THE ILIAD. BOOK I. ARGUMENT.(40) THE CONTENTION OF ACHILLES AND AGAMEMNON. In the war of Troy, the Greeks having sacked some of the neighbouring towns, and taken from thence two beautiful captives, Chryseis and Briseis, allotted the first to Agamemnon, and the last to Achilles. Chryses, the father of Chryseis, and priest of Apollo, comes to the Grecian camp to ransom her; with which the action of the poem opens, in the tenth year of the siege. The priest being refused, and insolently dismissed by Agamemnon, entreats for vengeance from his god; who inflicts a pestilence on the Greeks. Achilles calls a council, and encourages Chalcas to declare the cause of it; who attributes it to the refusal of Chryseis. The king, being obliged to send back his captive, enters into a furious contest with Achilles, which Nestor pacifies; however, as he had the absolute command of the army, he seizes on Briseis in revenge. Achilles in discontent withdraws himself and his forces from the rest of the Greeks; and complaining to Thetis, she supplicates Jupiter to render them sensible of the wrong done to her son, by giving victory to the Trojans. Jupiter, granting her suit, incenses Juno: between whom the debate runs high, till they are reconciled by the address of Vulcan. The time of two-and-twenty days is taken up in this book: nine during the plague, one in the council and quarrel of the princes, and twelve for Jupiter's stay with the Æthiopians, at whose return Thetis prefers her petition. The scene lies in the Grecian camp, then changes to Chrysa, and lastly to Olympus. Achilles' wrath, to Greece the direful spring Of woes unnumber'd, heavenly goddess, sing! That wrath which hurl'd to Pluto's gloomy reign The souls of mighty chiefs untimely slain; Whose limbs unburied on the naked shore, Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore.(41) Since great Achilles and Atrides strove, Such was the sovereign doom, and such the will of Jove!(42) Declare, O Muse! in what ill-fated hour(43) Sprung the fierce strife, from what offended power Latona's son a dire contagion spread,(44) And heap'd the camp with mountains of the dead; The king of men his reverent priest defied,(45) And for the king's offence the people died. For Chryses sought with costly gifts to gain His captive daughter from the victor's chain. Suppliant the venerable father stands; Apollo's awful ensigns grace his hands By these he begs; and lowly bending down, Extends the sceptre and the laurel crown He sued to all, but chief implored for grace The brother-kings, of Atreus' royal race(46) "Ye kings and warriors! may your vows be crown'd, And Troy's proud walls lie level with the ground. May Jove restore you when your toils are o'er Safe to the pleasures of your native shore. But, oh! relieve a wretched parent's pain, And give Chryseis to these arms again; If mercy fail, yet let my presents move, And dread avenging Phoebus, son of Jove." The Greeks in shouts their joint assent declare, The priest to reverence, and release the fair. Not so Atrides; he, with kingly pride, Repulsed the sacred sire, and thus replied: "Hence on thy life, and fly these hostile plains, Nor ask, presumptuous, what the king detains Hence, with thy laurel crown, and golden rod, Nor trust too far those ensigns of thy god. Mine is thy daughter, priest, and shall remain; And prayers, and tears, and bribes, shall plead in vain; Till time shall rifle every youthful grace, And age dismiss her from my cold embrace, In daily labours of the loom employ'd, Or doom'd to deck the bed she once enjoy'd Hence then; to Argos shall the maid retire, Far from her native soil and weeping sire." [Illustration: HOMER INVOKING THE MUSE.] HOMER INVOKING THE MUSE. The trembling priest along the shore return'd, And in the anguish of a father mourn'd. Disconsolate, not daring to complain, Silent he wander'd by the sounding main; Till, safe at distance, to his god he prays, The god who darts around the world his rays. "O Smintheus! sprung from fair Latona's line,(47) Thou guardian power of Cilla the divine,(48) Thou source of light! whom Tenedos adores, And whose bright presence gilds thy Chrysa's shores. If e'er with wreaths I hung thy sacred fane,(49) Or fed the flames with fat of oxen slain; God of the silver bow! thy shafts employ, Avenge thy servant, and the Greeks destroy." Thus Chryses pray'd.