

BOOK XIX.

ARGUMENT.

THE DISCOVERY OF ULYSSES TO EURYCLEA.

Ulysses and his son remove the weapons out of the armoury.

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

Consulting secret with the blue-eyed maid,
Still in the dome divine Ulysses stay'd:
Revenge mature for act inflamed his breast;
And thus the son the fervent sire address'd:

"Instant convey those steely stores of war
To distant rooms, disposed with secret care:

The cause demanded by the suitor-train,
To soothe their fears, a specious reason feign:
Say, since Ulysses left his natal coast,
Obscene with smoke, their beamy lustre lost,
His arms deform the roof they wont adorn:
From the glad walls inglorious lumber torn.
Suggest, that Jove the peaceful thought inspired,
Lest they, by sight of swords to fury fired,
Dishonest wounds, or violence of soul,
Defame the bridal feast and friendly bowl."

The prince, obedient to the sage command,
To Euryclea thus: "The female band
In their apartments keep; secure the doors;
These swarthy arms among the covert stores
Are seemlier hid; my thoughtless youth they blame,
Imbrown'd with vapour of the smouldering flame."

"In happier hour (pleas'd Euryclea cries),
Tutor'd by early woes, grow early wise;
Inspect with sharpen'd sight, and frugal care,
Your patrimonial wealth, a prudent heir.
But who the lighted taper will provide
(The female train retired) your toils to guide?"

"Without infringing hospitable right,

This guest (he cried) shall bear the guiding light:
I cheer no lazy vagrants with repast;
They share the meal that earn it ere they taste."

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

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

"Be calm (replies the sire); to none impart,
But oft revolve the vision in thy heart:
Celestials, mantled in excess of light,

Can visit unapproach'd by mortal sight.
Seek thou repose: whilst here I sole remain,
To explore the conduct of the female train:
The pensive queen, perchance, desires to know
The series of my toils, to soothe her woe."

With tapers flaming day his train attends,
His bright alcove the obsequious youth ascends:
Soft slumberous shades his drooping eyelids close,
Till on her eastern throne Aurora glows.

Whilst, forming plans of death, Ulysses stay'd,
In counsel secret with the martial maid,
Attendant nymphs in beauteous order wait
The queen, descending from her bower of state.
Her cheeks the warmer blush of Venus wear,
Chasten'd with coy Diana's pensive air.
An ivory seat with silver ringlets graced,
By famed Icmalius wrought, the menials placed:
With ivory silver'd thick the footstool shone,
O'er which the panther's various hide was thrown.
The sovereign seat with graceful air she press'd;
To different tasks their toil the nymphs address'd:
The golden goblets some, and some restored
From stains of luxury the polish'd board:
These to remove the expiring embers came,

While those with unctuous fir foment the flame.

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

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

Must share the general doom of withering time:
To some new channel soon the changeful tide
Of royal grace the offended queen may guide;
And her loved lord unplume thy towering pride.
Or, were he dead, 'tis wisdom to beware:
Sweet blooms the prince beneath Apollo's care;
Your deeds with quick impartial eye surveys,
Potent to punish what he cannot praise."

Her keen reproach had reach'd the sovereign's ear:
"Loquacious insolent! (she cries,) forbear;
To thee the purpose of my soul I told;
Venial discourse, unblamed, with him to hold;
The storied labours of my wandering lord,
To soothe my grief he haply may record:
Yet him, my guest, thy venom'd rage hath stung;
Thy head shall pay the forfeit of thy tongue!
But thou on whom my palace cares depend,
Eurynome, regard the stranger-friend:
A seat, soft spread with furry spoils, prepare;
Due-distant for us both to speak, and hear."

The menial fair obeys with duteous haste:
A seat adorn'd with furry spoils she placed:
Due-distant for discourse the hero sate;
When thus the sovereign from her chair of state:

"Reveal, obsequious to my first demand,
Thy name, thy lineage, and thy natal land."

He thus: "O queen! whose far-resounding fame
Is bounded only by the starry frame,
Consummate pattern of imperial sway,
Whose pious rule a warlike race obey!
In wavy gold thy summer vales are dress'd;
Thy autumns bind with copious fruit oppress'd:
With flocks and herds each grassy plain is stored;
And fish of every fin thy seas afford:
Their affluent joys the grateful realms confess;
And bless the power that still delights to bless,
Gracious permit this prayer, imperial dame!
Forbear to know my lineage, or my name:
Urge not this breast to heave, these eyes to weep;
In sweet oblivion let my sorrows sleep!
My woes awaked, will violate your ear,
And to this gay censorious train appear
A whiny vapour melting in a tear."

