The Odyssey Of Homer

Translated from the Greek

Homerus

London, 1726

The Twentieth Book Of The Odyssey.

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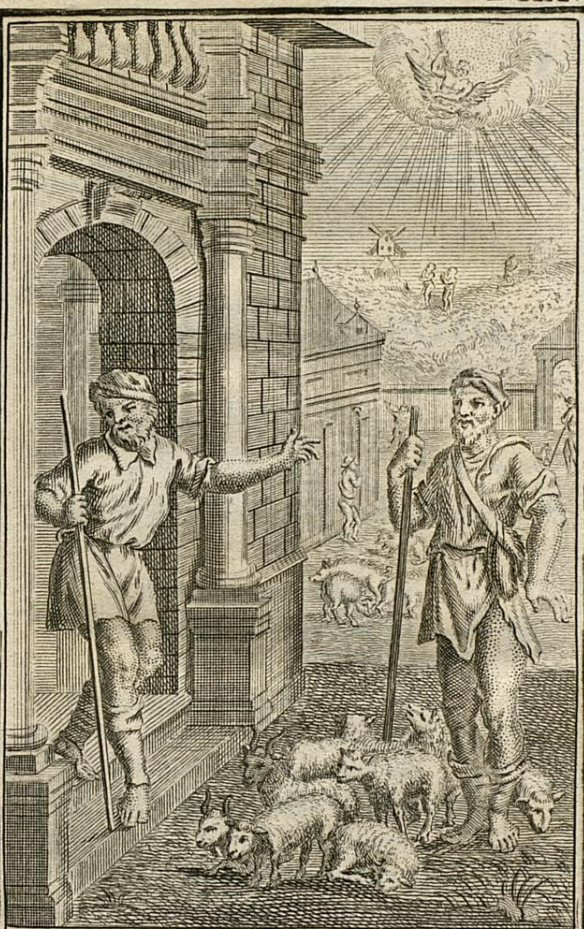
THE TWENTIETH BOOK OF THE ODYSSEY.

The ARGUMENT.

While Ulysses *lies in the Vestibule of the Palace, he is witness to the disorders of the women.* Minerva *comforts him and casts him asleep. At his awaking he desires a favourable sign from* Jupiter, *which is granted. The feast of* Apollo *is celebrated by the People, and the Suitors banquet in the Palace.* Telemachus *exerts his authority amongst them, notwithstanding which,* Ulysses *is insulted by* Ctesippus, *and the rest continue in their excesses. Strange Prodigies are seen by* Theoclymenus *the Augur, who explains them to the destruction of the Wooers.*

THE



Victims, which the Shepherds bring for the sacrifice and Wedding Dinner of Penelope *with one of the Suitors, in the Presence of* Ulysses *and* Telemachus.

THE TWENTIETH BOOK OF THE ODYSSEY.

AN ample hide divine *Ulysses* ſpread,
And form'd of fleecy skins his humble bed:
(The remnants of the ſpoil the ſuitor-crowd
In feſtival devour'd, and victims vow'd.)
5 Then o'er the chief, *Eurynome* the chaſte
With duteous care a downy carpet caſt:
With dire revenge his thoughtful boſom glows,
And ruminating wrath, he ſcorns repoſe.
As thus pavilion'd in the porch he lay,
10 Scenes of lewd loves his wakeful eyes ſurvey.

Whilst to nocturnal joys impure, repair
With wanton glee, the prostituted fair.

His

v. 12. *With wanton glee, the prostituted fair.*] *Eustathius* expatiates upon the conduct of these female servants of *Penelope*. Silence and a decent reserve (remarks that Author) is the ornament of the fair sex; levity and laughter betray them into an unguarded behaviour, and make them susceptible of wanton impressions. The *Athenians*, as *Pausanias* informs us, had a Temple sacred to Love and *Venus* the Whisperer. *Venus* was call'd the Whisperer (ψιθυρος) because they who there offer'd up their prayers apply'd their mouths to the ear of the statue of that Goddess, and whisper'd their petitions; an Intimation, that Women ought to govern their tongue, and not let it transgress either by loudness or loquacity. But this no ways affects the Ladies of *Great Britain*; they speak so well, they should never be silent.

Ulysses, *Homer* tells us, is almost provok'd to kill these females with his own hands: This has been imagin'd a thought unworthy an Heroe. The like objection has been made against *Æneas* in *Virgil* (*Æneid*; lib. 2. ver. 567.)

Thus, wand'ring in my way, without a guide,
The graceless Helen *in the porch I spy'd*
Of Vesta's *temple: there she lurk'd alone,*
Muffl'd she sate, and what she could, unknown;
Trembling with rage, the strumpet I regard,
Resolv'd to give her guilt the due reward.

This whole passage is said to have been expung'd from *Virgil* by *Tucca* and *Varius*; for as *Virgil* there expresses it,

'Tis true a soldier can small honour gain,
And boast no conquest from a woman slain. Dryden.

But the Objection is probably made with too great severity, both against *Homer* and *Virgil*: It is no disgrace to the best or bravest man, to be subject to such passions as betray him into no unworthy actions: A Heroe is not suppos'd to be insensible; he distinguishes himself as such, if he restrains them within the bounds of reason. Both *Æneas* and *Ulysses* are fir'd with a just indignation,

His heart with rage this new dishonour stung,
Wav'ring his thoughts in dubious balance hung;
15 Or, instant should he quench the guilty flame
With their own blood, and intercept the shame;
Or to their lust indulge a last embrace,
And let the Peers consummate the disgrace?
Round his swol'n heart the murm'rous fury rowls;
20 As o'er her young the mother-mastiff growls,

And

tion, and this is agreeable to human nature; but both of them proceed to no outragious action, and this shews that their passions are govern'd by superior reason. However this resentment of *Ulysses* is less liable to objection than that of *Æneas*: *Ulysses* subdues his indignation by the reflection of his own reason; but *Virgil* introduces a Machine to compose the spirit of *Æneas*:

——all shining heav'nly bright,
My mother stood reveal'd before my sight,
She held my hand, the destin'd blow to break, &c.

It may be further added that the case is very different between *Æneas* and *Ulysses*. The persons whom *Ulysses* intends to punish are his subjects and servants, and such a punishment would be no more than an act of justice, as he is their Master and King; and we find in the sequel of the *Odyssey* that he actually inflicts it. It should therefore be thought an instance of *Homer*'s judgment, in painting the disorders of these servants in such strong colours, that we may acknowledge the justice, when he afterwards brings them to punishment.

v. 20. *As o'er her young the mother-mastiff growls,* &c.] This in the original is a very bold expression, but *Homer*, to soften it, instances a comparison which reconciles us to it. *Ennius* has literally translated it, as *Spondanus* observes:

——animusque in pectore latrat.

And bays the ſtranger groom: ſo wrath compreſt
Recoiling, mutter'd thunder in his breaſt.
Poor ſuff'ring heart! he cry'd, ſupport the pain
Of wounded honour, and thy rage reſtrain.

Not

That is word for word;

——Κραδίη δέ οἱ ἔνδον ὑλάκομεν.

The ſimilitude it ſelf is very expreſſive; as the maſtiff barks to guard her young, ſo labours the ſoul of *Ulyſſes* in defence of his Son and Wife, *Penelope* and *Telemachus*. *Dacier* was afraid that the compariſon could not be render'd with any beauty in the *French* tongue, and therefore has ſubſtituted another in the room of it, *Son cœur rugiſſoit au dedans de luy, comme un Lion rugit autour d'une bergerie, où il ne ſçauroit entrer.* But however more noble the Lion may be than the Maſtiff, it is evident that ſhe utterly deviates from the alluſion: The Maſtiff rages in defence of her young, *Ulyſſes* of his Son *Telemachus*; but how is this repreſented by a Lion roaring round a fold, which he is not to defend, but deſtroy? We have therefore choſen to follow *Homer* in the more humble but more expreſſive ſimilitude; and what will entirely reconcile us to it, is the great honour which was paid to Dogs by the Antients: they were kept as a piece of ſtate by Princes and Heroes, and therefore a compariſon drawn from them was held to be as noble as if it had been drawn from a Lion.

v. 23. *Poor ſuff'ring heart! he cry'd, ſupport the pain*
Of wounded honour, and thy rage reſtrain.]