--the favouring power attends, And from Olympus' lofty tops descends. Bent was his bow, the Grecian hearts to wound;(50) Fierce as he moved, his silver shafts resound. Breathing revenge, a sudden night he spread, And gloomy darkness roll'd about his head. The fleet in view, he twang'd his deadly bow, And hissing fly the feather'd fates below. On mules and dogs the infection first began;(51) And last, the vengeful arrows fix'd in man. For nine long nights, through all the dusky air, The pyres, thick-flaming, shot a dismal glare. But ere the tenth revolving day was run, Inspired by Juno, Thetis' godlike son Convened to council all the Grecian train; For much the goddess mourn'd her heroes slain.(52) The assembly seated, rising o'er the rest, Achilles thus the king of men address'd: "Why leave we not the fatal Trojan shore, And measure back the seas we cross'd before? The plague destroying whom the sword would spare, 'Tis time to save the few remains of war. But let some prophet, or some sacred sage, Explore the cause of great Apollo's rage; Or learn the wasteful vengeance to remove By mystic dreams, for dreams descend from Jove.(53) If broken vows this heavy curse have laid, Let altars smoke, and hecatombs be paid. So Heaven, atoned, shall dying Greece restore, And Phoebus dart his burning shafts no more." He said, and sat: when Chalcas thus replied; Chalcas the wise, the Grecian priest and guide, That sacred seer, whose comprehensive view, The past, the present, and the future knew: Uprising slow, the venerable sage Thus spoke the prudence and the fears of age: "Beloved of Jove, Achilles! would'st thou know Why angry Phoebus bends his fatal bow? First give thy faith, and plight a prince's word Of sure protection, by thy power and sword: For I must speak what wisdom would conceal, And truths, invidious to the great, reveal, Bold is the task, when subjects, grown too wise, Instruct a monarch where his error lies; For though we deem the short-lived fury past, 'Tis sure the mighty will revenge at last." To whom Pelides:--"From thy inmost soul Speak what thou know'st, and speak without control. E'en by that god I swear who rules the day, To whom thy hands the vows of Greece convey. And whose bless'd oracles thy lips declare; Long as Achilles breathes this vital air, No daring Greek, of all the numerous band, Against his priest shall lift an impious hand; Not e'en the chief by whom our hosts are led, The king of kings, shall touch that sacred head." Encouraged thus, the blameless man replies: "Nor vows unpaid, nor slighted sacrifice, But he, our chief, provoked the raging pest, Apollo's vengeance for his injured priest. Nor will the god's awaken'd fury cease, But plagues shall spread, and funeral fires increase, Till the great king, without a ransom paid, To her own Chrysa send the black-eyed maid.(54) Perhaps, with added sacrifice and prayer, The priest may pardon, and the god may spare." The prophet spoke: when with a gloomy frown The monarch started from his shining throne; Black choler fill'd his breast that boil'd with ire, And from his eye-balls flash'd the living fire: "Augur accursed! denouncing mischief still, Prophet of plagues, for ever boding ill! Still must that tongue some wounding message bring, And still thy priestly pride provoke thy king? For this are Phoebus' oracles explored, To teach the Greeks to murmur at their lord? For this with falsehood is my honour stain'd, Is heaven offended, and a priest profaned; Because my prize, my beauteous maid, I hold, And heavenly charms prefer to proffer'd gold? A maid, unmatch'd in manners as in face, Skill'd in each art, and crown'd with every grace; Not half so dear were Clytaemnestra's charms, When first her blooming beauties bless'd my arms. Yet, if the gods demand her, let her sail; Our cares are only for the public weal: Let me be deem'd the hateful cause of all, And suffer, rather than my people fall. The prize, the beauteous prize, I will resign, So dearly valued, and so justly mine. But since for common good I yield the fair, My private loss let grateful Greece repair; Nor unrewarded let your prince complain, That he alone has fought and bled in vain." "Insatiate king (Achilles thus replies), Fond of the power, but fonder of the prize! Would'st thou the Greeks their lawful prey should yield, The due reward of many a well-fought field? The spoils of cities razed and warriors slain, We share with justice, as with toil we gain; But to resume whate'er thy avarice craves (That trick of tyrants) may be borne by slaves. Yet if our chief for plunder only fight, The spoils of Ilion shall thy loss requite, Whene'er, by Jove's decree, our conquering powers Shall humble to the dust her lofty towers." Then thus the king: "Shall I my prize resign With tame content, and thou possess'd of thine? Great as thou art, and like a god in fight, Think not to rob me of a soldier's right. At thy demand shall I restore the maid? First let the just equivalent be paid; Such as a king might ask; and let it be A treasure worthy her, and worthy me. Or grant me this, or with a monarch's claim This hand shall seize some other captive dame. The mighty Ajax shall his prize resign;(55) Ulysses' spoils, or even thy own, be mine. The man who suffers, loudly may complain; And rage he may, but he shall rage in vain. But this when time requires.