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SELECTIONS

FROM THE

CHORIC POETRY

OF THE

GREEK DRAMATIC WRITERS.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE,

BY

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#### ARGUMENT.

THE capture of Troy having been announced by beacons to Clytæmnestra at Argos, she commands offerings to be made on the altars of all the Gods. The Chorus, consisting of Argive old men, still ignorant of the cause of these offerings, describe the departure of the Grecian armament, and affirm the inevitable certainty of Divine Retribution: they lament their own unfitness for war; inquire the meaning of the sacrificial fires which are kindled; detail the ominous appearance of two Eagles to the Atridæ, and the interpretation of it given by Calchas, who predicted the ultimate success of the expedition; but warned the chieftains that they would be exposed to the wrath of Diana. They address Jove, and reflect on the necessity of moral discipline; relate the detention of the Fleet at Aulis, and the consequent sacrifice of Iphigenia by Agamemnon; and conclude by expressing their determination to leave to Heaven the direction of the event.



NINE weary years are more than spent,  
 Since royal Menelaus went,  
 On fatal suit with Priam bent,  
 And Agamemnon's armament  
     Joined to redress his wrong ;  
 Atridæ both, and each a King  
 From Jove his throne inheriting,  
 A thousand proud ships mustering,  
     They led the martial throng :  
 Screaming havoc from afar,  
 Eager flew the chiefs to war.

So, when bereaved the vultures ply  
 Their oary<sup>1</sup> wings athwart the sky,

---

(<sup>1</sup>) The different nautical systems of the ancients and moderns have caused a difference in their expressions, when a body passing through the air is compared to a vessel cleaving the water. Among the ancients, the motion of the wings of a bird is illustrated in general by that of oars; while modern poets generally liken it to that of sails. Thus Spenser, *Faery Queene*, I. xi. 10.

“ His flagging wings when forth he did display,  
 Were like two sails.”

Is heard beneath their piercing cry,  
 In circles wheeling as they fly<sup>2</sup>  
     Their nest above,  
 Where, till the plunderer dared intrude,  
 They watched and fed their callow brood  
     In patient love.  
 Those shrilly shrieks of bitter wail  
 With Phœbus, Pan, or Jove prevail;  
 The avenging Fury forth they send,  
 Those exiled nestlings to befriend,  
 True to redress the orphan's wrong,  
 Retributive at length, though haply lingering long.<sup>3</sup>

And Milton :

————— “ A fiery globe  
 Of Angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,  
 Who on their plumy vans received him soft.”  
*Par. Reg.* IV. 581.

(<sup>2</sup>) “ The wheeling Kite's wild, solitary cry.”

KEBLE'S *Christian Year*.

Compare the following Extract from an Ornithological Tour to the Islands of Shetland and Orkney (*Magazine of Natural History*, May 1831) :

“ There are, however, a pair or two of the peregrine falcon that repair annually to the island for the purpose of breeding; building in the most inaccessible places, which are only to be gained by the best and ablest rocksmen; and even then it is very uncertain if the nest can be discovered; the old bird always taking flight upon the first appearance of danger, and wheeling in circles over the fowler's head, uttering at intervals the peculiar cry of the falcon tribe, which she continues to do until he leaves the crags.”

(<sup>3</sup>) Compare the ancient proverb, “ The mill of God grinds late, but grinds to powder;” and the well-known lines of Horace,

“ Raro antecedentem scelestum  
 Deseruit pede Pœna Claudio.”—*Carm.* III. 2. 31.

The

Thus Jove, whose guardian eye on earth  
 Protects the hospitable hearth,  
 The crime of Paris to pursue,  
 Hath bid the Atridæ lead their crew :  
 And, while they claim, mid war's alarms,  
 A faithless woman's oft-wooed charms,  
 To either troop his laws ordain  
 Wrestlings and weariness and pain,  
 The toil-bowed limb, the shivered lance,  
 When warriors to the charge advance,  
 Or rest, to stem the foeman's thrust,  
 Their fainting knees in Trojan dust.