Theſe two Verſes are quoted by *Plato* in his *Phædo*, where he treats of the ſoul's immortality; He makes uſe of them to prove that *Homer* underſtood the ſoul to be uncompounded and diſtinct from the body. "If the ſoul, argues that Author, were a com-
" pounded ſubſtance, if it were harmony (as ſome philoſophically
" aſſert) ſhe would never act diſcordantly from the parts which
" compoſe it; but we ſee the contrary, we ſee the ſoul guide and
" govern the parts of which ſhe her ſelf is pretended to be com-
" poſed; ſhe reſiſts, threatens and reſtrains our paſſions, our fears,
" avarice and anger: in ſhort, the ſoul ſpeaks to the body as to a
" ſubſtance of a nature entirely different from its own. *Homer*
" therefore evidently underſtood that the ſoul ought to govern and
" direct

25 Not fiercer woes thy fortitude cou'd foil,
When the brave partners of thy ten years toil
Dire *Polypheme* devour'd: I then was freed
By patient prudence, from the death decreed.
Thus anchor'd safe on reason's peaceful coast,
30 Tempests of wrath his soul no longer tost;
Restless his body rolls, to rage resign'd:
As one who long with pale-ey'd famine pin'd;

The

"direct the passions, and that it is of a nature more divine than "harmony.

This is undoubtedly very just reasoning: and there is an expression, observes *Dacier*, that bears the same import in the holy Scriptures: *The heart of* David *smote him when he number'd the people.* There is this difference; in *Homer* by *heart* is understood the corporeal substance, in the Scriptures the spiritual; but both make a manifest distinction between the soul and the body.

v. 32. *As one who long*, &c.] No passage in the whole *Odyssey* has fall'n under more ridicule than this comparison; Monsieur *Perault* is particularly severe upon it: *Homer* (says that Critic) compares *Ulysses* turning in his bed to a black-pudding broiling on a gridiron; whereas the truth is, he compares that Hero turning and tossing in his bed, burning with impatience to satisfy himself with the blood of the Suitors, to a man in sharp hunger preparing the entrails of a victim over a great fire; and the agitation represents the agitation of *Ulysses*. *Homer* compares not the thing, but the persons.

Boileau, in his notes upon *Longinus*, answers this objection. It is notorious that the belly of some animals was one of the most delicious dishes amongst the antients: that the *sumen* or sow's belly was boasted of for its excellence by the *Romans*, and forbidden by a sumptuary law as too voluptuous. Besides, the *Greek* word used to express a black-pudding was not invented in the days of *Homer*. *Ogylby* indeed thus renders it:

As one a pudding broiling on the coals.

The ſav'ry cates on glowing embers caſt
Inceſſant turns, impatient for repaſt:
35 *Ulyſſes* ſo, from ſide to ſide devolv'd,
In ſelf-debate the Suitors doom reſolv'd.
When in the form of mortal nymph array'd,
From heav'n deſcends the *Jove*-born martial Maid;
And hov'ring o'er his head in view confeſs'd,
40 The Goddeſs thus her fav'rite care addreſs'd.

But you will ask, Is not the alluſion mean at beſt, and does it not convey a low image? Monſieur *Dacier* anſwers in the negative, in his notes upon *Ariſtotles's* Poetics. The compariſon is borrow'd from ſacrifices which yielded blood and fat, and was therefore ſo far from being deſpicable, that it was look'd upon with veneration by antiquity. *Lib.* 1. of the *Iliad.*

On theſe, in double cawls involv'd with art,
The choiceſt morſels lay from every part.

The *Cawls* and the *choiceſt morſels* were the fat of the Victim, ſelected as the beſt part of it, to be offered to the Gods. We may find that the thought was noble in the oriental language, for the Author of *Eccleſiaſt.* makes uſe of it, 47. 2. *As in the fat taken from the peace-offering, ſo was* David *choſen out of the children of* Iſrael. And the ſame alluſion which was uſed to repreſent the worth and excellence of *David*, could be no degradation to *Ulyſſes.*

But what is underſtood by the *belly of the beaſt, full of fat and blood?* *Boileau* is of opinion that thoſe words denote the fat and the blood which are in thoſe parts of an animal naturally: but he is in an error, as appears evidently from theſe lines, *lib.* 18. of the *Odyſſey.*

Γαστέρες ἄς δ' αἰγῶν κέατ' ἐν πυρί πᾶς δ' ἐπὶ δόρπῳ
Κατθέμεθα κνίσσης τε καὶ αἵματος ἐμπλήσαντες.

Implentes ſanguine & pinguedine, in cœnâ deponamus; a demonſtration that *Homer* intends not the natural fat and blood of the animal.

Oh

Oh thou, of mortals moſt inur'd to woes!
Why rowl thoſe eyes unfriended of repoſe?
Beneath thy palace-roof forget thy care;
Bleſt in thy Queen! bleſt in thy blooming heir!
45 Whom, to the Gods when ſuppliant fathers bow,
They name the ſtandard of their dearest vow.
Juſt is thy kind reproach (the chief rejoin'd)
Deeds full of fate diſtract my various mind,
In contemplation rapt. This hoſtile crew
50 What ſingle arm hath proweſs to ſubdue?
Or if by *Jove*'s, and thy auxiliar aid,
They're doom'd to bleed; O ſay, cœleſtial maid:
Where ſhall *Ulyſſes* ſhun, or how ſuſtain,
Nations embattel'd to revenge the ſlain?
55 Oh impotence of faith! *Minerva* cries,
If man on frail unknowing man relies,
Doubt you the Gods? Lo *Pallas*' ſelf deſcends,
Inſpires thy counſels, and thy toils attends.

In

v. 56. *If man on frail unknowing man relies,*
Doubt you the Gods?
There is excellent reaſoning in this: If a friend whom we know to be wiſe and powerful, adviſes us, we are ready to follow his inſtructions; the divine Being gives us his council, and we refuſe it. Monſieur *Dacier* obſerves that *Epictetus* had this paſſage in his view, and beautify'd his morality with it. "The protection of a "Prince or Potentate (ſays that Author) gives us full tranquillity, "and baniſhes from us all uneaſy apprehenſion. We have an all-
"powerful

In me affianc'd, fortify thy breast,
Tho' myriads leagu'd thy rightful claim contest;
My sure divinity shall bear the shield,
And edge thy sword to reap the glorious field.
Now, pay the debt to craving nature due,
Her faded pow'rs with balmy rest renew.
She ceas'd: Ambrosial slumbers seal his eyes;
His care dissolves in visionary joys:
The Goddess pleas'd, regains her natal skies.
Not so the Queen; The downy bands of sleep
By grief relax'd, she wak'd again to sleep
A gloomy pause ensu'd of dumb despair;
Then thus her fate invok'd, with fervent pray'r.

" powerful Being for our Protector, and for our Father; and yet " the knowledge of it is not sufficient to drive away our fears, " inquietudes and discontents."

What *Homer* further puts into the mouth of the Goddess of Wisdom is consonant to sacred verity, and agrees with the language of the holy Scripture; *Psalm* xxvii. 3. *Tho' an host of men were laid against me, yet shall not my Heart be afraid.*

The Poet almost in every book mentions the destruction of the Suitors by the single hand of *Ulysses*, to reconcile us to it by degrees, that we may not be shock'd at the great Catastrophe of the Poem as incredible: It is particularly judicious to insist upon it in this place in a manner so solemn, to prepare us for the approaching event. If the destruction of the Suitors should appear humanly improbable by being ascribed solely to *Ulysses*, it is at least reconcileable to divine probability, and becomes credible thro' the Intervention of a Goddess.

