

TELEMACHUS.

BOOK XX.

ARGUMENT.

VENUSIUM having been left as a deposit by both parties in the hands of the Lucanians, Telemachus declares against seizing it in an assembly of the chiefs, and persuades them to be of his opinion: he discovers great penetration and sagacity with respect to two deserters, one of whom, Acanthus, had undertaken to poison him and the other, Dioscorus, had offered to bring him Adrastus's head. In the battle which soon follows, Telemachus strews the field with dead in search of Adrastus: Adrastus, who is also in search of Telemachus, engages and kills Pistratus, the son of Nestor; Philoctetes comes up, and at the moment when he is about to pierce Adrastus, is himself wounded, and obliged to retire: Telemachus, alarmed by the cry of his friends, among whom Adrastus is making a terrible slaughter, rushes to their assistance: he engages Adrastus, and prescribes conditions, upon which he gives him his life: Adrastus, rising from the ground, attempts treacherously to kill his conqueror by surprise, who engages him a second time, and kills him.

IN the mean time, the chiefs of the army assembled, to consider whether it was expedient to possess themselves of Venusium, a strong town, which Adrastus had formerly taken from a neighbouring people, the Peucesian Apulians. They had entered into the alliance that was formed against him, to obtain satisfaction for the injury; and Adrastus, to soften their resentment, had put the town as a deposit into the hands of the Lucanians; he had, however, at the same time, corrupted the Lucanian garrison, and its commander, with money: so that he had still more authority in Venusium, than the Lucanians; and the Apulians, who had consented that Venusium should be garrisoned with Lucanian forces, were thus defrauded in the negotiation.

TELEMACHO.

TELÉMACO.

LIBRO XX.

SUMARIO.

EN una junta de los Xefes, Telémaco hace prevalecer su voto, para que no se sorprendiese Venusa, entregada por ambos partidos á los Lucanos. Hace ver su prudencia, con la ocasion de dos transfugas, de los quales el uno, llamado Acanto habia intentado envenenarle: El otro, llamado Dióscoro ofrecia á los aliados la cabeza de Adrasto. En el combate que sigue despues, lleva Telémaco la muerte por todas partes mientras va en busca de Adrasto; y este rey que tambien le busca á él, encuentra y mata á Pistrato, hijo de Nestor. Sobreviene Filoctetes, y en el mismo instante en que va atravesar á Adrasto, el mismo es herido, y obligado á retirarse de la batalla. Acude Telémaco á los gritos de los aliados á quienes iba Adrasto destrozando horriblemente. Combate á este enemigo, y le da la vida baxo unas condiciones que le impone. Levantado Adrasto quiere sorprehender á Telémaco; este le agarra otra vez, y le quita la vida.

JUNTÁRONSE entretanto los capitanes del ejército, para deliberar si habian de apoderarse de la ciudad de Venosa. Era ésta una ciudad fuerte, que habia antes Adrasto usurpado á los de la Pulla, vecinos de su Reyno. Habian ellos entrado en la alianza, para pedir justicia contra este Príncipe. Para apaciguarlos Adrasto habia puesto en depósito la ciudad en manos de los pueblos de Lucania; pero habia ganado con dinero la guarnicion y á su capitán; de manera que los Lucanos no tenian efectivamente en Venosa mas autoridad que él; y los Pulleses que habian convenido en que las milicias Lucanas la guarnecieran, habian quedado engañados en este Tratado.

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A citizen of Venusium, whose name was Demophantes, had secretly offered to put the allies in possession of one of the gates by night; an advantage which was of the greater importance, as Adrastus had placed his magazine of military stores and provisions in a neighbouring castle, which could not hold out against an enemy that was in possession of Venusium. Philoctetes and Nestor had already given their opinion, that this offer should be accepted; and the rest of the chiefs, influenced by their authority, and struck with the facility of the enterprise, and its immediate advantages, applauded their determination: but Telemachus, as soon as he returned, exerted his utmost abilities to set it aside.

« I confess, » said he, « that if any man can deserve to be surprised and deceived, it is Adrastus, who has practised fraud against all mankind; and I am sensible that the surprise of Venusium, will only put you into possession of a town, which, by right, is yours already; because it belongs to the Apulians, who are confederates in your expedition: I also acknowledge that you may improve this opportunity with the greater appearance of justice, as Adrastus, who has made a deposit of the town in question, has, at the same time, corrupted the commander and the garrison, to suffer him to enter it, whenever he shall think fit: and I am convinced, as well as you, that if you should take possession of Venusium to-day, you would, to-morrow, be masters of the neighbouring castle, in which Adrastus has formed his magazine; and that, the day following, this formidable war would be at an end. But is it not better to perish, than to conquer by means like these? Must fraud be counteracted by fraud? Shall it be said, that so many kings, who united to punish the perfidy of Adrastus, were themselves perfidious! If we can adopt the practices of Adrastus without guilt, Adrastus himself is innocent; and our attempt to punish him injurious. Has all Hesperia, sustained by so many colonies of Greece, by so many heroes returned from the siege of Troy, no other arms to oppose the fraud and treachery of Adrastus, than treachery and fraud?