"Their gifts the gods resumed (the queen rejoin'd),
Exterior grace, and energy of mind,
When the dear partner of my nuptial joy,
Auxiliar troops combined, to conquer Troy.

My lord's protecting hand alone would raise
My drooping verdure, and extend my praise!
Peers from the distant Samian shore resort:
Here with Dulichians join'd, besiege the court:
Zacynthus, green with ever-shady groves,
And Ithaca, presumptuous, boast their loves:
Obtruding on my choice a second lord,
They press the Hymenaeian rite abhor'd.
Misrule thus mingling with domestic cares,
I live regardless of my state affairs;
Receive no stranger-guest, no poor relieve;
But ever for my lord in secret grieve!--
This art, instinct by some celestial power,
I tried, elusive of the bridal hour:

"Ye peers, (I cry,) who press to gain a heart,
Where dead Ulysses claims no future part;
Rebate your loves, each rival suit suspend,
Till this funeral web my labours end:
Cease, till to good Laertes I bequeath
A pall of state, the ornament of death.
For when to fate he bows, each Grecian dame
With just reproach were licensed to defame,
Should he, long honour'd in supreme command,
Want the last duties of a daughter's hand.'
The fiction pleased; their loves I long elude;

The night still ravell'd what the day renew'd:
Three years successful in my heart conceal'd,
My ineffectual fraud the fourth reveal'd:
Befriended by my own domestic spies,
The woof unwrought the suitor-train surprise.
From nuptial rites they now no more recede,
And fear forbids to falsify the brede.
My anxious parents urge a speedy choice,
And to their suffrage gain the filial voice.
For rule mature, Telemachus deplores
His dome dishonour'd, and exhausted stores--
But, stranger! as thy days seem full of fate,
Divide discourse, in turn thy birth relate:
Thy port asserts thee of distinguish'd race;
No poor unfather'd product of disgrace."

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

"Crete awes the circling waves, a fruitful soil!

And ninety cities crown the sea-born isle:
Mix'd with her genuine sons, adopted names
In various tongues avow their various claims:
Cydonians, dreadful with the bended yew,
And bold Pelasgi boast a native's due:
The Dorians, plumed amid the files of war,
Her foodful glebe with fierce Achaians share;
Cnossus, her capital of high command;
Where sceptred Minos with impartial hand
Divided right: each ninth revolving year,
By Jove received in council to confer.
His son Deucalion bore successive sway:
His son, who gave me first to view the day!
The royal bed an elder issue bless'd,
Idomeneus whom Ilion fields attest
Of matchless deeds: untrain'd to martial toil,
I lived inglorious in my native isle.
Studious of peace, and Aethon is my name.
'Twas then to Crete the great Ulysses came.
For elemental war, and wintry Jove,
From Malea's gusty cape his navy drove
To bright Lucina's fane; the shelfy coast
Where loud Amnisus in the deep is lost.
His vessel's moor'd (an incommodious port!)
The hero speeded to the Cnossian court:
Ardent the partner of his arms to find,

In leagues of long commutual friendship join'd.
Vain hope! ten suns had warm'd the western strand
Since my brave brother, with his Cretan band,
Had sail'd for Troy: but to the genial feast
My honour'd roof received the royal guest:
Beeves for his train the Cnossian peers assign,
A public treat, with jars of generous wine.
Twelve days while Boreas vex'd the aerial space,
My hospitable dome he deign'd to grace:
And when the north had ceased the stormy roar,
He wing'd his voyage to the Phrygian shore."

Thus the fam'd hero, perfected in wiles,
With fair similitude of truth beguiles
The queen's attentive ear: dissolved in woe,
From her bright eyes the tears unbounded flow,
As snows collected on the mountain freeze;
When milder regions breathe a vernal breeze,
The fleecy pile obeys the whispering gales,
Ends in a stream, and murmurs through the vales:
So, melting with the pleasing tale he told,
Down her fair cheek the copious torrent roll'd:
She to her present lord laments him lost,
And views that object which she wants the most,
Withering at heart to see the weeping fair,
His eyes look stern, and cast a gloomy stare;

Of horn the stiff relentless balls appear,
Or globes of iron fix'd in either sphere;
Firm wisdom interdicts the softening tear.
A speechless interval of grief ensues,
Till thus the queen the tender theme renews.