Diana!

Diana! ſpeed thy deathful ebon dart,
And cure the pangs of this convulſive heart.
Snatch me, ye whirlwinds! far from human race,
75 Toſt thro' the void, illimitable ſpace:
Or if diſmounted from the rapid cloud,
Me with his whelming wave let Ocean ſhrow'd!
So, *Pandarus*, thy hopes, three orphan fair
Were doom'd to wander thro' the devious air;
80 Thy ſelf untimely and thy conſort dy'd,
But four Cœleſtials both your cares ſupply'd.

v. 72. Diana! *ſpeed thy deathful ebon dart*, &c.] I doubt not but the Reader will be pleas'd with the beauty of this ſoliloquy. There is an aſſemblage of tender images and moving complaints, and yet they are ſuch as betray no meanneſs of ſpirit: The lamentation of *Penelope* is the lamentation of a Queen and Heroine; ſhe mourns, but it is with dignity. The Poet makes a good uſe of her ſorrows, and they excellently ſuſtain her character of perſevering to elude the addreſſes of the Suitors, when ſhe wiſhes even to die rather than to yield to them.

But I confeſs the inſerting ſo many particularities of the daughters of *Pandarus*, &c. greatly leſſens the pathetic of this ſpeech.

v. 74. *Snatch me, ye whirlwinds!* &c.] The antients (ſays *Dacier*) were perſuaded that ſome perſons were carried away by ſtorms and whirlwinds. I would rather imagine ſuch expreſſions to be entirely figurative and poetical; it is probable that what gave occaſion to theſe fictions might be no more than the ſudden deaths of ſome perſons, and their diſappearance was aſcrib'd, in the language of Poetry, to ſtorms and whirlwinds. The *Orientals* delighted in ſuch bold figures. *Job* xxvii. 21. *The eaſt wind carrieth him away, and as a ſtorm hurrieth him out of his place.* And *Iſaiah* xli. 16. *The wind ſhall carry them away, and the whirlwind ſhall ſcatter them.*

Venus

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

v. 82. Venus *in tender delicacy rears*
With honey, milk, and wine, their infant years.]
Monsieur *Dacier* observes upon this passage; *Venus* is said to feed these Infants with wine, milk, and honey; that is, she nursed them in their infancy, with plenty and abundance. For this is the import of the expression: a land flowing with milk and honey means a land of the greatest fertility, as is evident from the writings of *Moses*. So the prophet. *Butter and honey shall he eat, till he knows how to refuse the evil and chuse the good*; that is, till the age of discretion.

v. 84. *Imperial* Juno *to their youth assign'd*
A form majestic, and sagacious mind.]
It may seem that *Homer* ascribes improper gifts to this Goddess; Wisdom is the portion of *Minerva*, Beauty of *Venus*, why then are they here ascrib'd to *Juno*? *Spondanus* calls this an insolvable difficulty. *Dacier* explains it by saying, that the beauty of Princesses is different from that of persons of an inferior station, their beauty consists in a majesty that is every way great and noble, and strikes with awe, very different from the little affectations and formal softnesses of inferior beauty; the former kind is the gift of *Venus* to the lower part of the fair sex, the latter is bestow'd on Princesses and Queens, by *Juno* the Regent of the skies.

Wing'd

Wing'd *Harpies* ſnatch'd th' unguarded charge away,
And to the Furies bore a grateful prey.
Be ſuch my lot! Or thou *Diana* ſpeed
95 Thy ſhaft, and ſend me joyful to the dead:
To ſeek my Lord among the warrior-train,
E're ſecond vows my bridal faith profane.
When woes the waking ſenſe alone aſſail,
Whilſt night extends her ſoft oblivious veil,
100 Of other wretches care the torture ends:
No truce the warfare of my heart ſuſpends!
The night renews the day-diſtracting theme,
And airy terrors ſable ev'ry dream.
The laſt alone a kind illuſion wrought,
105 And to my bed my lov'd *Ulyſſes* brought,

v. 92. *Wing'd* Harpies *ſnatch'd th' unguarded charge away.*] It is not evident what is meant by theſe Princeſſes being carried away by the *Harpies:* *Euſtathius* thinks that they wander'd from their own country, and fell into the power of cruel governeſſes, whoſe ſeverities the Poet aſcribes to the ἐρίνυες, or *Furies*. *Dacier* imagines, that theſe two Princeſſes having ſeen the unhappy fate of their ſiſter *Aëdon* (who was married to *Zethus*, and ſlew her own ſon fear'd a like calamity; and dreading marriage, retir'd to ſome diſtant ſolitude, where never being heard of, it gave room for the fiction. It muſt be allow'd that the thought excellently agrees with the wiſhes of *Penelope:* Theſe Princeſſes were taken away at the point of their marriage; *Penelope* believes herſelf to be in the ſame condition. and wiſhes to be loſt rather than ſubmit to ſecond nuptials. This Speech has a further effect; we find *Penelope* reduc'd to the utmoſt exigency, ſhe has no further ſubterfuge; the Poet therefore judiciouſly paints this exigency in the ſtrongeſt colours, to ſhew the neceſſity of unravelling the intrigue of the Poem in the concluſion of the *Odyſſey*.

In

In manly bloom, and each majeſtic grace
As when for *Troy* he left my fond embrace:
Such raptures in my beating boſom riſe,
I deem it ſure a viſion of the skies.
Thus, whilſt *Aurora* mounts her purple throne;
In audible laments ſhe breathes her moan:
The ſounds aſſault *Ulyſſes'* wakeful ear;
Miſ-judging of the cauſe, a ſudden fear
Of his arrival known, the Chief alarms;
He thinks the Queen is ruſhing to his arms.

v. 107. *As when for* Troy *he left my fond embrace.*] This little circumſtance is not without a good effect: it ſhews that the whole ſoul of *Penelope* was poſſeſs'd with the image of *Ulyſſes*: *Homer* adds, *ſuch as he was when he ſail'd to* Troy; which is inſerted to take off our wonder that ſhe ſhould not diſcover him; this *Ulyſſes* in diſguiſe is not like the *Ulyſſes* ſhe formerly knew, and now delineates in her imagination. *Euſtathius.*

v. 110. *Thus, whilſt* Aurora *mounts her purple throne.*] This is the morning of the fortieth day; for part of the eighteenth book, and the whole nineteenth, and ſo far of the twentieth book, contain no more time than the evening of the thirty ninth day.

v. 113. ——*a ſudden fear*
Of his arrival known, the Chief alarms.]
I was at a loſs for an explication of this line, 'till I found it in *Euſtathius*; for why ſhould *Ulyſſes* imagine that *Penelope* knew him to be *Ulyſſes*, after a ſpeech that expreſs'd ſo much concern for his abſence? *Ulyſſes*, having only heard the voice, not diſtinguiſh'd the words of her lamentation, miſtakes the tears of *Penelope* for tears of joy; he ſuſpects that the diſcovery is made by *Euryclea* or *Telemachus*; that they have told her the truth to give her comfort; and fears leſt in the tranſport of her joy ſhe ſhould act ſomething that would betray him to the Suitors, and prevent his deſigns: He therefore immediately withdraws, and makes a pray'r to Heav'n for a ſign to re-aſſure his hopes, that he may proceed with confidence to their deſtruction.