Habia un ciudadano de Venosa que se llamaba Demofante ofrecido á los aliados que la noche siguiente les entregaria una puerta de la ciudad. Era tanto mayor la ventaja de esta sorpresa quanto se sabia, que Adrasto habia puesto todas sus provisiones de guerra, y boca en un castillo vecino que habia de rendirse sin remedio luego que se rindiera la ciudad. Nestor y Filotetes habian dicho ya su parecer, y juzgado que convenia aprovecharse de una tan buena ocasion. Todos los capitanes, arrebatados de su autoridad y alucinados con la utilidad de tan facil empresa, aprobaban este dictámen; pero en su lugar Telemaco hizo el último esfuerzo, para apartarlos de este proposito.

Bien sé, dixo, que si hombre jamas mereció ser engañado de todos tan frecuentemente es Adrasto; veo tambien que sorprendiendo á Venosa, no hariais otro que apoderaros de una ciudad que os pertenece, puesto que tienen derecho sobre ella los Pulleses, que son miembro de la liga. Confieso que pudierais hacerlo con tanta mas apariencia de razon, quanto Adrasto ha puesto en terceria la ciudad, ha sobornado al capitan, y la guarnicion para poderla entrar, quando le pareciere tiempo oportuno. Conozco al fin no ménos que vos que si os apoderais de Venosa, el dia siguiente sereis dueños del castillo en que estan todas las provisiones de Adrasto, y que de esa manera poniais fin en dos dias á una guerra tan formidable. ¿Pero no es mejor el morir que vencer con estos medios? ¿Se debe por ventura rechazar un engaño con otro engaño? Y se podrá decir que mientras tantos Reyes coligados castigan los engaños del impio Adrasto, se semejan á él en ser engañadores? Si nosotros podemos imitarle sin culpa, no es culpado Adrasto, y somos injustos queriendolo castigar. ¿Toda la Hesperia pues defendida de tantas colonias Griegas y de los héroes que han vuelto del asedio de Troya, no tiene otras armas contra la perfidia, y perjuros de Adrasto, sino la misma perfidia, y el perjuro mismo?

You have sworn by all that is most sacred, to leave Venusium a deposit in the hands of the Lucanians: the Lucanian garrison, you say, is corrupted by Adrastus, and I believe it to be true; but this garrison is still Lucanian; it receives the pay of the Lucanians, and has not yet refused to obey them; it has preserved, at least, an appearance of neutrality; neither Adrastus nor his people have yet entered it; the treaty is still subsisting; and the gods have not forgotten your oath. Is a promise never to be kept, but when a plausible pretence to break it is wanting? Shall an oath be sacred only, when nothing is to be gained by its violation? If you are insensible to the love of virtue, and the fear of the gods, have ye no regard to your interest and reputation? If you give so pernicious an example to mankind, by breaking your promise and violating your oath, in order to put an end to a war, how many wars will this impious conduct excite? By which of your neighbours will you not be at once dreaded and abhorred; and by whom will you afterwards be trusted in the most pressing necessity? What security can you give for your faith, when you design to keep it; and how will you convince your neighbours, that you intend no fraud, even when you are sincere? Shall this security be a solemn treaty? You have trodden treaties under foot. Shall it be an oath? Will they not know that you set the gods at defiance when you can derive any advantage from perjury? With respect to you, peace will be a state of no greater security than war; for whatever you do, will be considered as the operations of war, either secret or avowed. You will be the constant enemies of all, who have the misfortune to be your neighbours. Every affair, which requires reputation, probity, or confidence, will, to you, become impracticable, and you will never be able to make any promise that can be believed.

But there is yet another interest, yet nearer and more pressing, which must strike you, if you are not

Vos habeis jurado por lo mas sagrado dejar depositada la ciudad de Venosa en manos de los pueblos de Lucania. Estan, me decís, sobornados los soldados Lucanos de la guarnicion con dinero de Adrasto. Persuádome eso no ménos que vosotros; todavía se hallan pagados al sueldo de Lucania, no han rehusado nunca obedecer á los depositarios; y á lo ménos en la apariencia han conservado la debida neutralidad. Ni Adrasto, ni los suyos han entrado jamas en Venosa: el tratado subsiste, y no se han olvidado los dioses del juramento que les hicisteis: ¿ Luego no se mantendrán las promesas, sino quando no hubiere especiosos pretextos para violarlas? ¿ No habrá fidelidad, ni puntualidad en guardar lo jurado, sino quando nada se pueda conseguir con faltar á la propia fe? Si no os mueve el amor de la virtud, y el temor de los dioses, muévaos por lo ménos vuestra reputacion, y vuestro mismo interes. Si mostrais al mundo tan dañoso exemplar de faltar á la fe, y violar un juramento para terminar una guerra ¿ qué guerras no levantarais contra vosotros mismos, con un porte tan impio? ¿ Qué pueblo vecino vuestro no se verá obligado á temeros, y á detestaros? ¿ Quién en lo venidero podrá fiarse de vos en sus necesidades mas urgentes? ¿ Quando querais tratar sinceramente, y quando vuestra sinceridad os permita hacerse creer de los pueblos vecinos, qué seguridad podréis dar? ¿ Será acaso algun tratado solemnne? Ya habeis hollado otro. ¿ Por ventura será un juramento? ¿ Pero no se sabrá que no teneis en algun aprecio á los dioses, quando esperais sacar con el perjurio alguna conveniencia? Luego será igualmente mal seguro estar con vos en guerra que estar en paz; y todas las fianzas que diereis, se recibirán, ó como una guerra fingida, ó como una guerra declarada. Seréis enemigos perpetuos de todos aquellos que tengan la desgracia de confinar con vuestros estados; se os harán imposibles todos los negocios, que hayan menester el buen nombre, la estimacion y la rectitud; ni os quedará algun modo de hacer que se dé crédito á vuestras promesas.