--It now remains We launch a bark to plough the watery plains, And waft the sacrifice to Chrysa's shores, With chosen pilots, and with labouring oars. Soon shall the fair the sable ship ascend, And some deputed prince the charge attend: This Creta's king, or Ajax shall fulfil, Or wise Ulysses see perform'd our will; Or, if our royal pleasure shall ordain, Achilles' self conduct her o'er the main; Let fierce Achilles, dreadful in his rage, The god propitiate, and the pest assuage." [Illustration: MARS.] MARS. At this, Pelides, frowning stern, replied: "O tyrant, arm'd with insolence and pride! Inglorious slave to interest, ever join'd With fraud, unworthy of a royal mind! What generous Greek, obedient to thy word, Shall form an ambush, or shall lift the sword? What cause have I to war at thy decree? The distant Trojans never injured me; To Phthia's realms no hostile troops they led: Safe in her vales my warlike coursers fed; Far hence removed, the hoarse-resounding main, And walls of rocks, secure my native reign, Whose fruitful soil luxuriant harvests grace, Rich in her fruits, and in her martial race. Hither we sail'd, a voluntary throng, To avenge a private, not a public wrong: What else to Troy the assembled nations draws, But thine, ungrateful, and thy brother's cause? Is this the pay our blood and toils deserve; Disgraced and injured by the man we serve? And darest thou threat to snatch my prize away, Due to the deeds of many a dreadful day? A prize as small, O tyrant! match'd with thine, As thy own actions if compared to mine. Thine in each conquest is the wealthy prey, Though mine the sweat and danger of the day. Some trivial present to my ships I bear: Or barren praises pay the wounds of war. But know, proud monarch, I'm thy slave no more; My fleet shall waft me to Thessalia's shore: Left by Achilles on the Trojan plain, What spoils, what conquests, shall Atrides gain?" To this the king: "Fly, mighty warrior! fly; Thy aid we need not, and thy threats defy. There want not chiefs in such a cause to fight, And Jove himself shall guard a monarch's right. Of all the kings (the god's distinguish'd care) To power superior none such hast strength, 'twas Heaven that strength bestow'd; For know, vain man! thy valour is from God. Haste, atred bear: Strife and debate thy restless soul employ, And wars and horrors are thy savage joy, If thou rize at equal rate Thy short-lived friendship, and thy groundless hate. Go, threat thy earth-born Myrmidons:--but here(56) 'Tis mine to threaten, prince, and thine to fear. Know, if the god the beauteous dame demand, My bark shall waft her to her native land; But then prepare, imperious prince! prepare, Fierce as thou art, to yield thy captive fair: Even in thy tent I'll seize the blooming prize, Thy loved Briseis with the radiant eyes. Hence shalt thou prove my might, and curse the hour Thou stood'st a rival of imperial power; And hence, to all our hosts it shall be known, That kings are subject to the gods alone." Achilles heard, with grief and rage oppress'd, His heart swell'd high, and labour'd in his breast; Distracting thoughts by turns his bosom ruled; Now fired by wrath, and now by reason cool'd: That prompts his hand to draw the deadly sword, Force through the Greeks, and pierce their haughty lord; This whispers soft his vengeance to control, And calm the rising tempest of his soul. Just in anguish of suspense he stay'd, While half unsheathed appear'd the glittering blade,(57) Minerva swift descended from above, Sent by the sister and the wife of Jove (For both the princes claim'd her care alike); Behind she stood, and by the golden hair Achilles seized; to him alone confess'd; A sable cloud conceal'd her from the rest. He sees, and sudden to the goddess cries, Known by the flashing eyes: [Illustration: MINERVA REPRESSING THE FURY OF ACHILLES.] MINERVA REPRESSING THE FURY OF ACHILLES. "Descends Minerva, in her guardian care, A heavenly witness from Atreus' son?