)
 And wants and insults, make me less than man?
 Rage flash'd in lightning from the Suitors eyes,
 Yet mix'd with terror at the bold emprise.
Antinous then: O miserable guest!
 310 Is common sense quite banish'd from thy breast?
 Suffic'd it not within the palace plac'd
 To fit distinguish'd, with our presence grac'd,
 Admitted here with Princes to confer,
 A man unknown, a needy wanderer?
 315 To copious wine this insolence we owe,
 And much thy betters wine can overthrow:



The great *Eurytion* when this frenzy stung,
Pirithous' roofs with frantick riot rung;

Boundles

v. 318. *Pirithous' roofs, &c.*] The story of the *Centaur* in this: *Pirithous* a *Lapithite* marrying *Hippodamia* the daughter of *Adrastus*, invited the *Centaur*s and *Lapithæ* to his nuptials; the *Centaur*s drinking to great excess, and offering violence to the bride, engag'd them in a quarrel; *Eurytion* was the person who began the disorder, and the war that ensued became fatal to the whole nation of the *Centaur*s. *Horace* alludes to this history.

*At nequis modici transfiliat munera liberi,
 Centaurea monet cum Lapithis rixa super mero
 Debellata*————

The *Lapithites* were a people of *Thessaly* inhabiting the mountain *Pindus* and *Othrys*; the *Centaur*s were their neighbours, and dwelt in mount *Pelion*. This war between the *Lapithites* and the *Centaur*s probably lasted about a year: for it began on the day of the nuptials of *Pirithous*, and on the day that his son *Polypætes* was born, he obtain'd a decisive victory over the *Centaur*s, and drove them from mount *Pelion*. Thus lib. 2. v. 900 of the *Iliad*.

*Thy troops Argilla, Polypætes leads
 And Eleon, shelter'd by Olympus' shades;
 Sprung from Pirithous of immortal race,
 The fruit of fair Hippodamæ's embrace,
 That day when hur'd from Pelion's cloudy head
 To distant dens the shaggy Centaurs fled.*

This history is at large related by *Ovid*, *Metamorph.* 12. He calls *Eurytion* by the name of *Eurytus*, and describes the nuptial feast in a cave, and not in the palace of *Pirithous*. Thus *M. Dryden*:

*In a cool cave's recess the treat was made,
 Whose entrance trees with spreading boughs o'ershade:
 There one more brutal of the brutal brood,
 Or whether wine or beauty fir'd his blood,*

Boundless the *Centaur* rag'd; 'till one and all

320 The Heroes rose, and dragg'd him from the hall;

His nose they shorten'd, and his ears they slit,

And sent him sober'd home, with better wit.

Hence with long war the double race was curst;

Fatal to all, but to th' aggressor first.

335 Such fate I prophesy our guest attends,

If here this interdicted bow he bends :

Nor shall these walls such insolence contain;

The first fair wind transports him o'er the main;

Where *Echelus* to death the guilty brings,

330 (The worst of mortals, ev'n the worst of Kings)

Better than that, if thou approve our cheer,

Cease the mad strife, and share our bounty here.

To this the Queen her just dislike exprest :

'Tis impious, Prince! to harm the stranger-guest;

335 Bafe to insult who bears a suppliant's name,

And some respect *Telemachus* may claim.

What if th' Immortals on the man bestow

Sufficient strength to draw the mighty bow?

*Or both at once; beheld with lustful eyes
The bride, at once, resolv'd to make his prize:
Down went the board; and fast'ning on her hair
He seiz'd with sudden force the frighted fair:
'Twas Eurytus began.*

D 2

Shall



Shall I, a Queen, by rival chiefs ador'd,
 340 Accept a wand'ring stranger for my Lord?
 A hope so idle never touch'd his brain:
 Then ease your bosoms of a fear so vain.
 Far be he banish'd from this stately scene
 Who wrongs his Princess with a thought so mean.

345 O fair! and wisest of so fair a kind!
 (Respectful thus *Euymachus* rejoin'd)
 Mov'd by no weak surmize, but sense of shame,
 We dread the all-arraigning voice of Fame;
 We dread the censure of the meanest slave,

350 The weakest woman: all can wrong the brave.
 Behold what wretches to the bed pretend
 Of that brave Chief whose bow they cou'd not bend!
 In came a Beggar of the strolling crew,
 And did what all those Princes could not do.

355 Thus will the common voice our deed defame,
 And thus posterity upbraid our name.

To whom the Queen. If Fame engage your views,
 Forbear those acts which Infamy pursues;

Wrong

v. 357. ———— *If Fame engage your views,
 Forbear those acts which Infamy pursues.*]

This answer of *Penelope* is very severe and very just: *Euymachus*
 (observes *Dacier*) had said, If this beggar draws the bow, we
 shall lose our reputation: *Penelope* answers, It is in vain to be sol-
 licitous

Wrong and oppression no renown can raise;

60 Know, Friend! that Virtue is the path to praise.

The stature of our guest, his port, his face,

Speak him descended from no vulgar race.