Up-ſpringing,

Up-ſpringing from his couch, with active haſte
The fleece and carpet in the dome he plac'd:
(The hide, without imbib'd the morning air.)
And thus the Gods invok'd, with ardent pray'r.
Jove, and ethereal thrones! with heav'n to friend
If the long ſeries of my woes ſhall end;
Of human race now riſing from repoſe,
Let one a bliſsful omen here diſcloſe:

v. 120. Jove, *and ethereal Thrones*———
123. ———*a bliſsful Omen*———]

The conſtruction in the *Greek* is ungrammatical, for after Ζεῦ πάτερ in the ſingular, the Poet immediately adds εἰ μ' ἐθέλοντες in the plural number; τὰ λοιπὰ δαιμόνια are imply'd, ſays *Euſtathius*, ſo that θεοὶ is underſtood, which rectifies the conſtruction.

The Reader will fully underſtand the import of this Prayer, from the nature of Omens, and the notions of them amongſt the Antients: *If*, ſays *Ulyſſes*, *my prayer is heard, let there be a voice from within the palace to certify me of it*; and immediately a voice is heard, *O* Jupiter, *may this day be the laſt to the Suitors!* Such ſpeeches as fell accidentally from any perſon were held ominous, and one of the antient ways of divination: *Ulyſſes* underſtands it as ſuch, and accepts the Omen. It was in uſe among the *Romans*, as appears from *Tully* of divination, when *P. Æmilius* was going to war with *Perſeus* King of the *Macedonians*, he found his little daughter in tears: *O Father*, ſays ſhe, Perſeus *is dead!* meaning her little dog named *Perſeus*; *Æmilius* immediately reply'd, *O Daughter I embrace the Omen*, applying it to *Perſeus* King of the *Macedonians*; who was afterwards conquer'd by him, and died a Captive in *Rome*. The ſame practice was us'd by the *Hebrews*, it was call'd *Bath Kol*; this is an inſtance of it: Two *Rabbies* deſiring to ſee *Samuel* a *Babyloniſh* doctor, *let us follow* ſaid they, *the hearing of Bath Kol*; travelling therefore near a ſchool, they heard a boy reading theſe words out of *Samuel* xxv. 1. *And* Samuel *died*. They obſerv'd it, and found that their Friend was dead. The *Sortes Virgilianæ* afterwards were much of this kind.

And

And to confirm my faith, propitious *Jove!*
Vouchsafe the sanction of a sign above.
Whilst lowly thus the Chief adoring bows,
The pitying God his guardian aid avows.
Loud from a saphire sky his thunder sounds:
With springing hope the Heroe's heart rebounds.
Soon, with consummate joy to crown his pray'r,
An omen'd Voice invades his ravish'd ear.

v. 128. *Loud from a saphire sky*———] It was this circumstance, of thunder bursting from a *serene sky*, that made it ominous: it was noted as such amongst the *Romans* in the books of the Augurs; and *Horace* brings it as a proof against the opinions of *Epicurus*.

———*Diespiter*
Igni corusco nubila dividens,
Plerumque per purum *tonantes*
Egit equos, volucremque currum.

Virgil likewise speaks of thunder as ominous, when *Anchises* saw the lambent flame round the head of *Iulus*: He prays to *Jupiter* and immediately it thunders.

Vix ea fatus erat senior, subitoque fragore
Intonuit.

The *Stoics* drew an argument from thunder from a serene air against the Doctrines of *Epicurus*, who taught that the Gods had no regard of human affairs; for they concluded such thunder to be præter-natural, and an argument of a divine Providence.

Beneath

Beneath a pile that close the dome adjoin'd,
Twelve female slaves the gift of *Ceres* grind;
Task'd for the royal board to bolt the bran
From the pure flour (the growth and strength of man)
Discharging to the day the labour due,
Now early to repose the rest withdrew;
One maid, unequal to the task assign'd,
Still turn'd the toilsome mill with anxious mind;
And thus in bitterness of soul divin'd.

Father of Gods and men! whose thunders rowl
O'er the *Cerulean* Vault, and shake the Pole;
Whoe'er from heav'n has gain'd this rare Ostent,
(Of granted vows a certain signal sent)
In this blest moment of accepted pray'r
Piteous, regard a wretch consum'd with care!
Instant, O *Jove!* confound the Suitor train,
For whom o'er-toil'd I grind the golden grain:
Far from this dome the lewd devourers cast,
And be this festival decreed their last!

v. 133. *Twelve female slaves the gift of* Ceres *grin'd.*] This little particularity shews us the great profusion of the Suitors, who employ'd twelve mills to find them bread. There is a particular energy in the word ἐπεῤῥώοντο; it denotes the great labour and assiduity of these people in preparing the bread, and consequently the great waste of the Suitors. It likewise preserves a piece of antiquity, that Kings formerly had mills in their palaces to provide for their families, and that these mills were attended by women; I suppose because preparing bread was an houshold care, and therefore fell to the lot of female servants.

Big with their doom denounc'd in earth and sky,
Ulysses' heart dilates with secret joy.
Mean-time the menial train with unctuous wood
Heap'd high the genial hearth, *Vulcanian* food:
155 When, early dress'd, advanc'd the royal heir;
With manly grasp he wav'd a martial spear,
A radiant sabre grac'd his purple zone,
And on his foot the golden sandal shone.
His steps impetuous to the portal press'd;
160 And *Euryclea* thus he there address'd.
Say thou, to whom my youth its nurture owes,
Was care for due refection, and repose,
Bestow'd the stranger guest? Or waits he griev'd,
His age not honour'd, nor his wants reliev'd?
165 Promiscuous grace on all the Queen confers;
(In woes bewilder'd, oft the wisest errs.)
The wordy vagrant to the dole aspires,
And modest worth with noble scorn retires.

v. 165. *Promiscuous grace on all the Queen confers.*] Th speech of *Telemachus* may seem to be wanting in filial respect, it appears to condemn the conduct of his mother: But (remar *Eustathius*) the contrary is to be gathered from it. His blame really a commendation; it shews that her affection was so gre for *Ulysses*, that she receiv'd every vagrant honourably, who d ceiv'd her with false news about him; and that other persons wh brought no tydings of him, tho' men of greater worth, were le acceptable.

Sh

She thus: O ceaſe that ever-honour'd name
To blemiſh now; it ill deſerves your blame:
A bowl of gen'rous wine ſuffic'd the gueſt;
In vain the Queen the night-refection preſt;
Nor wou'd he court repoſe in downy ſtate,
Unbleſs'd, abandon'd to the rage of fate!
A hide beneath the portico was ſpread,
And fleecy skins compos'd an humble bed:
A downy carpet caſt with duteous care,
Secur'd him from the keen nocturnal air.
His cornel javelin pois'd, with regal port,
To the ſage *Greeks* conven'd in *Themis'* court,
Forth-iſſuing from the dome the Prince repair'd:
Two dogs of chace, a lion-hearted guard,
Behind him ſow'rly ſtalk'd. Without delay
The dame divides the labour of the day;
Thus urging to the toil the menial train.
What marks of luxury the marble ſtain!
Its wonted luſtre let the floor regain;

v. 180. *To the ſage* Greeks *conven'd in* Themis' *court,*
Forth-iſſuing from the dome the Prince repair'd:]
It was cuſtomary for Kings and Magiſtrates to go early every morning into the public aſſemblies, to diſtribute juſtice, and take care of public affairs: but this aſſembly contributing nothing to the action of the *Odyſſey*, the Poet paſſes it over in a curſory manner, without any enlargement. *Euſtathius.*

The

The ſeats with purple cloathe in order due;
And let th' abſterſive ſponge the board renew:
190 Let ſome refreſh the vaſe's ſullied mold;
Some bid the goblets boaſt their native gold:
Some to the ſpring, with each a jar, repair,
And copious waters pure for bathing bear:

v. 189. *And let th' abſterſive ſponge the board renew.*] The table was not antiently cover'd with linen, but carefully cleans'd with wet ſponges. Thus *Arrian*, ἔρον τὰς τραπέζας, σπόγγισον. And *Martial*:

Hæc tibi ſorte datur tergendis ſpongia menſis.