Mas hé aquí un interes mas relevante que debe venceros, si teneis todavía lumbre de razon para juz-

lost to all sense of probity, and wholly blind to your advantage: a conduct so perfidious, will be a canker in the very heart of your alliance, which it must finally destroy. The fraud that you are about to practise against Adrastus, will inevitably render him victorious.»

At these words, the assembly demanded, with great emotion, how he could take upon him to affirm that the alliance would be ruined by a measure, that would procure them certain and immediate victory.

«How can you,» said he, «confide in each other, if you violate the only bond of society and confidence, your plighted faith? After you have admitted this maxim, that the laws of honesty and truth may be violated, to secure a considerable advantage; who, among you, would confide in another, when that other may secure a considerable advantage, by breaking his promise and defrauding you? and when this is the case, what will be your situation? Which of you would not practise fraud, to preclude the fraudulent practices of his neighbour? What must become of an alliance consisting of so many nations, each, of which has a separate interest, when it is agreed among them, in a public deliberation, that every one is at liberty to circumvent his neighbour, and violate his engagements? Will not the immediate consequence be distrust and dissension; an impatience to destroy each other, excited by the dread of being destroyed? Adrastus will have no need to attack you: you will effect his purpose upon yourselves, and justify the perfidy you combined to punish.

«Ye mighty chiefs! renowned for magnanimity and wisdom, who govern innumerable people with experienced command, despise not the counsel of a youth. Whatever is your danger or distress, your resources should be diligence and virtue. True fortitude can never despair: but if once you pass the barrier of integrity and honour, your retreat is cut off, and your ruin inevitable: you can never more establish that confidence, without which no affair of importance can succeed: you can never make those hold virtue sacred, whom you have once taught to despise it. And, after

gar de las cosas, y preveer lo futuro: y es que un porte tan engañoso, ataca internamente, y destruye vuestra alianza. Vuestro perjuro hará que Adrasto triunfe de todos vosotros.

A estas razones todo el congreso alterado le preguntaba, cómo se atrevia á decir, que una accion, de que resultaria á la liga una victoria segura, podia ocasionar su destruccion.

Si una vez, respondió Telémaco, quebrantais la fe que es el único lazo de la confederacion y seguridad, ¿Cómo podreis fiaros unos de otros? Despues de haber sentado la máxima, de que para sacar alguna grande utilidad, se pueden violar las leyes de la rectitud, y fidelidad, ¿Quién de vosotros se fiará del otro, quando á este se le podrá seguir crecida conveniencia, faltando á la palabra, y engañando al amigo? A qué términos os veréis reducidos entónces? ¿Quién con las suyas no querrá prevenir las fraudes de sus enemigos y de sus vecinos? ¿Qué fundamento tiene una alianza de tantos pueblos, quando en una deliberacion comun han quedado de acuerdo que se permita engañar al vecino, y violar la fe dada? ¿Qual será vuestra mútua desconfianza, vuestra discordia, vuestro ardor en destruirlos alternativamente? No tendrá ya Adrasto necesidad de arruinaros; bastantemente os arruinaréis vos mismos, y justificaréis todas perfidias.

No os desdeñeis, sabios y magnánimos Reyes, que gobernais innumerables pueblos, con tan larga experiencia de mandar: no os desdeñeis de dar oidos á los consejos que os vienen por la boca de un mozo. Si hubierais dado en los mas lastimosos extremos, á que tal vez la guerra precipita á los hombres, seria menester que vuestra vigilancia y los esfuerzos de vuestra virtud os sacaran de estado tan infeliz; porque el valor verdadero nunca se dexa rendir, pero en habiendo roto una vez el reparo de la honra, y de la buena fé que os conservan, esta es una pérdida irrepara-

all, what have you to fear? Will not your courage conquer, without so base an auxiliary as fraud? Are not your own powers, and the strength of united nations, sufficient? Let us fight; and if we must, let us die; but let us not conquer with the loss of virtue and of fame. Adrastus, the impious Adrastus, is in our power; and nothing can deliver him, but our participation of the crimes that expose him to the wrath of heaven. »