The flying sinner, doomed to woe,  
 The Fury still can trace ;  
 Though limping be her step and slow,  
 She will not quit the chase.

See also a very curious passage in the Choephoræ of Æschylus, which would be still more valuable if the proper reading could be throughout accurately ascertained: that here given is Professor Scholefield's, which is however by no means satisfactory.

ἔθιγε δ' ἐν μάχῃ χερὸς ἐτήτυμος  
 Διὸς κόρα—Δίκαν δέ νιν  
 προσαγορεύομεν  
 βροτοὶ τυχόντες καλῶς—  
 ὀλέθριον πνέουσ' ἐν ἔχθροῖς κότον·  
 τάνπερ ὁ Λοξίας, ὁ Παρνάσιος,  
 μέγαν ἔχων μυχὸν χθόνος, ἐχθροξέναν,  
 ἀδόλως δουλίαν,  
 βλαπτομένων, χρονισ-  
 θεῖσαν, ἐποίχεται.  
 κρυτεῖται πως τὸ θεῖον παρὰ τὸ μὴ  
 ὑπουργεῖν κακοῖς.

Daughter of Jove, with certain hand,  
 Fell Justice wields the fatal brand;

(Such

The present hour alone we see,  
 The future's shaped by Fate's decree.  
 Ye in secret tears may pine,  
     Vain the suppliant sob of grief;  
 Ye may pour the sparkling wine,  
     Shall libations yield relief?  
 Not thus appeased the anger dies,  
 That waits on slighted sacrifice.<sup>4</sup>

Withered age was little prized;  
 Chiefs our worthless aid despised;  
 All unmeet for warlike toil,  
 We were left on Argive soil,

---

(Such title meet by men is given,  
 To designate that maid of heaven)  
 Upon her foes her blasting breath  
 She sheds, the minister of death.  
 The God, whose steps Parnassus bless,  
 Or tread the mighty cave's recess,  
     Bids her go forth to slay;  
 Limping and lingering long, but sure,  
 And wily, though for purpose pure;  
 Not hospitality can lure

    The huntress from her prey.  
 E'en the Divinity we find  
 Compelled by strange, superior sway,  
 Mysterious mandates, that can bind  
 E'en Gods to own them and obey.  
 They dare not sinners to befriend,  
 Nor sheltering aid to foul transgressors lend.

(<sup>4</sup>) This interpretation seems sufficiently established by the Bishop of London; that adopted by Professor Scholefield and some other commentators may be thus rendered:

Not thus are soothed the sisters dire,  
 Whose altars never gleam with fire.

There, with feebleness opprest,  
 On the friendly staff to rest.  
 Childhood's strength alone is ours ;  
 Ere expand the youthful powers,  
 Shrined within the bosom's cell  
 Mars will never deign to dwell.  
 When the leaf of life is sere,<sup>5</sup>  
 Age as weakly wields the spear,

(<sup>5</sup>) ————— “ My way of life  
 Is fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf.”  
 SHAKESPEARE. *Macbeth*.

“ What cold again is able to restore  
 My fresh greene yeares, that wither thus and fade ? ”  
 LORD SURREY.

As the decline of life is here compared to the withering of the leaf in autumn, so in Homer is the passing away of generations to its fall in winter :

οἷη περ φύλλων γενεή, τοιήδε καὶ ἀνδρῶν.  
 φύλλα τὰ μὲν τ' ἄνεμος χαμάδις χέει, ἄλλα δὲ θ' ὕλη  
 τηλεθόωσα φύει· ἔαρος δ' ἐπιγιγνεται ὥρη.  
 ὡς ἀνδρῶν γενεή, ἣ μὲν φύει, ἣ δ' ἀπολήγει.

As that of leaves upon the tree,  
 Such is thy course, Humanity !  
 The leaves—on earth the blast strews some,—  
 The budding wood bids others come ;  
 New life the spring-tide hour supplies,  
 And sees a second race arise :  
 So are man's generations fleeting,  
 And one is born, while one's retreating.