--Then let those eyes that view The daring crime, behold the vengeance to o." "Forbear (the progeny of Jove replies) To calm thy fury I forsake the skies: Let great Achilles, to reason yield the empire o'er his mind. By awful Juno this command is given; The king and you are both the care of heaven. The force of keen reproaches let him feel; But sheathe, o steel. For I pronounce (and trust a heavenly power) Thy injured honour has its fated hour, When the proud monarch shall thy arms implores And bribe thy friendship with a boundless enge no longer bear the sway; Command thy passions, and the gods obey." To her Pelides:--"With regardful ear, 'Tis just, O goddess! I thy dictates hear. Hard as it is, my vengeance I suppress: Those who revere the gods the gods will bless." He said, observant of the blue-eyed maid; Then in the sheath return'd the shining blade. The goddess swift to high Olympus flies, And joins the senate of the skies. Nor yet the rage his boiling breast forsook, Which thus redoubling on Atrides broke: "O monster! mix'd of insolence and fear, Thou dog in forehead, but in heart a deer! known in ambush'd fights to dare, Or nobly face the horrid front of war? 'Tis ours, the chance of fighting fields to try; Thine to look on, and bid the valiant die: So much 'tis safer thro go, And rob a subject, than despoil a foe. Scourge of thy people, violent and base! Sent in Jove's anger on a slavish race; Who, lost to sense of generous freedom past, --or this had been thy last. Now by this sacred sceptre hear me swear, Which never more shall leaves or blossoms bear, Which sever'd from the trunk (as I from thee) On the bare ft its parent tree; This sceptre, form'd by temper'd steel to prove An ensign of the delegates of Jove, From whom the power of laws and justice springs (Tremendous oath! inviolate to them) By this I swear:--when bleeding Greece again Shall call Achilles, she shall call in vain. When, flush'd with slaughter, Hector comes to spread The purpled shore with mountain dead, Then shall thou mourn the affront thy madness gave, Forced to deplore when impotent to save: Then rage in bitterness of soul to know This act has made the bravest Greek my foe." He spoke; and furious hurl'd against the ground His sceptre starr'd with golden studs around: Then sternly silent sat. With like disdain The raging king return'd his frowns again: calm their passion with the words of age, Slow from his seat arose the Pylian sage, Eloquent Nestor, in persuasion skill'd; Words, sweet as honey, from his lips distill'd:(58) Twice nera tions now had pass'd away, Wise by his rules, and happy by his sway; Two ages o'er his native realm he reign'd, And now the example of the third remain'd. All view'd with ven erable man; Who thus with mild benevolence began:-- "What shame, what woe is this to Greece! what joy To Troy's proud monarch, and the friends of Troy! That adverse gods omm it to stern debate The best, the bravest, of the Grecian state. Young as ye are, this youthful heat restrain, Nor think your Nestor's years and wisdom vain. A godlike race of heroes s on ce I knew, Such as no more these aged eyes shall view! Lives there a chief to match Pirithous' fame, Dryas the bold, or Ceneus' deathless name; Theseus, endued with more n m ortal might, Or Polyphemus, like the gods in fight? With these of old, to toils of battle bred, In early youth my hardy days I led; Fired with the thirst which virtuous envy breeds, And smit with love of honourable deeds, Strongest of men, they pierced the mountain boar, Ranged the wild deserts red with monsters' gore, And from their hills the shaggy Centaurs tore: Yet these with soft persuasive arts I sway'd; When Nestor spoke, they listen'd and obey'd. If in my youth, even these esteem'd me wise; Do you, young warriors, hear my age advise. Atrides, seize not on the beauteous slave; That prize the Greeks by common suffrage gave: Nor thou, Achilles, treat our prince with pride; Let kings be just, and sovereign power preside. Thee, the first honours of the war adorn, Like gods in strength, and of a goddess born; Him, awful majesty exalts above The powers of earth, and sceptred sons of Jove. Let both unite with well-consenting mind, So shall authority with strength be join'd. Leave me, O king! to calm Achilles' rage; Rule thou thyself, as more advanced in age. Forbid it, gods! Achilles should be lost, The pride of Greece, and bulwark of our host." This said, he ceased. The king of men replies: "Thy years are awful, and thy words