When Telemachus had done speaking, he perceived that his words had carried conviction to the heart. He observed, that, of all who were present, not one offered to reply; their thoughts were fixed; not, indeed, upon him, nor the graces of his elocution; but upon the truths that he had displayed. At first, all was silent astonishment, expressed only by the countenance! but, after a short time, a confused murmur spread by degrees through the whole assembly: they looked upon each other; and all were impatient to declare their sentiments, though every one was afraid to speak first. It was expected, that the chiefs of the army should give their opinion: and the venerable Nestor, at length, spoke as follows:

« The gods, O son of Ulysses! have spoken by thy voice; Minerva, who has so often inspired thy father, has suggested to thee the wise and generous counsel which thou hast given to us. I think not of thy youth: for when I hear thee, Pallas only is present to my mind. Thou hast been the advocate of virtue. The greatest advantage, without virtue, is lost: without virtue, men are suddenly overtaken by the vengeance of their enemies, they are distrusted by their friends, abhorred by good men, and obnoxious to the righteous anger of the gods. Let us then leave Venusium in the hands of the Lucanians, and think of defeating Adrastus only by our own magnanimity. »

table. No podriais de nuevo fiar unos de otros con recíproca seguridad, qual es precisa, para conducir á buen fin todos los negocios que importan, ni hacer que recobráran los hombres sus maximas primeras de virtud habiéndoles enseñado vosotros mismos á despreciarlas. Pero decidme, ¿ de qué teméis? ¿ No teneis bastante valor para vencer sus engaños? ¿ No basta por ventura vuestro corage junto con la fuerza de tantos pueblos? Peleemos pues: muramos pues, si es menester, mas presto que vencer con tanta indignidad. Adrasto, el impio Adrasto, está ya en nuestras manos, con tal que estemos léjos de imitarlo y tengamos horror á su mala fé, y a su traicion infame.

Quando acabó Telémaco de hablar, reparó que sus voces, con dulce persuasion, habian penetrado hasta lo íntimo de todos los corazones, y advirtió en el congreso un profundo silencio. Cada uno admiraba, no á él, ni á la elegancia de sus palabras, sino la fuerza de la verdad, que en el progreso de su razonamiento se hacia sentir en los animos de los que le oian. Velase en los rostros de todos vivamente expresada la admiracion; y al fin se oyó un silencioso murmullo, que se iba poco á poco extendiendo. Mirabanse unos á otros, y no habia quien se atreviera á ser el primero en hablar: esperabase que los capitanes del ejército explicaran su parecer, y entretanto cada uno tenia harto trabajo para contenerse de no decir su interior sentimiento. Finalmente pronunció estas palabras el autorizado Nestor.

Los dioses os han hecho hablar, ó digno hijo de Ulises, y Minerva que tantas veces inspiró la alma de vuestro padre, ha puesto en vuestro pecho el cuerdo y generoso consejo que ahora nos habeis dado. No me detengo en vuestra juventud, y no atiendo sino á Minerva en todo lo que habeis dicho. Habeis hablado por la virtud: sin ella las mayores ventajas son verdaderas pérdidas: sin ella luego se arrastran la venganza enemiga, la desconfianza de los aliados, el odio de los hombres de bien, y la cólera justa de los dioses. Dexemos, pues, á Venosa en poder de las gentes de Lucania, y no pensemos mas sino en vencer á Adrasto con solo nuestro esfuerzo.

Thus Nestor spoke, and the whole assembly applauded: but their eyes were fixed upon Telemachus; and every one thought he saw the wisdom of the goddess that inspired him, lighten in his countenance.

This question being determined, the council began immediately to debate another, in which Telemachus acquired equal reputation. Adrastus with a perfidy and cruelty natural to his character, had sent one Acanthus into the camp as a deserter, who had undertaken to destroy the principal commanders of the army by poison; and had a particular charge not to spare Telemachus, who was already become the terror of the Daunians. Telemachus, who was too generous and brave easily to entertain suspicion, readily admitted this wretch to his presence, and treated him with great kindness: for having seen Ulysses in Sicily, he recommended himself by relating his adventures. Telemachus took him under his immediate protection, and consoled him under his misfortunes; for he pretended to have been defrauded, and treated with indignity, by Adrastus. Telemachus, however, was warming and cherishing a viper in his bosom, which his kindness only could enable to destroy him.

Acanthus had dispatched another deserter, whose name was Arion, from the camp of the allies to Adrastus, with particular intelligence of its situation; and assurances, that he would give poison to the chief commanders, and in particular to Telemachus, the next day, at an entertainment, to which he had been invited as a guest. It happened that this man was detected and seized, as he was escaping from the camp; and, in the terror and confusion of conscious guilt, he confessed his treachery. Achantus was suspected to have been his accomplice, because a remarkable intimacy had been observed between them; but Acanthus, who had great courage, and was profoundly skilled in dissimulation, made so artful a defence, that nothing could be proved against him, nor could the conspiracy be traced to its source.

Many of the princes were of opinion, that he ought certainly to be sacrificed to the public safety. « He

Dixo; y todo el congreso aplaudió tan sabias palabras; pero en el mismo tiempo, cada uno admirado volvía la atención á el hijo de Ulises, y parecía á todos ver traslucirse en él la sabiduría de Minerva que le inspiraba.