The same simile occurs in the following passage from the Méditations Poétiques of Lamartine :

“ Mais toujours repasser par une même route,  
 Voir ses jours épuisés s'écouler goutte à goutte ;  
 Mais suivre pas à pas dans l'immense troupeau,  
 Ces générations, inutile fardeau,  
 Qui meurent pour mourir, qui vécutent pour vivre,  
 Et dont chaque printemps la terre se délivre,

Comme

Age, no more in battle strong,  
Creeps on borrowed stay along,<sup>6</sup>

Comme dans nos forêts, le chêne avec mépris,  
Livre aux vents des hivers ses feuillages flétris ;  
Sans regrets, sans espoir, avancer dans la vie,  
Comme un vaisseau qui dort sur une onde assoupie ;  
Sentir son âme usée en impuissant effort,  
Se ronger lentement sous la rouille du sort ;  
Penser sans découvrir, aspirer sans atteindre,  
Briller sans éclairer, et pâlir sans s'eteindre :  
Hélas ! tel est mon sort et celui des humains."

Along the self-same track for aye to stray,  
To see one's days waste drop by drop away,  
To follow, step by step, the countless train  
Of generations burdening earth in vain,  
Who live but to exist, who die to rest,  
Of whom, each spring, earth rids her weary breast,  
E'en as the forest oak disdainful casts  
His withered foliage to the wintry blasts,  
Onward without regret or hope to creep,  
Like vessel slumbering on a drowsy deep,  
To feel one's spirit toil, yet nought advance,  
Corroded slowly by the rust of chance,  
Muse, but not solve, aspire, but ever fail,  
A ray not clear when bright, nor quenched though pale,—  
This lot, not I alone, but all mankind must wail.

(<sup>6</sup>) Literally, "on three feet." So Sackville, in his description of old age :

"Crooke-backt he was, tooth-shaken and blear-eyed,  
Went on three feet, and sometimes crept on fower—"

*Induction to the Mirror of Magistrates.*

The allusion is to the riddle proposed by the Sphynx to the inhabitants of Thebes, and solved by Œdipus :

Ἔστι δίπουν ἐπὶ γῆς καὶ τέτραπον, οὗ μία φωνή,  
καὶ τρίπον· ἀλλάσσει δὲ φνὴν μόνον, ὅσσ' ἐπὶ γαῖαν  
ἐρπετὰ κινεῖται, ἀνά τ' αἰθέρα καὶ κατὰ πόντον.  
ἀλλ' ὅπῳταν πλείστοισιν ἐπειγόμενον ποσὶ βαίῃη,  
ἔνθα τάχος γυίοισιν ἀφαιρότατον πέλει αὐτοῦ.

There

Doting in its last decay,  
Shadowy dream that stalks by day.<sup>7</sup>

There is a creature, wont to go  
Upon four feet, and three, and two,  
Its cry in every state the same.  
Can earth, or air, or ocean name,  
From every kind that through them ranges,  
A single one that, like this, changes?  
To make the prodigy complete,  
'Tis slowest when it has most feet.

## THE ANSWER.

Κλῦθι, καὶ οὐκ ἐθέλουσα, κακόπτερε Μοῦσα θανόντων,  
φωνῆς ἡμετέρης σὸν τέλος ἀμπλακίης.  
ἄνθρωπον κατέλεξας, ὅς, ἠνίκα γαῖαν ἐφέρπει,  
πρῶτον ἔφυ τετράπους νήπιος ἐκ λαγόνων·  
γηραλέος δὲ πέλωνι, τρίτατον πόδα, βάκτρον ἐρείδει,  
αὐχένα φορτίζων, γήρυϊ καμπτόμενος.

List, Muse of evil pinion,  
Unwilling, while I tell,  
That fallen is thy dominion;  
I can thy riddle spell.  
On man thy mind was musing,  
Who, ere erect he stands,  
Crawls on earth's bosom, using  
As feet his tiny hands.  
Age, bowed with years and sorrows,  
His limbs on staff must stay;  
Another foot he borrows  
To aid him on his way.