To him the bow, as he desires, convey;

And to his hand if *Phæbus* give the day,

35 Hence, to reward his merit, he shall bear

A two-edg'd faulchion and a shining spear,

licitous about your reputation, when your lives are a series of infamous actions: Fame is the reward of good, and shame the portion of base and unworthy deeds: It is no dishonour to a Prince to be surpass'd by a Beggar in strength, but a Prince is more infamous than a Beggar, if his actions betray him to be a worse man; a base action sinks him into contempt, and taints his nobility. The words in *Homer* are, *τι δαίμων ταῦτα τίθειοις*; which *Eusebius* thus explains; Why do you overlook the greater dishonour, and are thus afraid of trifles? and, adds *Dacier*, the sentiment is just and happy: These Princes place disgrace where it is not; they think it a shame to yield in strength to this stranger, which is really no shame; meer strength is the praise of a beast, not of a Prince: On the contrary, what is really a shame, they think to be none; they prey upon a King, who was a friend to all mankind; they act a thousand insolent and base deeds, and yet apprehend no discredit. This is an unhappy, and I wish it were an unjust, picture of human nature; we deceive our selves with false notions both of shame and glory, and we may apply the words of *Terence* to this purpose:

————— *Hic ubi opus est*
Non verentur: illic ubi opus est ibi verentur.

Praise is only to be obtain'd by virtue, and fame is the certain reward of it: Ill-nature or envy may eclipse it, but it will prevail and break out into glory.

Embroider'd sandals, a rich cloak and vest,
And safe conveyance to his port of rest.

O royal mother! ever-honour'd name!

370 Permit me (cries *Telemachus*) to claim

A son's just right. No Grecian Prince but I
Has pow'r this bow to grant, or to deny.

Of all that *Ithaca's* rough hills contain,

And all wide *Elis'* courser-breeding plain,

375 To me alone my father's arms descend;

And mine alone they are, to give or lend.

Retire, oh Queen! thy household task resume,

Tend, with thy maids, the labors of the loom;

The

v. 377. *Retire, oh Queen! &c.*] This speech has been accus'd of too great a liberty, and as wanting in respect from a son to a mother: *Telemachus* speaks with authority, when he ought to have shew'd obedience and filial duty. But these Criticks mistake the design and intention of *Telemachus*; he speaks directly to *Penelope*, but obliquely and intentionally to the Suitors: It is for this reason that he says he is supreme in the palace, viz. to let them know that he will not give up the sway into their pow'r. He tells *Penelope* that the Bow shall be used as he directs; this is done to intimidate the Suitors, and prepare the way for the delivery of it to *Ulysses*, contrary to their injunctions to *Eumæus*.

The verses are the same with those in the 6th of the *Iliad*. There *Hector* speaks to *Andromache*, a tender husband to a fond wife, and the speech was never tax'd with any want of love and kindness. In that place *Hector* remembers that he is an husband, yet forgets not that he is an Hero. In this, *Telemachus* deviates not from the duty of a son, yet speaks in the character and style of a Prince.

Eustathius excellently enlarges upon the words of *Telemachus*: There is an absolute necessity that *Penelope* should withdraw, that

The bow, the darts, and arms of chivalry,
 380 These cares to man belong, and most to me.
 Mature beyond his years, the Queen admir'd
 His sage reply, and with her train retir'd:
 There in her chamber as she set apart,
 Revolv'd his words, and plac'd them in her heart.
 385 On her *Ulysses* then she fix'd her soul,
 Down her fair cheek the tears abundant roll,

She might not be present at the scene of blood and slaughter. It is for the same reason that the Poet introduces *Minerva* casting her into a profound sleep, that she might be entirely ignorant of the death of the Suitors: This is absolutely necessary; for if she had been acquainted that *Ulysses* was return'd, and the Suitors slain by his hand, there could have been no room for the interview between *Ulysses* and *Penelope* in the succeeding parts of the *Odyssey*.

But is not *Minerva* introduc'd upon too small an occasion, only to cast *Penelope* into a slumber? would not nature have work'd the same effect without the assistance of the Goddess? I have already remark'd that machines are not always used out of necessity, but frequently for ornament, to dignify the Poetry and create surprise by the appearance of a Deity. But here the Poet brings down *Minerva*, to give credibility to the story; for tho' it be true that nature is sufficient to produce this effect, yet that it should operate in the critical and exact moment, when the Poet has occasion for it, is in some degree incredible: The Poet therefore, to reconcile the relation to probability, introduces a præternatural sleep, occasion'd by the immediate operation of a Goddess.

v. 381.