Ofrecióse bien presto otra cuestión en el consejo de los Reyes, en la qual se adquirió Telémaco no ménos reputacion que en la primera. Adrasto, siempre cruel, y siempre pérfido, envió al campo de los aliados un fugitivo, llamado Acante, para atosigar por su medio á los capitanes de mayor garvo. A este tal se habia especialmente encargado que se valiera de todo el artificio para quitar la vida á Telémaco que era ya terror de todos los Daunos. Telémaco, que era sobrado corajoso, y sobrado sincero para inclinar á la desconfianza, acogió á este infeliz amorosamente sin alguna dificultad; y él, que en Sicilia habia visto á Ulises, le referia los acontecimientos de aquel heroe. Proveyóle del sustento preciso, y procuraba consolarle en su desventura; porque se lamentaba de haber sido engañado de Adrasto, y tratado de él indignamente; pero era alimentar, y avivar en el seno la venenosa vibora, que ya estaba á punto de hacer mortal herida.

Tomóse presto otro fugitivo, llamado Arion, que Acante despachaba para Adrasto á darle aviso del estado del campo de los aliados, y para asegurarle de que el dia siguiente atosigaría á los principales reyes á una con Telémaco, en un convite, en que éste les habia de regalar. Preso Arion, confesó su traicion, y se sospechó que estuviera de acuerdo con Acante, porque eran los dos muy amigos; pero Acante, profundamente disimulado, é intrepido, se defendía con tanta astucia, que no se le podia convencer, ni descubrir el fondo de la conjuracion.

Fuéron de parecer muchos reyes que en una duda tal se debía sacrificar Acante á la pública seguridad.

must, at all events, » said they, « be put to death; for the life of a private individual is nothing, in competition with the lives of so many kings. It is possible he may die innocent; but that consideration should have no weight, when the vicegerents of the gods are to be secured from danger. »

« This horrid maxim, said Telemachus, « this barbarous policy, is a disgrace to human nature. Is the blood of men to be so lightly spilt; and are they to be thus wantonly destroyed by those that are set over them only for their preservation? The gods have made you to mankind, what the shepherd is to his flock; and will you degrade yourselves into wolves, and worry and devour those, whom you ought to cherish and protect? Upon your principles, to be accused, and to be guilty, is the same thing; and every one that is suspected must die. Envy and calumny will destroy innocence at pleasure; the oppressed will be sacrificed to the oppressor; and, in proportion as tyranny makes kings distrustful, judicial murderers will depopulate the state. »

Telemachus uttered this remonstrance with a vehemence and authority that gave it invincible force, and covered those, who gave the counsel he had reprov'd, with confusion. He perceived it and softened his voice: « As for myself, » said he, « I am not so fond of life, as to secure it upon such terms. I had rather Acanthus should be wicked, than Telemachus; and would more willingly perish by his treason, than destroy him unjustly, while I doubt only of his crime. A king is, by his office, the judge of his people; and his decision should be directed by wisdom, justice, and moderation: let me, then, examine Acanthus in your presence. »

Every one acquiesced, and Telemachus immediately questioned him concerning his connexion with Arion: he pressed him with a great variety of particulars; and he frequently took occasion to intimate a design of sending him back to Adrastus, as a deserter: this, if he had really deserted, would have alarmed him; for Adrastus would certainly have punished

Conviene, decian, que muera: no debe hacerse caso de la vida de un hombre, por salvar la de tantos reyes. ¿Qué importa que muera un inocente, quando se trata de conservar aquellos que representan en la tierra los dioses?

¿Qué máxima inhumana, qué cruel política! dixo luego Telémaco. ¿Luego sois tan pródigos de la sangre humana? ¿O, vosotros que sois escogidos para ser pastores de los hombres, y que no los regís sino para conservarlos como un pastor conserva la manada propia! luego sois lobos crueles, y no pastores; ó no sois á lo ménos pastores sino para degollar el ganado en vez de guiarle, como debierais al pasto. Segun vuestra opinion, quando es acusado un hombre al punto es delinquente, y es delito digno de muerte una sola sospecha. De esta suerte los inocentes se dexan á merced de los envidiosos, y calumniadores, y quando vaya creciendo en vuestros corazones la desconfianza tiranica, será menester degollar á proporcion las víctimas.

Decia estas palabras Telémaco con una autoridad, y una fuerza que obligaba á todos los ánimos á probar sus razones, y hacia colorirse de avergonzados á los autores de tan infame consejo. Despues componiéndose con un ayre mas apacible, les dixo de esta suerte: Por quanto á mí, no amo tanto la vida que desee vivir á semejante precio: mas gusto de que Acante sea malvado que de serlo yo mismo; y que él me quite con traición la vida, que hacerle yo morir injustamente con la sola sospecha de su delito. Pero oidme, ó vos, que teniendo el grado de reyes, esto es, de jueces de vuestros pueblos, debeis juzgar los hombres con justicia, con prudencia, y moderacion. Dexadme interrogar á Acante á vista de todos vosotros.