(7) In Eurip. Phœn. 1531. Œdipus replies to Antigone :

τί μ', ὦ παρθένε, βακτρεύμασι τυ-  
φλοῦ ποδὸς ἐξάγαγες εἰς φῶς  
λεχθήρη σκοτίων ἐκ θαλάμων  
οἰκτροτάτοισιν δακρύοισιν,  
πολιὸν αἰθέρος τ' ἀφανὲς εἶδωλον, ἢ  
νέκυν ἔνερθεν, ἢ  
πτανὸν ὄνειρον;

Say, Clytæmnestra, wherefore thus,  
Thou queenly child of Tyndarus,  
Moved by what recent voice of fame,  
Thy Heralds bid the altars flame?  
On every shrine their gifts bestow  
Of Gods above us and below,  
Who dwell beyond our mortal ken,  
Or mingle in the haunts of men,  
And ever stretch their sheltering arm,  
Our city to protect from harm?  
From each to each the signal spreads,  
The welkin flashes o'er our heads  
    With fires that mount in turn;  
Long hath in regal cells been stored  
The incense pure, now gently poured,  
    To bid them clearly burn.  
Oh! if thou mayst the tale declare,  
Why thus the kindled altars glare,  
    Restore my soul to rest;  
Now bodes it ill, now Hope's fond smile  
Bids heart-corroding cares awhile  
    Be banished from my breast.

---

Why hast thou called me forth to day,  
While ill these darkling steps I stay?  
Why summoned me, with wail of woe,  
From murky cell and pallet low?  
With time and grief my hair is white;  
Like airy ghost that mocks the sight  
This weary, withered form must seem,  
Or pallid corpse, or winged dream.



List, while the favouring sign I tell,  
 That erst our journeying host befell,  
     Its leaders sent to cheer ;  
 For still my years can strength supply  
 For breath of heaven-taught poesy,  
     Congenial art and dear.

Severed in empire, one in soul,  
 And swaying Greece with joint controul,  
     Forth are the Atridæ gone ;  
 And many a spear and hand of might  
 Is marshalled with them for the fight ;  
     Nor these are there alone ;  
 The bird is nigh of rapid pinion,  
 The Eagle,<sup>8</sup> to whose proud dominion  
     Quail all the fowls that fly ;

(<sup>8</sup>) In Chaucer's *Assembly of Fowls*, the Goddess Nature, in addressing the birds, speaks of

“ The tercell Egle, as ye know full well,  
 The foule royall, above you all in degre.”

See also Massinger :

“ Queen of the inhabitants of the air,  
 The Eagle that bears thunder on her wings.”

*Great Duke of Florence.* Act IV. Sc. 2.

In Dunbar's *Rose and Thistle*, Kind or Nature is represented as crowning the Eagle, King of Birds.

The origin of the supremacy of the Eagle is thus related by Myro.—(Ed. Giles.)

Ζεὺς δ' ἄρ' ἐνὶ Κρήτῃ τρέφετο μέγας, οὐδ' ἄρα τίς νιν  
 ἠήδει μακάρων· ὁ δ' ἀέξετο πᾶσι μέλεσσι,  
 τὸν μὲν ἄρα τρήρωνες ὑπὸ ζαθέφ τρέφον ἄντρα,

ἀμβροσίαι·

Before the rulers of the fleet  
 Conspicuous sit, an emblem meet,  
     Twin rulers of the sky.  
 One is jet black ;—a circlet pale  
 Surrounds his fellow's spreading tail  
     With plumes of silvery hue ;  
 Their prey between their claws they tear,  
 The quarry is a pregnant hare,  
     That, as it ran, they slew ;  
 And many a mangled young one died,  
 Torn from its teeming mother's side :