are wise. But that imperious, that unconquer'd soul, No laws can limit, no respect control. Before his pride must his superiors fall; His word the law, and he the lord of all? Him must our hosts, our chiefs, ourself obey? What king can bear a rival in his sway? Grant that the gods his matchless force have given; Has foul reproach a privilege from heaven?" Here on the monarch's speech Achilles broke, And furious, thus, interrupting spoke: "Tyrant, I well deserved thy galling chain, To live thy slave, and could I submit to each unjust decree:-- Command thy vassals, but command not me. Seize on Briseis, whom the Grecians doom'd My prize of war, yet tamely see resumed; And seize ring sword in any woman's cause. The gods command me to forgive the past: But let this first invasion be the last: For know, thy blood, when next thou darest invade, Shall stream in ve the stern debate expired: The chiefs in sullen majesty retired. Achilles with Patroclus took his way Where near his tents his hollow vessels lay. Meantime Atrides launch'd with numerous oars the deck was fair Chryseis placed, And sage Ulysses with the conduct graced: Safe in her seats the hecatomb they stow'd, Then swiftly sailing, cut the liquid road. The host to expiate ne rs. Wash'd by the briny wave, the pious train(59) Are cleansed; and cast the ablutions in the main. Along the shore whole hecatombs were laid, And bulls and goats to Phoebus' altars paid: dours to the skies. The army thus in sacred rites engaged, Atrides still with deep resentment raged. To wait his will two sacred heralds stood, Talthybius and Eurybates the good. "Haste to l prize: Submit he must; or if they will not part, Ourself in arms shall tear her from his heart." The unwilling heralds act their lord's commands; Pensive they walk along the barren sands: A reclined. At awful distance long they silent stand, Loth to advance, and speak their hard command; Decent confusion! This the godlike man Perceived, and thus with accent mild began: "Son and gods!(60) I know your message; by constraint you came; Not you, but your imperious lord I blame. Patroclus, haste, the fair Briseis bring; Conduct my captive to the haughty king. Go, ve, and men below! But first, and loudest, to your prince declare (That lawless tyrant whose commands you bear), Unmoved as death Achilles shall remain, Though prostrate Greece shall Blind to himself, and useless to his host, Unskill'd to judge the future by the past, In blood and slaughter shall repent at last." [Illustration: THE DEPARTURE OF BRISEIS FROM THE TENT OF ACHILLES.] THE DEPARTURE OF BRISEIS FROM THE TENT OF ACHILLES. Patroclus now the unwilling beauty brought; She, in soft sorrows, and in pensive thought, Pass'd silent, as the heralds held her hand, And of look'd back, slow is loss the fierce Achilles bore; But sad, retiring to the sounding shore, O'er the wild margin of the deep he hung, That kindred deep from whence his mother sprung:(61) There bathed in d disdain, Thus loud lamented to the stormy main: "O parent goddess! since in early bloom Thy suppliant hear; Refuse, or grant; for what has Jove to fear? Or oh! declare, of all the powers above, Is wretched Thy span adorn: Honour and fame at least the thunderer owed; And ill he pays the promise of a god? ah, why should Jove engage In foreign contests and domestic rage, The gods' complaints, and Juno's fierce alarms p recesses of the main, Where aged Ocean holds his watery reign, The goddess-mother heard secure thy prayer is sped: Witness the sacred honours of our head, The nod that ratifies the will divine, The faithful, fixed as fate: thus the sorrows of his soul explores. "Why grieves my son? Thy anguish let me share; Revealed and gives the nod, The stamp of fate and sanction of the god: High heaven with trembling the dread signal took, And all well you know. From Thebe, sacred to Apollo's name(62) (Aetion's realm), our conquering arms, Immortals wait The coming god, and from their thrones of state Arising silent, wrapp'd in holy fear, Before the majesty of his right Chryseis, heavenly prize! was led, By vote selected, to the general's bed. The priest of dame, And all her passions kindled into flame. "Say, artful manager of heaven (she cries), Who now partakes the secrets of owly bending down, Held forth the sceptre and the laurel crown, Intreating all; but chief implored in prudence from his consort hides?" To this the thunderer: "Seek not thou to find The sacred counsels of almighty mind: Inv priest to reverence, and release the fair; Not so Atrides: he, with wonted pride, The sire insulted the prayer: A dreadful plague ensues: the avenging darts Incessant fly, and pierce the Grecian gods above, and men below; But thou, nor they, shall search the thoughts that roll Deep in the close recesses of my soul." Full on the sire the goddess of the skies Roll'd the large orbs of her majestic eyes, And thus return'd:--"Austere Saturnius, say, From whence this wrath, or who controls thy sway? Thy boundless will, for me, remains in force, And all thy counsels take the destined course. But 'tis for Greece I fear: for late was seen, In close consult, the silver-footed queen. Jove to his Thetis nothing could deny, Nor was the signal vain that shook the sky. What fatal favour has the goddess won, To grace her fierce, inexorable son? Perhaps in Grecian blood to drench the plain, And glut his vengeance with my people slain." Then thus the god: "O restless fate of pride, That strives to learn what heaven resolves to hide; Vain is the search, presumptuous and abhorr'd, Anxious to thee, and odious to thy lord. Let this suffice: the immutable decree No force can shake: what is, that ought to be. Goddess, submit; nor dare our will withstand, But dread the power of this avenging hand: The united strength of all the gods above In vain resists the omnipotence of Jove." [Illustration: VULCAN.] VULCAN. The thunderer spoke, nor durst the queen reply; A reverent horror silenced all the sky. The feast disturb'd, with sorrow Vulcan saw His mother menaced, and the gods in awe; Peace at his heart, and pleasure his design, Thus interposed the architect divine: "The wretched quarrels of the mortal state Are far unworthy, gods! of your debate: Let men their days in senseless strife employ, We, in eternal peace and constant joy. Thou, goddess-mother, with our sire comply, Nor break the sacred union of the sky: Lest, roused to rage, he shake the bless'd abodes, Launch the red lightning, and dethrone the gods. If you submit, the thunderer stands appeased; The gracious power is willing to be pleased." Thus Vulcan spoke: and rising with a bound, The double bowl with sparkling nectar crown'd,(72) Which held to Juno in a cheerful way, "Goddess (he cried), be patient and obey. Dear as you are, if Jove his arm extend, I can but grieve, unable to defend What god so daring in your aid to move, Or lift his hand against the force of Jove? Once in your cause I felt his matchless might, Hurl'd headlong down from the ethereal height;(73) Toss'd all the day in rapid circles round, Nor till the sun descended touch'd the ground. Breathless I fell, in giddy motion lost; The Sinthians raised me on the Lemnian coast;(74) He said, and to her hands the goblet heaved, Which, with a smile, the white-arm'd queen received Then, to the rest he fill'd; and in his turn, Each to his lips applied the nectar'd urn, Vulcan with awkward grace his office plies, And unextinguish'd laughter shakes the skies. Thus the blest gods the genial day prolong, In feasts ambrosial, and celestial song.(75) Apollo tuned the lyre; the Muses round With voice alternate aid the silver sound. Meantime the radiant sun to mortal sight Descending swift, roll'd down the rapid light: Then to their starry domes the gods depart, The shining monuments of Vulcan's art: Jove on his couch reclined his awful head, And Juno slumber'd on the golden bed. [Illustration: JUPITER.] JUPITER. [Illustration: THE APOTHEOSIS OF HOMER.] THE APOTHEOSIS OF HOMER. BOOK II. ARGUMENT. THE TRIAL OF THE ARMY, AND CATALOGUE OF THE FORCES. Jupiter, in pursuance of the request of Thetis, sends a deceitful vision to Agamemnon, persuading him to lead the army to battle, in order to make the Greeks sensible of their want of Achilles. The general, who is deluded with the hopes of taking Troy without his assistance, but fears the army was discouraged by his absence, and the late plague, as well as by the length of time, contrives to make trial of their disposition by a stratagem. He first communicates his design to the princes in council, that he would propose a return to the soldiers, and that they should put a stop to them if the proposal was embraced. Then he assembles the whole host, and upon moving for a return to Greece, they unanimously agree to it, and run to prepare the ships. They are detained by the management of Ulysses, who chastises the insolence of Thersites. The assembly is recalled, several speeches made on the occasion, and at length the advice of Nestor followed, which was to make a general muster of the troops, and to divide them into their several nations, before they proceeded to battle. This gives occasion to the poet to enumerate all the forces of the Greeks and Trojans, and in a large catalogue. The time employed in this book consists not entirely of one day. The scene lies in the Grecian camp, and upon the sea-shore; towards the end it removes to Troy. Now pleasing sleep had seal'd each mortal eye, Stretch'd in the tents the Grecian leaders lie: The immortals slumber'd on their thrones above; All, but the ever-wakeful eyes of Jove.