Interrogólo pues sin detencion de muchas cosas, en orden á su inteligencia con Arion: estrechólo, preguntándole de infinitas circunstancias, y fingió muchas veces que le queria remitir á Adrasto, como á transfuga, que merecia castigo, para observar si con esta amenaza concebía temor: mas conserváronse tan tranquilos la voz, y el semblante de Acante que con-

him with death: but Telemachus, who watched the effect of this experiment with great attention, perceived not the least token of fear, either in his countenance or his voice; and, therefore, thought it probable, that he was guilty of the conspiracy. Not being able, however, fully to convict him, he demanded his ring: «I will send it,» said he, «to Adrastus.» At the demand of his ring, Acanthus turned pale: and Telemachus, who kept his eyes fixed upon him, perceived that he was in great confusion. The ring being delivered, «I will send Polytropus,» said Telemachus, «a Lucanian, whom you well know, to Adrastus, as a messenger dispatched with private intelligence from you; and he shall produce this ring as a token. If it is acknowledged by Adrastus, and, by this means, we discover that you are his emissary, you shall be put to death by torture; but if you will now voluntarily confess your guilt, we will remit the punishment it deserves, and only banish you to some remote island, where every thing shall be provided for your subsistence.» Acanthus being now urged both by fear and hope, made a full confession; and Telemachus prevailed with the kings to give him his life, as he had promised it; and he was sent into one of the Echinadian islands, where he passed his days in security and peace.

Not long afterwards, a Daunian of obscure birth but of a daring and violent spirit, whose name was Dioscorus, came into the camp of the allies by night, and offered to assassinate Adrastus in his tent: this offer it was in his power to make good; for, whoever despises his own life, can command that of another. Dioscorus had no wish, but for revenge; Adrastus had forcibly taken away his wife, whom he loved to distraction, and who was equal in beauty to Venus herself; and he had determined either to kill the tyrant, and recover his wife, or perish in the attempt. He had received secret instructions how to enter the tent in the night; and had learnt, that his enterprise would be favoured by many officers in the service: but he thought it would also be necessary, that the allies should attack the camp at the same time; as the

cluyó Telémaco, que tal vez no se hallaba culpado. Viendo al fin que no le era posible sacarle la verdad del corazón: Dadme, le dixo, vuestro anillo que le quiero despachar á Adrasto. Demudóse Acante á esta petición y quedó confuso. Advertiólo Telémaco, que siempre le miraba fixamente, y le tomó al instante el anillo. Ahora mismo, le dixo, le remito á Adrasto: llevará-selo un Lucano advertido, llamado, Politropio, que vos conoceis bien; y dará á entender que va allá con secreto de vuestra parte. Si por este camino podemos descubrir vuestra inteligencia con Adrasto, se os hará morir sin piedad con los mas atroces tormentos; pero si al contrario confesais vuestra culpa ahora, se os perdonará, y nos contentaremos con enviaros á una isla del mar, donde no dexaremos que os falte cosa. Acante entónces lo confesó todo; Telémaco alcanzó de los reyes que le concedieran la vida, que él ántes le habia ofrecido. Fué pues despachado el traidor á una de las islas Equinades, en donde pasó con sosiego el resto de su vida.

Pasado breve tiempo, un Dauno de baxo linage, pero de un espíritu violento y atrevido que se llamaba Dióscoro, vino de noche al campo de los aliados, para ofrecerles degollar á Adrasto en su tienda; y bien podía hacerlo, porque quien no hace aprecio de su vida, es dueño de las ajenas. Respiraba sangre y venganza, porque Adrasto le habia robado la muger, á quien él amaba perdidamente, y que en hermosura igualaba á la misma Venus. Habia resuelto morir, ó matar á Adrasto recobrando á su muger. Tenia Dióscoro secreta inteligencia para entrar de noche en la tienda del Rey, y para ser ayudado de muchos capitanes de los Daunos en la execucion de su intento; pero tenia por necesario, que al mismo tiempo fuese atacado el campo de Adrasto del ejército de los coligados, para poder salvarse en la confusion, y recobrar su muger; porque

confusion would facilitate his escape, and afford him a fairer opportunity to carry off his wife.

As soon as this man had made the confederate princes acquainted with his design, they turned towards Telemachus, as referring implicitly to his decision

« The gods, » said he, « who have preserved us from traitors, forbid us to employ them. It would be our interest to reject treachery, if we had not sufficient virtue to detest it: if we should once practise it against others, our example would justify others in the practice of it against us: and then, who among us will be safe? If Adrastus should avoid the mischief that threatens him, it will recoil upon ourselves; the nature of war will be changed; military skill and heroic virtue will have no object; and we shall see nothing but perfidy, treason, and assassination: we shall ourselves experience their fatal effects; and deserve to suffer every evil, to which we have given sanction by our practice. I am, therefore, of opinion, that we ought to send back this traitor to Adrastus; not for his sake, indeed; but the eyes of all Hesperia, and of all Greece are upon us, and we owe this testimony of our abhorrence of perfidy to them, and to ourselves; we owe it also to the gods, for the gods are just. »

Dioscorus was accordingly sent away to Adrastus, who trembled at the review of his danger, and was beyond expression amazed at the generosity of his enemies; for the wicked have no idea of disinterested virtue: he contemplated what had happened with admiration, and a secret and involuntary praise; but he did not dare to applaud it openly; being conscious that it would condemn himself; it brought into his mind the fraud and cruelty he had practised, with a painful sense both of guilt and shame. He endeavoured to account for appearances, without imputing to his enemies such virtue as he could not emulate; and while he felt himself indebted to them for his life, he could not think of ingratitude without compunction; but, in those who are habitually wicked, remorse is

si no podia recobrarla, estaba contento con perder la vida tambien.