They made uſe of no napkins to wipe their hands, but the ſoft and fine part of the bread, which they called ἀπομαγδαλίαι, which afterwards they threw to the dogs; this cuſtom is mention'd in the *Odyſſey*, *lib.* 10.

Ὡς δ' ὅταν ἀμφὶ ἄνακτα κύνες δαίτηθεν ἴοῦσα
Σαίνωσ', ὅ τι οἱ γάρ τε φέρει μειλίγματα θυμῷ.

As from ſome feaſt a man returning late,
His faithful dogs all meet him at the gate,
Rejoicing round, ſome morſel to receive,
Such as the good man ever wont to give.

The morſel in the tranſlation, and the μειλίγματα in the *Greek* mean theſe pieces of bread, or ἀπομαγδαλίαι, with which the Antients wip'd their hands after eating, and then threw to the dogs.

Diſpatch

Dispatch! for soon the Suitors will assay
195 The lunar feast-rites to the God of day.
She said; with duteous haste a bevy fair
Of twenty virgins to the spring repair:
With varied toils the rest adorn the dome.
Magnificent, and blithe, the Suitors come.
200 Some wield the sounding ax; the dodder'd oaks
Divide, obedient to the forceful strokes.
Soon from the fount, with each a brimming urn,
(*Eumaus* in their train) the maids return.
Three porkers for the feast, all brawny chin'd,
205 He brought; the choicest of the tusky kind:

v. 195. *The lunar feast-rites to the God of day.*] This was the last day of one month, and the first of the following: The *Greek* months were lunar, the first day of every month was a day of great solemnity, and it was consecrated to *Apollo*, the author and fountain of light. *Ulysses* had said, *lib.* 14. *v.* 186.

E're the next moon increase, or this decay,
His antient realms Ulysses *shall survey;*
In blood and dust each proud oppressor mourn.

Τὸν μὲν φθίνοντος μηνὸς, τὸν δ' ἰσαμένοιο.

This, says *Solon* in *Plutarch*, means that *Ulysses* shall return on the last day of the month precisely; and here we find it verify'd. *Ulysses* discovers himself upon this day, and kills the Suitors: By his return, in the foregoing period, is meant his discovery; for he was return'd when he made that assertion to *Eumæus*. It is therefore probable, that the above recited verse was rightly interpreted by *Solon*.

In lodgments firſt ſecure his care he view'd,
Then to the King this friendly ſpeech renew'd:
Now ſay ſincere, my gueſt! the Suitor train
Still treat thy worth with lordly dull diſdain;
Or ſpeaks their deed a bounteous mind humane?
Some pitying God (*Ulyſſes* ſad reply'd)
With vollied vengeance blaſt their tow'ring pride!
No conſcious bluſh, no ſenſe of right reſtrains
The tides of luſt that ſwell their boiling veins:
From vice to vice their appetites are toſt,
All cheaply ſated at another's coſt!
While thus the Chief his woes indignant told,
Melanthius, maſter of the bearded fold,
The goodlieſt goats of all the royal herd
Spontaneous to the Suitors' feaſt preferr'd:
Two grooms aſſiſtant bore the victims bound;
With quav'ring cries the vaulted roofs reſound:
And to the Chief auſtere, aloud began
The wretch unfriendly to the race of man.
Here, vagrant, ſtill? offenſive to my Lords!
Blows have more energy than airy words;
Thoſe arguments I'll uſe: nor conſcious ſhame,
Nor threats, thy bold intruſion will reclaim.

On this high feaſt the meaneſt vulgar boaſt
A plenteous board! Hence! ſeek another hoſt!
Rejoinder to the churl the King diſdain'd,
But ſhook his head, and riſing wrath reſtrain'd.
From *Cephalenia* croſs the ſurgy main
Philætius late arriv'd, a faithful ſwain.
A ſteer ungrateful to the bull's embrace,
And goats he brought, the pride of all their race;
Imported in a ſhallop not his own:
The dome re-echo'd to their mingled moan.
Strait to the guardian of the briſtly kind
He thus began, benevolent of mind.
What gueſt is he, of ſuch majeſtic air?
His lineage and paternal clime declare:
Dim thro' th' eclipſe of fate, the rays divine
Of ſovereign ſtate with faded ſplendor ſhine.

v. 237. *Imported in a ſhallop*———] To underſtand this paſſage, it is neceſſary to remember that *Melanthius* and *Philætius* fed their flocks and herds in *Cephalenia*, an adjacent Iſland, under the dominion of *Ulyſſes*; but living in different parts of it, they are brought over in ſeparate veſſels, by different ferrymen, πορθμῆες, as *Homer* expreſſes it.

245 If Monarchs by the Gods are plung'd in woe,
To what abyss are we foredoom'd to go!
Then affable he thus the Chief address'd,
Whilst with pathetic warmth his hand he press'd.
Stranger! may fate a milder aspect shew,
250 And spin thy future with a whiter clue!
O *Jove!* for ever deaf to human cries;
The tyrant, not the father of the skies!

Unpiteous

v. 245. *If Monarchs by the Gods, &c.*] This is the reasoning of *Philætius:* Kings are in a peculiar manner the care of the Gods; and if the Gods exempt not Kings from calamities, how can inferior persons (says *Dacier*) expect to be exempted, or complain in the day of adversity? But I persuade my self the words have a deeper sense, and mean *Ulysses*; "Well may vagrants suffer, "when Kings, such as *Ulysses*, are not free from afflictions.

v. 251. *O Jove! for ever deaf to human cries;*
The tyrant, not the father of the skies!

These words are to be ascribed to the excess of sorrow which *Philætius* feels for the sufferings of *Ulysses*; for they certainly transgress the bounds of reason. But if we consider the state of Theology in *Homer*'s time, the sentence will appear less offensive; "How can *Jupiter* (says *Philætius*) who is our father, throw his "children into such an abyss of misery? Thou, oh *Jove*, hast "made us; yet hast no compassion when we suffer." It is no easy matter to answer this argument from the heathen Theology; and no wonder therefore if it confounds the reason of *Philætius*; but we who have certain hopes of a future state, can readily solve the difficulty: that state will be a time of retribution; it will amply recompense the good man for all his calamities, or as *Milton* expresses,

Will justify the ways of God to men.

It may be observ'd in general that this introduction of *Philætius* and his speech, so warm in the cause of *Ulysses*, is inserted here with

Unpiteous of the race thy will began,
The fool of fate, thy manufacture, man,
55 With penury, contempt, repulse, and care,
The gauling load of life is doom'd to bear.
Ulysses from his state a wand'rer still,
Upbraids thy pow'r, thy wisdom, or thy will:
O Monarch ever dear!——O man of woe!——
60 Fresh flow my tears, and shall for ever flow!

Like

with admirable judgment; The Poet intends to make use of his assistance in the destruction of the Suitors; he therefore brings him in giving *Ulysses* full assurance of his fidelity; so that when that Heroe reveals himself to him, he does not depart from his cautious character, being before certify'd of his honesty.

I will only add that *Philætius* is not to be look'd upon as a common servant, but as an officer of state and dignity: and whatever has been said in these annotations concerning *Eumæus* may be apply'd to *Philætius*; he is here call'd ὄρχαμος ἀνδρῶν, a title of honour, and *Ulysses* promises to marry him into his own family in the sequel of the *Odyssey*; consequently he is a personage worthy to be an actor in Epic Poetry.

v. 260. *Fresh flow my tears, and shall for ever flow!*] The words in the original are ἴδιον ὡς ἐνόησα, and they are very differently explain'd by *Dacier* and *Eustathius*: ἴδιον, τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ἱδρῶσα, ἠγωνίασα, "I have sweated and been in an agony at the thought of the severe "dispensations of *Jupiter*;" this is the interpretation of *Eustathius*. *Dacier* takes ἴδιον to be an adjective, and then it must be connected with the preceding period.