(76) To honour Thetis' son he bends his care, And plunge the Greeks in all the woes of war: Then bids an empty phantom rise to sight, And thus commands the vision of the night. "Fly hence, deluding Dream! and light as air,(77) To Agamemnon's ample tent repair. Bid him in arms draw forth the embattled train, Lead all his Grecians to the dusty plain. Declare, e'en now 'tis given him to destroy The lofty towers of wide-extended Troy. For now no more the gods with fate contend, At Juno's suit the heavenly factions end. Destruction hangs o'er yon devoted wall, And nodding Ilion waits the impending fall." Swift as the word the vain illusion fled, Descends, and hovers o'er Atrides' head; Clothed in the figure of the Pylian sage, Renown'd for wisdom, and revered for age: Around his temples spreads his golden wing, And thus the flattering dream deceives the king. [Illustration: JUPITER SENDING THE EVIL DREAM TO AGAMEMNON.] JUPITER SENDING THE EVIL DREAM TO AGAMEMNON. "Canst thou, with all a monarch's cares oppress'd, O Atreus' son! canst thou indulge the rest?(78) Ill fits a chief who mighty nations guides, Directs in council, and in war presides, To whom its safety a whole people owes, To waste long nights in indolent repose.(79) Monarch, awake! 'tis Jove's command I bear; Thou, and thy glory, claim his heavenly care. In just array draw forth the embattled train, Lead all thy Grecians to the dusty plain; E'en now, O king! 'tis given thee to destroy The lofty towers of wide-extended Troy. For now no more the gods with fate contend, At Juno's suit the heavenly factions end. Destruction hangs o'er yon devoted wall, And nodding Ilion waits the impending fall. Awake, but waking this advice approve, And trust the vision that descends from Jove." The phantom said; then vanish'd from his sight, Resolves to air, and mixes with the night. A thousand schemes the monarch's mind employ; Elate in thought he sacks untaken Troy: Vain as he was, and to the future blind, Nor saw what Jove and secret fate design'd, What mighty toils to either host remain, What scenes of grief, and numbers of the slain! Eager he rises, and in fancy hears The voice celestial murmuring in his ears. First on his limbs a slender vest he drew, Around him next the regal mantle threw, The embroider'd sandals on his feet were tied; The starry falchion glitter'd at his side; And last, his arm the massy sceptre loads, Unstain'd, immortal, and the gift of gods. Now rosy Morn ascends the court of Jove, Lifts up her light, and opens day above. The king despatch'd his heralds with commands To range the camp and summon all the bands: The gathering hosts the monarch's word obey; While to the fleet Atrides bends his way. In his black ship the Pylian prince he found; There calls a senate of the peers around: The assembly placed, the king of men express'd The counsels labouring in his artful breast. "Friends and confederates! with attentive ear Receive my words, and credit what you hear. Late as I slumber'd in the shades of night, A dream divine appear'd before my sight; Whose visionary form like Nestor came, The same in habit, and in mien the same.(80) The heavenly phantom hover'd o'er my head, 'And, dost thou sleep, O Atreus' son? (he said) Ill fits a chief who mighty nations guides, Directs in council, and in war presides; To whom its safety a whole people owes, To waste long nights in indolent repose. Monarch, awake! 'tis Jove's command I bear, Thou and thy glory claim his heavenly care. In just array draw forth the embattled train, And lead the Grecians to the dusty plain; E'en now, O king! 'tis given thee to destroy The lofty towers of wide-extended Troy. For now no more the gods with fate contend, At Juno's suit the heavenly factions end. Destruction hangs o'er yon devoted wall, And nodding Ilion waits the impending fall. This hear observant, and the gods obey!' The vision spoke, and pass'd in air away. Now, valiant chiefs! since heaven itself alarms, Unite, and rouse the sons of Greece to arms. But first, with caution, try