Al punto que él descubrió su intencion á los reyes confederados, se volviéron todos acia el hijo de Ulises, como para pedirle la decision.

Los dioses, les dixo Telémaco, que nos han preservado de traidores, nos vedan que nos sirvamos de ellos. Aun quando no tuviéramos virtud bastante para detestar la traicion, bastaría para no admitirla la consideracion sola de nuestro propio interés, luego que la hubieremos autorizado con nuestro exemplo, merecerémos que se vuelva contra nosotros. De aquí en adelante, ¿Quién habrá de nosotros que pueda vivir seguro? Bien podrá Adrasto evitar el golpe que le amenaza, y hacerle desconfiar sobre las cabezas de los reyes aliados: la guerra no será ya guerra: no se usará ya mas de la prudencia y de la virtud, y no se verá otro que perfidías, que asesinamientos, y que traiciones. Concluyo pues, que conviene remitir el traidor á Adrasto. Confieso que no lo merece el impio Rey, pero toda la Hesperia, y Grecia, que atentamente nos miran, merecen que tengamos este porte, para adquirirnos su aprecio. De semejante modo hemos de obrar por respeto á nosotros mismos; y finalmente por respeto á los justos dioses, debemos teher un tal aborrecimiento á la perfidia de los traidores.

Fué luego Dióscoro remitido á Adrasto, que horroizado todo con el riesgo, en que habia estado no podia bastantemente admirarse de la generosidad de sus enemigos; porque no pueden los malvados ni figurarse, ni comprehender una pura virtud. Admirabáse Adrasto, a su pesar, de lo que entonces él mismo veía, y no se atrevia á alabar. Esta accion noble de los coligados traía á su memoria con vergüenza todas las fraudes, y todas las crueldades por él executadas: procuraba disminuir el crédito á la generosidad de su enemigo, y avergonzabase de parecer ingrato, mientras que le debia la vida. Pero los hombres malvados se endurecen presto contra todo lo que pudiera vencer la obstinacion de sus corazones. Viendo Adrasto crecer de dia en dia la reputacion de los aliados, juzgó ser

of short duration. Adrastus, who saw the reputation of the allies perpetually increase, thought it absolutely necessary to attempt something of importance against them immediately: as he found they must of necessity foil him in virtue, he could only hope to gain the advantage of them in arms; and therefore prepared to give them battle without delay.

The day of action arrived; and Aurora had scarce strewed her roses in the path of the sun, and thrown open the gates of the east before him, when Telemachus, anticipating the vigilance of experience and age, broke from the soft embraces of sleep, and put all the commanders in motion. His morion, covered with horse-hair that floated in the wind, already glittered upon his head: his cuirass diffused a new sun-shine upon the plain; and his shield, the work of Vulcan, besides its natural beauty, shone with a divine effulgence, which it derived from the ægis of Minerva that was concealed under it, in one hand he held a lance, and, with the other, he pointed out the posts which the several divisions of the army were to occupy.

Minerva had given a fire to his eye that was more than human, and animated his countenance with an expression of awful majesty, that seemed to be an earnest of victory. He marched, and all the princes of the confederacy, forgetting their dignity and their age, followed him by an irresistible impulse; their hearts were inaccessible even to envy; and every one yielded, with a spontaneous obedience, to him, who was under the immediate but invisible conduct of Minerva. There was now nothing impetuous or precipitate in his deportment; he possessed himself, with the most placid tranquillity, and condescending patience; he was ready to hear every opinion, and to improve every hint: but he shewed also the greatest activity, vigilance, and foresight; he provided against the remotest contingencies; he was neither disconcerted himself, nor disconcerted others; he excused all mistakes, regulated all that was amiss, and obviated difficulties even in their causes, before they could take effect: he exacted no unreasonable service, he left every man at liberty, and enjoyed every man's confidence.

necesario hacer alguna accion señalada contra ellos; y como no podia executar alguna que fuera virtuosa, quiso á lo ménos alcanzar con las armas alguna gran venganza, y se dió priesa para pelear.

Habiendo ya llegado el día de la batalla, apenas pareció en el oriente la roxa aurora, precursora del sol, quando el jóven Telémaco, previniendo su diligencia al desvelo de los capitanes mas veteranos, se levantó temprano, é hizo igualmente que todos los oficiales se pusieran á punto de cumplir con su obligacion. Ya resplandecia en su cabeza el yelmo, cubierto todo de trémulos penachos, y la coraza de que iba guarnecido, deslumbraba los ojos del ejército que la miraba. El escudo labrado de Vulcano, tenia, á mas de su natural hermosura, el resplandor de la Egide que se ocultaba en él. Tenia en una mano la lanza: señalaba con la otra diferentes puestos que convenia ocupar.