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

"'Tis hard (he cries,) to bring to sudden sight
Ideas that have wing'd their distant flight;
Rare on the mind those images are traced,
Whose footsteps twenty winters have defaced:
But what I can, receive.--In ample mode,
A robe of military purple flow'd
O'er all his frame: illustrious on his breast,
The double-clasping gold the king confess'd.
In the rich woof a hound, mosaic drawn,
Bore on full stretch, and seized a dappled fawn;
Deep in the neck his fangs indent their hold;
They pant and struggle in the moving gold.
Fine as a filmy web beneath it shone
A vest, that dazzled like a cloudless sun:
The female train who round him throng'd to gaze,

In silent wonder sigh'd unwilling praise.
A sabre, when the warrior press'd to part,
I gave, enamell'd with Vulcanian art:
A mantle purple-tinged, and radiant vest,
Dimension'd equal to his size, express'd
Affection grateful to my honour'd guest.
A favourite herald in his train I knew,
His visage solemn, sad of sable hue:
Short woolly curls o'erfleeced his bending head,
O'er which a promontory shoulder spread;
Eurybates; in whose large soul alone
Ulysses view'd an image of his own."

His speech the tempest of her grief restored;
In all he told she recognized her lord:
But when the storm was spent in plenteous showers,
A pause inspiriting her languish'd powers,
"O thou, (she cried,) whom first inclement Fate
Made welcome to my hospitable gate;
With all thy wants the name of poor shall end:
Henceforth live honour'd, my domestic friend!
The vest much envied on your native coast,
And regal robe with figured gold emboss'd,
In happier hours my artful hand employ'd,
When my loved lord this blissful bower enjoy'd:
The fall of Troy erroneous and forlorn

Doom'd to survive, and never to return!"

Then he, with pity touch'd: "O royal dame!
Your ever-anxious mind, and beauteous frame,
From the devouring rage of grief reclaim.
I not the fondness of your soul reprove
For such a lord! who crown'd your virgin love
With the dear blessing of a fair increase;
Himself adorn'd with more than mortal grace:
Yet while I speak the mighty woe suspend;
Truth forms my tale; to pleasing truth attend.
The royal object of your dearest care
Breathes in no distant clime the vital air:
In rich Thesprotia, and the nearer bound
Of Thessaly, his name I heard renown'd:
Without retinue, to that friendly shore
Welcomed with gifts of price, a sumless store!
His sacrilegious train, who dared to prey
On herds devoted to the god of day,
Were doom'd by Jove, and Phoebus' just decree,
To perish in the rough Trinacrian sea.
To better fate the blameless chief ordain'd,
A floating fragment of the wreck regain'd,
And rode the storm; till, by the billows toss'd,
He landed on the fair Phaeacian coast.
That race who emulate the life of gods,

Receive him joyous to their bless'd abodes;
Large gifts confer, a ready sail command,
To speed his voyage to the Grecian strand.
But your wise lord (in whose capacious soul
High schemes of power in just succession roll)
His Ithaca refused from favouring Fate,
Till copious wealth might guard his regal state.
Phedon the fact affirm'd, whose sovereign sway
Thesprotian tribes, a duteous race, obey;
And bade the gods this added truth attest
(While pure libations crown'd the genial feast),
That anchor'd in his port the vessels stand,
To waft the hero to his natal land.
I for Dulichium urge the watery way,
But first the Ulyssean wealth survey:
So rich the value of a store so vast
Demands the pomp of centuries to waste!
The darling object of your royal love
Was journey'd thence to Dodonean Jove;
By the sure precept of the sylvan shrine,
To form the conduct of his great design;
Irresolute of soul, his state to shroud
In dark disguise, or come, a king avow'd!
Thus lives your lord; nor longer doom'd to roam;
Soon will he grace this dear paternal dome.
By Jove, the source of good, supreme in power!

By the bless'd genius of this friendly bower!
I ratify my speech, before the sun
His annual longitude of heaven shall run;
When the pale empress of yon starry train
In the next month renews her faded wane,
Ulysses will assert his rightful reign."