Οὐκ ἐλεαίρεις ἄνδρας, ἐπὴν δὴ γείτεας αὐτὸς,
Μισγέμεναι κακότητι, καὶ ἄλγεσι λευγαλέοισι,
Ἴδιον ὡς ἐνόησα.

Ut privatim, vel domestico admonitus suum exemplo, for so we may render ἴδιον, meaning *Ulysses*; then the sense will be this; Jupiter, the

Like thee, poor ſtranger gueſt, deny'd his home!
Like thee, in rags obſcene decreed to roam!
Or haply periſh'd on ſome diſtant coaſt,
In *Stygian* gloom he glides a penſive ghoſt!
265 O, grateful for the good his bounty gave,
I'll grieve, 'till ſorrow ſink me to the grave!
His kind protecting hand my youth preferr'd,
The regent of his *Cephalenian* herd:
With vaſt increaſe beneath my care it ſpreads,
270 A ſtately breed! and blackens far the meads.
Conſtrain'd, the choiceſt beeves I thence import,
To cram theſe cormorants that crowd his court:
Who in partition ſeek his realm to ſhare;
Nor human right, nor wrath divine revere.
275 Since here reſolv'd oppreſſive theſe reſide,
Contending doubts my anxious heart divide:
Now, to ſome foreign clime inclin'd to fly,
And with the royal herd protection buy:

tho' thou haſt made us, thou haſt no compaſſion upon mankind, thou caſteſt us into evils and miſery; as I have learn'd by a private or domeſtic inſtance, namely in the perſon of Ulyſſes. If my judgment were of any weight, I ſhould recommend this interpretation rather than that of *Euſtathius*, which ſeems to be a forced one, and I remember no inſtance of this nature in *Homer*; but the preference is ſubmitted to the Reader's deciſion.

Then,

Then, happier thoughts return the nodding ſcale,
280 Light mounts deſpair, alternate hopes prevail:
In op'ning proſpects of ideal joy,
My King returns; the proud Uſurpers die.
To whom the Chief: In thy capacious mind
Since daring zeal with cool debate is join'd;
285 Attend a deed already ripe in fate:
Atteſt, oh *Jove*, the truth I now relate!
This ſacred truth atteſt each genial pow'r,
Who bleſs the board, and guard this friendly bow'r!
Before thou quit the dome (nor long delay)
290 Thy wiſh produc'd in act, with pleas'd ſurvey,
Thy wond'ring eyes ſhall view: his rightful reign
By arms avow'd *Ulyſſes* ſhall regain,
And to the ſhades devote the Suitor-train.
O *Jove* ſupreme, the raptur'd ſwain replies,
295 With deeds conſummate ſoon the promis'd joys!
Theſe aged nerves with new-born vigor ſtrung,
In that bleſt cauſe ſhou'd emulate the young——
Aſſents *Eumæus* to the pray'r addreſt;
And equal ardors fire his loyal breaſt.
300 Mean-time the Suitors urge the Prince's fate,
And deathful arts employ the dire debate:

When in his airy tour, the bird of *Jove*
Truſs'd with his ſinewy pounce a trembling dove;
Siniſter to their hope! This omen ey'd
305 *Amphinomus*, who thus preſaging cry'd. 31
The Gods from force and fraud the Prince defend;
O Peers! the ſanguinary ſcheme ſuſpend:
Your future thought let ſable Fate employ;
And give the preſent hour to genial joy.
310 From council ſtrait th'aſſenting peerage ceas'd, 32
And in the dome prepar'd the genial feaſt.

Diſ-rob'd,

v. 305. Amphinomus, *who thus preſaging cry'd.*] It may be ask'd why *Amphinomus* gives this interpretation to the Prodigy? and why might not the Eagle denote the Suitors, and the Pigeon *Telemachus?* No doubt but ſuch an interpretation would have been ſpecious, but contrary to the rules of Augury. The Eagle is the King of birds, and muſt therefore of neceſſity denote the chief perſonage, and conſequently could only be apply'd to *Ulyſſes*, or *Telemachus*. *Amphinomus* thus interprets it, and the Suitors acquieſce in his interpretation.

v. 311. *And in the dome prepar'd the genial feaſt.*] The Antients, ſays *Euſtathius*, obſerve that this is the only place where the Suitors offer any Sacrifice throughout the whole *Odyſſey*, and that there is no inſtance at all, that they make any prayer to the Gods. But is it evident from this place, that this is a Sacrifice? 'tis true the ſacrificial term of ἱέρευον is mention'd; but perhaps that word may not denote a Sacrifice; for ἱερεῖα, tho' it primarily ſignifies the fleſh of animals offer'd to the Gods, yet in a leſs proper acceptation implies the fleſh of all animals indifferently. Thus *Athenæus*, τροφὴν, τὴν τῶν νεογνῶν ἱερείων, which muſt be render'd, *the fleſh of young animals.* Thus, *Lib. 7.* εὐσηπτότερα τὰ νύκτωρ θυόμενα ἱερεῖα, *the fleſh of animals that are kill'd by night ſooneſt putrify*; and *Galen* uſes ζῶν, and ἱερεῖον, for an animal indiſcriminately. The reaſon is, becauſe originally no animal was ever ſlain but

Dis-rob'd, their vests apart in order lay,
Then all with speed succinct the victims slay:
With sheep and shaggy goats the porkers bled,
315 And the proud steer was on the marble spread.
With fire prepar'd they deal the morsels round,
Wine rosy-bright the brimming goblets crown'd,
By sage *Eumæus* born: the purple tide
Melanthius from an ample jar supply'd:
320 High canisters of bread *Philætius* plac'd;
And eager all devour the rich repast.
Dispos'd apart, *Ulysses* shares the treat!
A trivet-table, and ignobler seat,

but some part of it was offer'd to the Gods, and in this sense every ζῶν was ἱερεῖον. If we consult the context in *Homer*, it must be allowed that there is no other word but ἱέρευον that distinguishes this from a common repast, thro' the whole description; and if that word will bear a remote signification, as ἱερεῖον does, I should conclude, that this is no Sacrifice. Nay, if it should be found that ἱέρευον implies of necessity a religious act, yet it will not prove that this is more than a customary meal, since the Antients at all entertainments made Libations to the Gods; What may seem to strengthen this conjecture is that the Poet immediately adds, that the *Greeks*, Ἀχαιοὶ, sacrific'd in the grove of *Apollo*; without mentioning that the Suitors partook in the sacrifice: nay they seem to be feasting in the palace, while the *Greeks* are offering in the grove.

v. 323. *A trivet-table, and ignobler seat.*] This circumstance is not inserted unnecessarily; the table is suitable to the disguise of *Ulysses*, and it might have created a jealousy in the Suitors if *Telemachus* had us'd him with greater distinction.

The Prince appoints; but to his Sire assigns
325 The tasteful inwards, and nectareous wines.
Partake my guest, he cry'd, without controul
The social feast, and drain the cheering bowl:
Dread not the railer's laugh, nor ruffian's rage;
No vulgar roof protects thy honour'd age;
330 This dome a refuge to thy wrongs shall be,
From my great Sire too soon devolv'd to me!
Your violence and scorn, ye Suitors cease,
Lest arms avenge the violated peace.
Aw'd by the Prince, so haughty, brave, and young,
335 Rage gnaw'd the lip, amazement chain'd the tongue.
Be patient, Peers! at length *Antinous* cries;
The threats of vain imperious youth despise:
Wou'd *Jove* permit the meditated blow,
That stream of eloquence shou'd cease to flow.
340 Without reply vouchsaf'd, *Antinous* ceas'd:
Mean-while the pomp of festival increas'd:
By Heralds rank'd, in marshall'd order move
The city-tribes, to pleas'd *Apollo*'s grove:
Beneath the verdure of which awful shade,
345 The lunar hetacomb they grateful laid;
Partook the sacred feast, and ritual honours paid.