—the Queen admir'd

His sage reply —]

Penelope is amaz'd at the free remonstrance of *Telemachus*; she is ignorant of the reason of it, yet immediately retires, not doubting but his words flow'd from a just cause, and not from a want of filial duty: she is therefore said by the Poet to lodge his words in her memory, waiting till time should unfold the mystery. *Dacier*.

'Till gentle *Pallas*, piteous of her cries,
In slumber clos'd her silver-streaming eyes;

Now thro' the prefs the bow *Eumæus* bore;

390 And all was riot, noise, and wild uproar.

Hold, lawless rustic! whither wilt thou go?

To whom, insensate, dost thou bear the bow?

Exil'd for this to some sequester'd den,

Far from the sweet society of men,

395 To thy own dogs a prey thou shalt be made;

If heav'n and *Phæbus* lend the Suitors aid.

Thus they. Aghast he laid the weapon down,

But bold *Telemachus* thus urg'd him on.

Proceed, false slave, and slight their empty words;

400 What? hopes the fool to please so many lords?

Young as I am, thy Prince's vengeful hand

Stretch'd forth in wrath, shall drive thee from the land.

Oh! could the vigor of this arm as well

Th' oppressive Suitors from my walls expell!

405 Then what a shoal of lawless men should go

To fill with tumult the dark courts below?


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

v. 407. *The Suitors with a scornful smile, &c.*] *Spondanus* believes they laugh out of contempt of *Telemachus*; *Dacier* because they believe the time come which is to end all their doubts by the marriage of *Penelope*; they hope to draw the Bow, and this hope mollifies their anger. But all these reasons (as well as those of *Eustathius*) seem to be rather invented than natural: we may find a sufficient reason of their laughter, from the sharpness of *Telemachus* towards *Eumæus*; they rejoice to see an enemy (for such they esteem *Eumæus*) misus'd, and this will likewise give a reason why the Poet adds that they ceas'd their anger against *Telemachus*, namely, because he gratifies their ill-will by threatening *Eumæus*.

v. 412. *Hear what Telemachus enjoyns, &c.*] It is very evident that this command proceeds not from *Telemachus* but *Ulysses*: It was *Ulysses* who gave directions to shut the door of the women's apartment; but *Eumæus* is ignorant that *Euryclæa* was acquainted with the return of *Ulysses*, and therefore speaks as from *Telemachus*. He knew very well that she would obey the orders of *Telemachus*, but if she had not been acquainted with the return of *Ulysses*, she would have made some hesitation, believing the Beggar to be really a stranger and not *Ulysses*. *Eustathius*.



- Her prompt obedience on his order waits;
 420 Clos'd in an instant were the Palace gates.
 In the same moment forth *Philatius* flies,
 Secures the court, and with a cable ties
 The utmost gate. (the cable strongly wrought
 Of *Byblos*' reed, a ship from *Egypt* brought)
- 425 Then unperceiv'd and silent, at the board
 His seat he takes, his eyes upon his Lord.
 And now his well-known bow the Master bore,
 Turn'd on all sides, and view'd it o'er and o'er;

v. 425.  (the cable strongly wrought
 Of *Byblos* reed.)

The word in the *Greek* is *βύβλον*, which we are not to understand of the *Egyptian Papyrus*, but it is deriv'd from *βίβλος* or *βύβλος*, a plant growing in the marshes of *Egypt*, *βιβάς* *εμπαπύρος*, that bears the resemblance of the *Papyrus*, as *Enstatius* explains it. Of this plant the Antients made their cordage; on the top of it there grew fibrous threads resembling hair, and thus *Strabo* describes it, *πλήθ' ἰσίδος ἐν ἀκρῆ ἕρμα χαίτων*, a slender twig, bearing, as it were, hair on the top of it.

v. 428. Turn'd on all sides, and view'd it o'er and o'er.] This little particularity is not inserted in vain: *Ulysses* is ready to engage in a terrible combat; it is therefore very necessary to be curious in the examination of the Bow, to be certain that he might depend upon it; if he had observ'd that it had been decay'd thro' time, his prudence would have furnish'd him with some other instrument. *Enstatius* is of opinion that this whole Bow was made of horn, because *ὄρνις* denotes worms that breed in horn: The Bow, says that Author, was made of horn, and not of wood, like the *Scythian* bows. This, it must be confess'd, is not entirely satisfactory, because the bows were antiently tipt or pointed at the extremities with horn; and to this horn *Ulysses* may refer:
 But

Lest time or worms had done the weapon wrong,

430 Its owner absent, and untry'd so long.

While some deriding—How he turns the bow?

Some other like it sure the man must know,

Or else wou'd copy; or in bows he deals;

Perhaps he makes them, or perhaps he steals. _____

435 Heav'n to this wretch (another cry'd) be kind!

And bless, in all to which he stands inclin'd,

With such good fortune as he now shall find.