"What thanks! what boon! (replied the queen), are due,
When time shall prove the storied blessing true!
My lord's return should fate no more retard,
Envy shall sicken at thy vast reward.
But my prophetic fears, alas! presage
The wounds of Destiny's relentless rage.
I long must weep, nor will Ulysses come,
With royal gifts to send you honour'd home!--
Your other task, ye menial train forbear:
Now wash the stranger, and the bed prepare:
With splendid palls the downy fleece adorn:
Uprising early with the purple morn.
His sinews, shrunk with age, and stiff with toil,
In the warm bath foment with fragrant oil.
Then with Telemachus the social feast
Partaking free, my soul invited guest;
Whoe'er neglects to pay distinction due,
The breach of hospitable right may rue.
The vulgar of my sex I most exceed

In real fame, when most humane my deed;
And vainly to the praise of queen aspire,
If, stranger! I permit that mean attire
Beneath the feastful bower. A narrow space
Confines the circle of our destin'd race;
'Tis ours with good the scanty round to grace.
Those who to cruel wrong their state abuse,
Dreaded in life the mutter'd curse pursues;
By death disrobed of all their savage powers,
Then, licensed rage her hateful prey devours.
But he whose inborn worth his acts commend,
Of gentle soul, to human race a friend;
The wretched he relieves diffuse his fame,
And distant tongues extol the patron-name."

"Princess? (he cried) in vain your bounties flow
On me, confirm'd and obstinate in woe.
When my loved Crete received my final view,
And from my weeping eyes her cliffs withdrew;
These tatter'd weeds (my decent robes resign'd)
I chose, the livery of a woful mind!
Nor will my heart-corroding care abate
With splendid palls, and canopies of state:
Low-couch'd on earth, the gift of sleep I scorn,
And catch the glances of the waking morn.
The delicacy of your courtly train

To wash a wretched wanderer would disdain;
But if, in tract of long experience tried,
And sad similitude of woes allied,
Some wretch reluctant views aerial light,
To her mean hand assign the friendly rite."

Pleased with his wise reply, the queen rejoin'd:
"Such gentle manners, and so sage a mind,
In all who graced this hospitable bower
I ne'er discerned, before this social hour.
Such servant as your humble choice requires,
To light received the lord of my desires,
New from the birth; and with a mother's hand
His tender bloom to manly growth sustain'd:
Of matchless prudence, and a duteous mind;
Though now to life's extremest verge declined,
Of strength superior to the toil design'd--
Rise, Euryclea! with officious care
For the poor friend the cleansing bath prepare:
This debt his correspondent fortunes claim,
Too like Ulysses, and perhaps the same!
Thus old with woes my fancy paints him now!
For age untimely marks the careful brow."

Instant, obsequious to the mild command,
Sad Euryclea rose: with trembling hand

She veils the torrent of her tearful eyes;
And thus impassion'd to herself replies:

"Son of my love, and monarch of my cares,
What pangs for thee this wretched bosom bears!
Are thus by Jove who constant beg his aid
With pious deed, and pure devotion, paid?
He never dared defraud the sacred fane
Of perfect hecatombs in order slain:
There oft implored his tutelary power,
Long to protract the sad sepulchral hour;
That, form'd for empire with paternal care,
His realm might recognize an equal heir.
O destined head! The pious vows are lost;
His God forgets him on a foreign coast!--
Perhaps, like thee, poor guest! in wanton pride
The rich insult him, and the young deride!
Conscious of worth reviled, thy generous mind
The friendly rite of purity declined;
My will concurring with my queen's command,
Accept the bath from this obsequious hand.
A strong emotion shakes my anguish'd breast:
In thy whole form Ulysses seems express'd;
Of all the wretched harboured on our coast,
None imaged e'er like thee my master lost."

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

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

This on Parnassus (combating the boar)
With glancing rage the tusky savage tore.
Attended by his brave maternal race,
His grandsire sent him to the sylvan chase,
Autolycus the bold (a mighty name
For spotless faith and deeds of martial fame:
Hermes, his patron god, those gifts bestow'd,
Whose shrine with weanling lambs he wont to load).

His course to Ithaca this hero sped,
When the first product of Laertes' bed
Was now disclosed to birth: the banquet ends,
When Euryclea from the queen descends,
And to his fond embrace the babe commends:
"Receive (she cries) your royal daughter's son;
And name the blessing that your prayers have won."
Then thus the hoary chief: "My victor arms
Have awed the realms around with dire alarms:
A sure memorial of my dreaded fame
The boy shall bear; Ulysses be his name!
And when with filial love the youth shall come
To view his mother's soil, my Delphic dome
With gifts of price shall send him joyous home."
Lured with the promised boon, when youthful prime
Ended in man, his mother's natal clime
Ulysses sought; with fond affection dear
Amphitea's arms received the royal heir:
Her ancient lord an equal joy possess'd;
Instant he bade prepare the genial feast:
A steer to form the sumptuous banquet bled,
Whose stately growth five flowery summers fed:
His sons divide, and roast with artful care
The limbs; then all the tasteful viands share.
Nor ceased discourse (the banquet of the soul),
Till Phoebus wheeling to the western goal

Resign'd the skies, and night involved the pole.
Their drooping eyes the slumberous shade oppress'd,
Sated they rose, and all retired to rest.