Hábale Minerva derramado en los ojos una divina luz, y en el semblante una majestad feroz, que ántes de tiempo prometia ya la victoria. Abanzábanse, y todos los reyes olvidándose de su edad y grado, se sentian tirar de una superior fuerza que les obligaba á seguirle. No podian ya entrar en les corazones los villanos zelos: ya todo cede á Telémaco, á quien sin ser sentida guia de la mano Minerva. Su porte no tenia cosa inconsiderada, ó impetuosa: era agradable, sosegado, paciente, pronto siempre para oir á los otros, y para aprovecharse de sus consejos; pero juntamente era activo, pródigo, atento á reparar las mas remotas urgencias: disponia oportunamente todas las cosas: no se descomponia por nada, y ménos confundia á los demas: excusaba las faltas, remediaba los yerros, prevenia las dificultades; nunca pedia á nadie cosas imposibles; é inspiraba á todos una denodada franqueza, y suma confianza.

When he gave an order, he expressed himself with the greatest plainness and perspicuity; he repeated it, to assist the apprehension and memory of those that were to execute it; he consulted their looks while he was speaking, to know whether he was perfectly understood, and he made them express their sense of his orders in their own words. When he had satisfied himself of the abilities of the persons he employed, and perceived that they perfectly entered into his views, he never dismissed them without some mark of his esteem and confidence; every one, therefore, that was engaged in the execution of his designs, was interested in the success? from a principle of love to their commander; whom they wished, more than all things, to please. Nor was their activity restrained, by the fear of having misfortune imputed to them as a fault: for he blamed none that were unsuccessful even by mistake, if their intentions appeared to have been good.

The first rays of the sun now tinged the horizon with a glowing red, and the sea sparkled with the reflected fires of the rising day: the plain was thronged with men and arms, and horses and chariots were every where in motion. An almost infinite variety of sounds produced a loud but hoarse noise, like that of the sea, when a mighty tempest, at the command of Neptune, moves the world of waters to its foundation; and Mars, by the din of arms, and the dreadful apparatus of war, began to scatter the seeds of rage in every breast. Spears stood erect in the field as thick as corn, that hides the furrows of the plough in autumn; a cloud of dust rose in the air, which hid both heaven and earth, by degrees, from the sight of man; and inexorable death advanced, with confusion, horror, and carnage in his train.

The moment the first flight of arrows was discharged, Telemachus, lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, pronounced these words:

« O Jupiter, father both of gods and men! Thou seest justice on our side; and peace, which we have not been ashamed to seek: we draw the sword with reluctance; and would spare the blood of man. Against

Si daba un orden, usaba de los términos mas llanos y mas claros: volvía otra vez á repetirlo, para darlo á entender mejor á quien lo habia de executar: descubriale por los ojos, si habia bien comprehendido su sentimiento: despues se hacia familiarmente explicar, cómo habia entendido sus palabras, y el principal intento de lo que se debia efectuar.

Habiendo hecho esta prueba de la buena inteligencia de aquel á quien él despachaba, para poner en obra sus designios, y habiéndole hecho comprehender su intencion, no le dexaba partir, sino habiéndole dado alguna señal de estima, y habiéndole mostrado tener buena opinion de su talento para animarlo. Así todos aquellos á quienes él enviaba á executar algo, se empeñaban con todo zelo por darle gusto, y por conducir á buen fin la empresa: mas no tenían miedo que él imputaría á culpa suya el mal suceso de la cosa que les encomendaba; porque escusaba Telémaco todos los yerros que no se originaban de malicia.

Bermejeaba ya el orizonte, inflamado con los rayos primeros del sol, y estaba lleno el mar de la luz del día que despuntaba. Toda la playa estaba cubierta de hombres de armas, de caballos y de carros que estaban en movimiento, y oíase en todas partes cierto rumor confuso, como el de las ondas furiosas: quando Neptuno mueve en el mas hondo seno del mar las desapoderadas borrascas. Así comenzaba la guerra á mover el enojo en los corazones de todos en el estruendo de las armas, y con la prevencion horrorosa de la batalla. Toda la campaña se miraba llena de espesas picas, como las espigas que cubren las tierras fecundas en el tiempo de la cosecha. Levantábase ya una nube de polvo, que hacia poco á poco perder de vista tierra, y cielo; y ya las sombras, el horror, el estrago, y la cruel muerte, empezaban á aparecer.

Apénas se arrojaron las primeras flechas, quando levantando Telémaco los ojos, y las manos al cielo, hizo esta humilde oracion:

O Júpiter, padre de los dioses, y de los hombres, veis bien de nuestra parte la justicia y la paz, que no hemos tenido vergüenza de pedir. Nosotros peleamos con disgusto, porque quisieramos ser piadosos con los