But

But the rich banquet in the dome prepar'd,
(An humble side-board set) *Ulysses* shar'd.
Observant of the Prince's high behest,
His menial train attend the stranger guest;
Whom *Pallas* with unpard'ning fury fir'd,
By lordly pride and keen reproach inspir'd.
A *Samian* Peer, more studious than the rest
Of vice, who teem'd with many a dead-born jest;
And urg'd, for title to a consort Queen,
Unnumber'd acres arable and green;
(*Ctesippus* nam'd) this Lord *Ulysses* ey'd,
And thus burst out, imposthumate with pride.
The sentence I propose, ye Peers, attend:
Since due regard must wait the Prince's friend,
Let each a token of esteem bestow:
This gift acquits the dear respect I owe;
With which he nobly may discharge his seat,
And pay the menials for the master's treat.
He said; and of the steer before him plac'd,
That sinewy fragment at *Ulysses* cast,
Where to the pastern-bone by nerves combin'd,
The well-horn'd foot indissolubly join'd;
Which whizzing high, the wall unseemly sign'd.

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

v. 370. ——*grins a ghastly smile;*] The Expression in *Greek* is remarkable: 375

——μειδήσας δὲ θυμῷ
Σαρδάνιον (or Σαρδόνιον)

Some tells us that there is an herb frequent in the island of *Sardinia*, which by tasting distorts the muscles, that a man seems to laugh while he is under a painful agony; and from hence the *Sardinian laugh* became a Proverb, to signify a laugh which conceal'd an inward pain. Others refer the expression to an antient 380 custom of the *Sardinians* (a colony of the *Lacedemonians*) it is pretended that upon a certain festival every year, they not only slew all their prisoners of war, but also all the old men that were above seventy, and oblig'd these miserable wretches to laugh while they underwent the severity of torment. Either of these reasons fully explains the meaning of the Σαρδόνιος γέλως; and shews it to denote an exterior laugh, and an inward pain. I am inclin'd to prefer the former interpretation, not only as it appears most natural, but because *Virgil* seems to understand it in that sense, 385 for he alludes to the above-mention'd quality of the *Sardinian* Herbs, *Eclogue* 7. *v.* 41.

Immo ego Sardois videor tibi amarior herbis

——*deform'd like him who chaws*
Sardinian *herbage to contract his jaws.*

The Reader may observe that *Ctesippus* breaks out into buffoonry, and the Suitors frequently are guilty of it in other parts of 390 the *Odyssey:* These levities have been proscrib'd by the Critics as too low, and unworthy of Epic Poetry: but *Homer* adapts himself to his characters, he paints ridiculous men in ridiculous colours; tho' I will not say but such characters are more proper for Comedy than Epic Poetry. If ever they are pardonable, they are in *Homer*, who puts these low pleasantries into the mouths of drunkards and debauchees; such persons being generally men of no worth or serious deportment.

When

When thus the Prince with pious rage inflam'd:
Had not th' inglorious wound thy malice aim'd
Fall'n guiltless of the mark, my certain spear
375 Had made thee buy the brutal triumph dear:
Nor shou'd thy Sire a Queen his daughter boast,
The Suitor now had vanish'd in a ghost:
No more, ye lewd Compeers, with lawless pow'r
Invade my dome, my herds and flocks devour:
380 For genuine worth, of age mature to know,
My grape shall redden, and my harvest grow.
Or if each other's wrongs ye still support,
With rapes and riot to profane my court;
What single arm with numbers can contend?
385 On me let all your lifted swords descend,
And with my life such vile dishonours end.
A long cessation of discourse ensu'd,
By gentler *Agelaus* thus renew'd.
A just reproof, ye Peers! your rage restrain
390 From the protected guest, and menial train:
And Prince! to stop the source of future ill,
Assent your self, and gain the royal will.
Whilst hope prevail'd to see your Sire restor'd,
Of right the Queen refus'd a second Lord:

395 But who so vain of faith, so blind to fate,
To think he still survives to claim the state?
Now press the sovereign Dame with warm desire
To wed, as wealth or worth her choice inspire:
The Lord selected to the nuptial joys,
400 Far hence will lead the long-contended prize:
Whilst in paternal pomp, with plenty blest,
You reign, of this imperial dome possest.
Sage and serene *Telemachus* replies;
By him at whose behest the thunder flies!
405 And by the name on earth I most revere,
By great *Ulysses*, and his woes I swear!
(Who never must review his dear domain;
Inroll'd, perhaps, in *Pluto*'s dreary train.)

v. 403. *Sage and serene* Telemachus *replies*; &c.] It is observable that *Telemachus* swears by the *sorrows* of his father; an expression, in my judgment, very noble, and at the same time, full of a filial tenderness. This was an antient custom amongst the *Orientals*, as appears from an oath not unlike it in *Genesis* xxxi. 53. *And* Jacob *swore by the* fear *of his father* Isaac.

But how is this speech to be understood? for how can *Telemachus* persuade his mother to marry, when he knows that *Ulysses* is return'd? There is a conceal'd and an apparent meaning in the expression. *Telemachus*, observes *Eustathius*, swears that he will not hinder his mother from taking an husband, but he means *Ulysses*: the words therefore are ambiguous, and the ambiguity deceives the Suitors, who believe that by this oath *Telemachus* obliges himself not only not to hinder, but promote the intended nuptials.

Whene'er

Whene'er her choice the royal Dame avows,
410 My bridal gifts ſhall load the future ſpouſe:
But from this dome my Parent-Queen to chaſe!——
From me, ye Gods! avert ſuch dire diſgrace.
But *Pallas* clouds with intellectual gloom
The Suitors ſouls, inſenſate of their doom!
415 A mirthful phrenzy ſeiz'd the fated crow'd;
The roofs reſound with cauſeleſs laughter loud:

Floating

v. 415. *A mirthful phrenzy ſeiz'd*, &c.] It is in the *Greek*, *They laugh'd with other mens cheeks.* There are many explications of this paſſage: *Euſtathius* imagines it to denote a feign'd and pretended laughter. *Eraſmus* explains it, *non libenter neque ex animo ridere, ſed ita ridere quaſi non tuis, ſed alienis maxillis rideas.* But if we conſult the conduct of the Suitors, a contrary interpretation will ſeem to be neceſſary: for this laughter of the Suitors appears to be very real, and from the heart. *Homer* calls it ἀσβεστον *exceſſive, inextinguiſh'd*; and again, ἡδὺ γέλασσαν, or they laugh'd *with joy, ſuaviter riſerunt*; which expreſſions denote a real and unfeign'd laughter. But how will the words be brought to bear this conſtruction? Very naturally: They laugh'd as if they had borrow'd their cheeks, as if their cheeks were not their own, and conſequently they were not afraid to uſe them with licence and exceſs; (ſuch perſons as the Suitors having no regard for any thing that belongs to another.)

Horace makes uſe of the ſame expreſſion,

Cum rapies in jus, malis ridentem alienis.

And likewiſe *Vakrius*:

Errantesque genæ, atque alieno gaudia vultu.

This

Floating in gore, portentous to ſurvey!
In each diſcolour'd vaſe the viands lay:

Ther

This is the opinion of *Dacier:* But there are ſome lines in the *Greek* that make it doubtful; for immediately after the expreſſion of laughing with other mens cheeks, *Homer* adds, that their eyes *flow'd with tears,* and *ſorrow ſeiz'd their Souls.* 'Tis true, *Homer* deſcribes the Suitors under an alienation of mind, and a ſudden diſtraction occaſion'd by *Minerva*; and from hence we may gather the reaſon why they are toſt by ſo ſudden a tranſition to contrary paſſions, from laughter to tears; this moment they laugh extravagantly, and the next they weep with equal exceſs: perſons in ſuch a condition being liable to ſuch viciſſitudes.