Soon as the morn, new-robed in purple light,
Pierced with her golden shafts the rear of night,
Ulysses, and his brave maternal race,
The young Autolyçi, essay the chase.
Parnassus, thick perplex'd with horrid shades,
With deep-mouth'd hounds the hunter-troop invades;
What time the sun, from ocean's peaceful stream,
Darts o'er the lawn his horizontal beam.
The pack impatient snuff the tainted gale;
The thorny wilds the woodmen fierce assail:
And, foremost of the train, his cornel spear
Ulysses waved, to rouse the savage war.
Deep in the rough recesses of the wood,
A lofty copse, the growth of ages, stood;
Nor winter's boreal blast, nor thunderous shower,
Nor solar ray, could pierce the shady bower.
With wither'd foliage strew'd, a heapy store!
The warm pavilion of a dreadful boar.
Roused by the hounds' and hunters' mingling cries,
The savage from his leafy shelter flies;
With fiery glare his sanguine eye-balls shine,
And bristles high impale his horrid chine.

Young Ithacus advanced, defies the foe,
Poising his lifted lance in act to throw;
The savage renders vain the wound decreed,
And springs impetuous with opponent speed!
His tusks oblique he aim'd, the knee to gore;
Aslope they glanced, the sinewy fibres tore,
And bared the bone; Ulysses undismay'd,
Soon with redoubled force the wound repaid;
To the right shoulder-joint the spear applied,
His further flank with streaming purple dyed:
On earth he rushed with agonizing pain;
With joy and vast surprise, the applauding train
View'd his enormous bulk extended on the plain.
With bandage firm Ulysses' knee they bound;
Then, chanting mystic lays, the closing wound
Of sacred melody confess'd the force;
The tides of life regain'd their azure course.
Then back they led the youth with loud acclaim;
Autolycus, enamoured with his fame,
Confirm'd the cure; and from the Delphic dome
With added gifts return'd him glorious home.
He safe at Ithaca with joy received,
Relates the chase, and early praise achieved.

Deep o'er his knee inseam'd remain'd the scar;
Which noted token of the woodland war

When Euryclea found, the ablution ceased:
Down dropp'd the leg, from her slack hand released;
The mingled fluids from the base redound;
The vase reclining floats the floor around!
Smiles dew'd with tears the pleasing strife express'd
Of grief and joy, alternate in her breast.
Her fluttering words in melting murmurs died;
At length abrupt--"My son!--my king!"--she cried.
His neck with fond embrace infolding fast,
Full on the queen her raptured eye she cast
Ardent to speak the monarch safe restored:
But, studious to conceal her royal lord,
Minerva fix'd her mind on views remote,
And from the present bliss abstracts her thought.
His hand to Euryclea's mouth applied,
"Art thou foredoom'd my pest? (the hero cried:)
Thy milky founts my infant lips have drain'd;
And have the Fates thy babbling age ordain'd
To violate the life thy youth sustain'd?
An exile have I told, with weeping eyes,
Full twenty annual suns in distant skies;
At length return'd, some god inspires thy breast
To know thy king, and here I stand confess'd.
This heaven-discover'd truth to thee consign'd,
Reserve the treasure of thy inmost mind:
Else, if the gods my vengeful arm sustain,

And prostrate to my sword the suitor-train;
With their lewd mates, thy undistinguish'd age
Shall bleed a victim to vindictive rage."

Then thus rejoin'd the dame, devoid of fear:
"What words, my son, have passed thy lips severe?
Deep in my soul the trust shall lodge secured;
With ribs of steel, and marble heart, immured.
When Heaven, auspicious to thy right avow'd,
Shall prostrate to thy sword the suitor-crowd,
The deeds I'll blazon of the menial fair;
The lewd to death devote, the virtuous spare."

"Thy aid avails me not (the chief replied);
My own experience shall their doom decide:
A witness-judge precludes a long appeal:
Suffice it then thy monarch to conceal."