Headless he heard them; but disdain'd reply;

The bow perusing with exactest eye.

440 Then, as some heav'nly minstrel, taught to sing

High notes responsive to the trembling string,

To some new strain when he adapts the lyre,

Or the dumb lute refits with vocal wire,

But the other opinion is most probable, and *Ovid* thus understood it:

Penelope vires juvenum tentabat in arcu

Quæ laius argueret corneus arcus erat.

v. 440. Then, as some heav'nly minstrel, &c.] *Eusebians* confesses himself to be greatly pleas'd with this comparison; it is very just, and well suited to the purpose; the strings of the lyre represent the bow-string, and the ease with which the Lyrist stretches them, admirably paints the facility with which *Ulysses* draws the bow. When similitudes are borrow'd from an object entirely different from the subject which they are brought to illustrate, they give us a double satisfaction, as they surprize us by shewing an agreement between such things in which there seems to be the greatest disagreement.

D 6

Relaxes,



Relaxes, strains, and draws them to and fro;
 445 So the great Master drew the mighty bow:
 And drew with ease. One hand aloft display'd
 The bending horns, and one the string essay'd.
 From his essaying hand the string let fly
 Twang'd short and sharp, like the shrill swallow's cry,
 450 A gen'ral horror ran thro' all the race,
 Sunk was each heart, and pale was ev'ry face.
 Signs from above ensu'd: the unfolding sky
 In lightning burst; Jove thunder'd from on high.

Fir'd

v. 448.

—— the string let fly
Twang'd short and sharp, like the shrill swallow's cry.
 The comparison is not intended to represent the sweetness of the sound, but only the quality and nature of it; and means a harsh or jarring sound, or somewhat rough, *στροπαχὺ*, as *Eustathius* interprets it; such a sound as the swallow makes when she sings by starts, and not in one even tenour. The swallow is inharmonious, and *Aristophanes* uses *χελιδόνων μυστρία* in his frogs, to signify those who are enemies to the Muses; and here the Poet uses it to denote a shrill, harsh, or jarring sound.

v. 452. *Signs from above ensu'd*——] The signal of battle is here given in thunder by *Jupiter*, as in the eleventh book of the *Iliad*.

*Ev'n Jove, whose thunder spoke his wrath, disill'd
 Red drops of blood o'er all the fatal field.*

And again,

*That instant Juno and the martial maid
 In happy thunders promis'd Greece their aid.*

This prepares us for the greatness of the following action, which is usher'd in with thunder from heaven: And we are not surpriz'd

Fir'd at the call of Heav'n's almighty Lord,

455 He snatch'd the shaft that glitter'd on the board:

(Fast by, the rest lay sleeping in the sheath,

But soon to fly the messengers of death.)

Now sitting as he was, the chord he drew,

Thro' ev'ry ringlet levelling his view;

460 Then notch'd the shaft, releas't, and gave it wing;

The whizzing arrow vanish'd from the string,

Sung on direct, and threaded ev'ry ring.

The solid gate its fury scarcely bounds;

Pierc'd thro' and thro', the solid gate resounds.

65 Then to the Prince. Nor have I wrought thee shame;

Nor err'd this hand unfaithful to its aim;

Nor prov'd the toil too hard; nor have I lost

That antient vigor, once my pride and boast.

Ill I deserv'd these haughty Peers disdain;

70 Now let them comfort their dejected train,

priz'd to see *Ulysses* defeat his enemies, when *Jupiter* declares himself in his favour. *Homer* calls this thunder a sign and a prodigy: It is a sign, because it predicts the event; and a prodigy, because the thunder proceeds from a serene sky. *Enstathius*.

v. 457. ——— nor have I lost

That antient vigor ———]

Ulysses speaks not thus out of vanity, but solely to confirm the courage of *Telemachus*, and his two friends, *Eupeus* and *Philatus*. He sets his vigor before their eyes, that they may have confidence in it in the succeeding engagement.



In sweet repaste the present hour employ,
 Nor wait 'till ev'ning for the genial joy.
 Then to the lute's soft voice prolong the night,
 Musick, the banquet's most refin'd delight.

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

v. 471. *In sweet repast the present hour employ,
 Nor wait 'till ev'ning*

This circumstance is very necessary; *Ulysses* excites the Suitors to supper by day-light, because it would be more easy for him to assault them while they sat at table: the posture would give him some advantage; and he adds *before ev'ning*, because if they had sup'd by the light of the torch, upon extinguishing it, they had greatly embarrass'd him, and perhaps render'd his designs ineffectual thro' the benefit of the darkness. Neither is it without reason that he proposes singing and music; he does it to draw away their thoughts from any jealousy of intended violence; and by this method he gives the assault unexpectedly, and begins the slaughter before they are prepar'd to make any opposition.



THE