V. 417. *Floating in gore, portentous to ſurvey!*
In each diſcolour'd vaſe the viands lay.]

This is to be look'd upon as a prodigy, the belief of which was eſtabliſhed in the old world, and conſequently, whether true or falſe, may be allow'd to have a place in Poetry. *See* Book XII. Annot. 32.

In the following ſpeech of *Theoclymenus* there is a beautiful enthuſiaſm of Poetry; but how are we to underſtand that *Theoclymenus* ſees theſe wonders, when they are inviſible to all the Suitors? *Theoclymenus* was a Prophet, and ſpeaks of things future as preſent; it is the eye of the Prophet that ſees theſe events, and the language of prophecy that ſpeaks of them as preſent. Thus when he ſays he ſees the palace red with blood, and throng'd with ghoſts; he anticipates the event, which is verify'd in the approaching death of the Suitors.

Euſtathius is of opinion that by the laſt words of this ſpeech *Theoclymenus* intends to expreſs an Eclipſe of the ſun; this being the day of the new moon, when eclipſes happen. Others underſtand by it the death of the Suitors, as when we ſay the ſun is for-ever gone down upon the dead: *Theocritus* uſes that expreſſion, Θνάσκοντι πάντα δεδύκεν ἥλιον. *Homer* means by it, that the Suitors ſhall never more behold the light of the ſun.

——ἠέλιος δὲ
Οὐρανῷ ἐξαπόλωλε——

Then down each cheek the tears ſpontaneous flow,
And ſudden ſighs precede approaching woe.
In viſion rap'd; the * *Hypereſian* Seer
Up-roſe, and thus divin'd the vengeance near.

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

Yet warn'd in vain, with laughter loud elate
The Peers reproach the ſure Divine of Fate;
And thus *Eurymachus*: The dotard's mind
To ev'ry ſenſe is loſt, to reaſon blind:

* *Theoclymenus.*

So far *Euſtathius*. It may be added that the *Roman* Poets uſed the ſame expreſſion in this latter ſignification. Thus *Catullus*,

Nobis, quùm ſemel occidit brevis lux,
Nox eſt perpetua una dormienda.

Either of theſe expoſitions makes the paſſage intelligible.

Swift

435 Swift from the dome conduct the ſlave away;
Let him in open air behold the day.
Tax not, (the heav'n-illumin'd Seer rejoin'd)
Of rage, or folly, my prophetic mind,
No clouds of error dim th' etherial rays,
440 Her equal pow'r each faithful ſenſe obeys.
Unguided hence my trembling ſteps I bend,
Far hence, before yon' hov'ring deaths deſcend;
Leſt the ripe harveſt of revenge begun,
I ſhare the doom ye Suitors cannot ſhun.

v. 436. *Let him in open air behold the day.*] The Suitors t king the prediction of *Theoclymenus* literally, *viz. I ſee you all in volv'd in darkneſs*, think him diſtracted, not conceiving his word to be a prophecy; and therefore by way of deriſion command him to be carry'd into a place of publick reſort, that he may convinc himſelf it is full day. *Euſtathius* imagines, they intended to re proach him with drunkenneſs, becauſe it makes all objects appe indiſtinct and different from the reality: He quotes a pleaſant ex preſſion of *Anacharſis* to this purpoſe: A certain perſon telling him at an entertainment that he had married a very ugly woman *I think ſo too*, replies *Anacharſis*; *but fill me a Bumper, that I may make her a beauty.*

v. 437. *Tax not (the heav'n-illumin'd Seer rejoin'd,)* &c.] *Eu ſtathius* explains the anſwer of *Theoclymenus* to be both pleaſant and ſerious: "I have *eyes*, and therefore have no occaſion for "a guide to lead me from the palace; I have *ears*, and therefore "hear that my abſence is deſir'd; I have both my *feet*, and there "fore am able to go away without giving others the trouble to "aſſiſt me; and I have an *underſtanding* well inform'd, by which "I ſee the evil that threatens the Suitors, and haſte away to a "void it.

445 This said, to sage *Piræus* sped the Seer,
His honour'd host, a welcome inmate there.
O'er the protracted feast the Suitors sit,
And aim to wound the Prince with pointless wit:
Cries one, with scornful leer and mimic voice,
450 Thy charity we praise, but not thy choice;
Why such profusion of indulgence shown
To this poor, tim'rous, toil-detesting drone?
That other feeds on planetary schemes,
And pays his host with hideous noon-day dreams.
455 But, Prince! for once at least believe a friend,
To some *Sicilian* mart these courtiers send,
Where, if they yield their freight across the main
Dear sell the slaves! demand no greater gain.

Thus

v. 456. *To some* Sicilian *mart these courtiers send.*] It is evident from this passage that the name of *Sicily* is very antient, and *Eustathius* makes the following remark upon it: That the reason why the Poet never mentions this word in describing the wandrings of *Ulysses* which happen chiefly near *Sicily*, is to make his Poetry more surprising and marvellous; and that the more to countenance those fabulous relations and miracles which he has told to the *Phæacians*, he chuses to speak of it by names less known, and less familiar to his Readers. *Dacier* observes from *Bochart*, that this island received the name of *Sicily* from the *Phœnicians*, long before the birth of *Homer*, or the war of *Troy*: *Siclul* in their language signifies *perfection*; they call'd it the *Isle of perfection*, because it held the chief rank amongst all the islands in the *Mediterranean*: "It is the largest and best island in "all our seas," says *Strabo*. It has likewise been thought to have taken its name from the *Syrian* language, namely from *Segol*, or

Thus jovial they; but nought the Prince replies;
460 Full on his Sire he rowl'd his ardent eyes;
Impatient ſtrait to fleſh his virgin-ſword,
From the wiſe Chief he waits the deathful word.
Nigh in her bright alcove, the penſive Queen
To ſee the circle ſat, of all unſeen.
465 Sated at length they riſe, and bid prepare
An eve-repaſt, with equal coſt and care:

But

or *Segul*, a *Raiſin*. For long before the vine was known in *Afric*, *Sicily* was famous for its Vineyards, and from thence the *Carthaginians* imported their raiſins and wines. *Homer* celebrates this iſland for its vines in the 9th *Odyſſey*.

Spontaneous wines from weighty cluſters pour,
And Jove *deſcends in each prolific ſhow'r.*

It is likewiſe probable from this paſſage, that the *Sicilians* traded in ſlaves; for their lands were fertil, and they merchandiz'd for them to manure the ground. I ſhould rather think that they were remarkable for their barbarity to their ſlaves; the Suitors ſpeaking by way of terror to intimidate *Theoclymenus*; and the expreſſion ſeems to bear the ſame import with that concerning *Echetus*, we will *ſend him to* Echetus, or *the* Sicilians, *who will uſe him with the utmoſt cruelty.*

ν. 463. *Nigh in her bright alcove, the penſive Queen.*] The word in the original is δίφρος, and ſignifies a large ſeat that would hold two perſons, from δὶς φέρειν.

This circumſtance (obſerves *Euſtathius*) is not inſerted in vain: the Poet deſcribes *Penelope* thus ſeated, that ſhe might ſee and hear the actions and deſigns of the Suitors, in order to form her conduct according to the occaſion: Now for inſtance, ſhe perceives

their

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

their inſolence riſen to ſuch an height, that ſhe dares make no further delay, but immediately proclaims herſelf the prize of the beſt Archer: And this naturally connects the ſtory with the next book.

THE