He said: obsequious, with redoubled pace,
She to the fount conveys the exhausted vase:
The bath renew'd, she ends the pleasing toil
With plenteous unction of ambrosial oil.
Adjusting to his limbs the tatter'd vest,
His former seat received the stranger guest;
Whom thus with pensive air the queen addressed:

"Though night, dissolving grief in grateful ease,
Your drooping eyes with soft impression seize;
Awhile, reluctant to her pleasing force,
Suspend the restful hour with sweet discourse.
The day (ne'er brighten'd with a beam of joy!)
My menials, and domestic cares employ;
And, unattended by sincere repose,
The night assists my ever-wakeful woes;
When nature's hush'd beneath her brooding shade,
My echoing griefs the starry vault invade.
As when the months are clad in flowery green,
Sad Philomel, in bowery shades unseen,
To vernal airs attunes her varied strains;
And Itylus sounds warbling o'er the plains;
Young Itylus, his parents' darling joy!
Whom chance misled the mother to destroy;
Now doom'd a wakeful bird to wail the beauteous boy.
So in nocturnal solitude forlorn,
A sad variety of woes I mourn!
My mind, reflective, in a thorny maze
Devious from care to care incessant strays.
Now, wavering doubt succeeds to long despair;
Shall I my virgin nuptial vow revere;
And, joining to my son's my menial train,
Partake his counsels, and assist his reign?
Or, since, mature in manhood, he deplores

His dome dishonour'd, and exhausted stores;
Shall I, reluctant! to his will accord;
And from the peers select the noblest lord;
So by my choice avow'd, at length decide
These wasteful love-debates, a mourning bride!
A visionary thought I'll now relate;
Illustrate, if you know, the shadow'd fate:

"A team of twenty geese (a snow-white train!)
Fed near the limpid lake with golden grain,
Amuse my pensive hours. The bird of Jove
Fierce from his mountain-eyrie downward drove;
Each favourite fowl he pounced with deathful sway,
And back triumphant wing'd his airy way.
My pitying eyes effused a plenteous stream,
To view their death thus imaged in a dream;
With tender sympathy to soothe my soul,
A troop of matrons, fancy-form'd, condole.
But whilst with grief and rage my bosom burn'd,
Sudden the tyrant of the skies returned;
Perch'd on the battlements he thus began
(In form an eagle, but in voice a man):
`O queen! no vulgar vision of the sky
I come, prophetic of approaching joy;
View in this plummy form thy victor-lord;
The geese (a glutton race) by thee deplored,

Portend the suitors fated to my sword.'
This said, the pleasing feather'd omen ceased.
When from the downy bands of sleep released,
Fast by the limpid lake my swan-like train
I found, insatiate of the golden grain."

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

"Hard is the task, and rare," (the queen rejoin'd,)
Impending destinies in dreams to find;
Immured within the silent bower of sleep,
Two portals firm the various phantoms keep;
Of ivory one; whence flit, to mock the brain,
Of winged lies a light fantastic train;
The gate opposed pellucid valves adorn,
And columns fair incased with polish'd horn;
Where images of truth for passage wait,
With visions manifest of future fate.
Not to this troop, I fear, that phantom soar'd,
Which spoke Ulysses to this realm restored;
Delusive semblance!-but my remnant life
Heaven shall determine in a gameful strife;
With that famed bow Ulysses taught to bend,

For me the rival archers shall contend.
As on the listed field he used to place
Six beams, opposed to six in equal space;
Elanced afar by his unerring art,
Sure through six circlets flew the whizzing dart.
So, when the sun restores the purple day,
Their strength and skill the suitors shall assay;
To him the spousal honour is decreed,
Who through the rings directs the feather'd reed.
Torn from these walls (where long the kinder powers
With joy and pomp have wing'd my youthful hours!)
On this poor breast no dawn of bliss shall beam;
The pleasure past supplies a copious theme
For many a dreary thought, and many a doleful dream!"

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

To whom with grace serene the queen rejoin'd:
"In all thy speech what pleasing force I find!
O'er my suspended woe thy words prevail;
I part reluctant from the pleasing tale,
But Heaven, that knows what all terrestrials need,
Repose to night, and toil to day decreed;

Grateful vicissitudes! yet me withdrawn,
Wakeful to weep and watch the tardy dawn
Establish'd use enjoins; to rest and joy
Estranged, since dear Ulysses sail'd to Troy!
Meantime instructed is the menial tribe
Your couch to fashion as yourself prescribe."

Thus affable, her bower the queen ascends;
The sovereign step a beauteous train attends;
There imaged to her soul Ulysses rose;
Down her pale cheek new-streaming sorrow flows;
Till soft oblivious shade Minerva spread,
And o'er her eyes ambrosial slumber shed.