*ἀμβροσίαν φορέουσαι ἀπ' Ὠκεανοῦ ῥοάων.  
 νέκταρ δ' ἐκ πέτρας μέγας αἰετὸς αἰὲν ἀφύσσων,  
 γαμφηλῇ φορέεσκε ποτὸν Διὶ μητιόεντι.  
 τὸν καὶ, νικήσας πατέρα Κρόνον, εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς  
 ἀθάνατον ποίησε, καὶ οὐρανῷ ἐγκατέμισσεν·  
 ὡς δ' αὐτῶς τρήρωσι πελειάσιν ὠπασε τιμὰν,  
 αἱ δὴ τοι θέρεος καὶ χείματος ἀγγελοὶ εἶσι.*

Within the Cretan cavern's shade  
 The infant heir of heaven was laid ;  
     No God the secret knew ;  
 There waxed in strength each boyish limb ;  
 From ocean's streams, the doves for him  
     With sweet ambrosia flew.  
 The mighty eagle nectar quaffed  
 From some tall cliff, and bore the draught,  
     His vigour to renew.  
 When Saturn fell, on that proud bird  
 Jove immortality conferred,  
     And to the skies translated ;  
 The doves, though still confined below,  
     His heralds he created ;  
 And bade them by their wanderings show  
     Whence seasons should be dated.

Hard by the halls of regal state,  
 Upon the spear-hand perched they wait.  
 Greece awhile must weep and wail ;<sup>9</sup>  
 May the right at last prevail !  
 The Seer upon the Atridæ turns ;  
 With glance prophetic he discerns  
     The vision's import clear ;  
 The Eagles, by their varying tint,  
 He deems of either chieftain hint  
     The different character.  
 Then thus he speaks : " The host you lead  
 " Shall against Priam's town succeed,  
     " In heaven's appointed hour ;

---

(9) In the original it is, " Sing ah ! Linus ! ah ! Linus ! but may the good prevail." Linus is said to have been a son of Urania, who was torn in pieces by shepherds' dogs ; his fate was a constant theme of lamentation ; and the expression *αἴλινον*, *αἴλινον*, Ah ! Linus ! ah ! Linus ! which was probably the burden of his dirge, was used proverbially to designate any melancholy song. He is mentioned in a fragment of Hesiod :

*Οὐρανίη δ' ἄρ' ἔτικτε Λίνον πολήρατον νιόν,  
 ὅν δὴ ὕσοι βροτοί εἰσιν ἀοιδοὶ καὶ κιθαριστὰι  
 πάντες μὲν θρηνοῦσιν ἐν εἰλαπίνας τε χοροῖς τε,  
 ἀρχόμενοι δὲ Λίνου καὶ λήγοντες καλέουσι.*

On Linus erst Urania smiled,  
 Fair mother of a lovely child ;  
 But now alone to him belong  
 The bard's lament, the minstrel's song ;  
 Where dance and feast are sparkling gay,  
 His is the melancholy lay ;  
 Ere they begin, and when they close,  
 They call on Linus' name, they tell of Linus' woes.

“ But first must Fate the treasures drain,  
“ Now stored throughout your rich domain  
    “ In many an ancient tower.  
“ Yet tremble, lest some God should frown,  
“ While on your army gazing down ;  
    “ For scarce may Dian love,  
“ Though Ilion’s curb, the proud array  
“ Of those whose types are birds of prey,  
    “ The winged hounds of Jove ;  
“ She for the timid hare will mourn,  
“ Slain with its litter yet unborn ;  
“ She guards the offspring of the wood,  
“ She loathes the Eagle’s feast of blood.  
“ Greece awhile must weep and wail ;  
“ May the right at last prevail.  
“ Since fair Diana lends her help,  
“ To shield the Lion’s tender whelp,  
    “ The suckling cub to save ;  
“ Since all she tends with fostering care,  
“ That make amid the fields their lair,  
    “ Meekly her pardon crave !  
“ May she avert whate’er of ill  
“ Those birds forebode !—may she fulfil  
    “ The blessings they portend !  
“ Apollo ! let thine accents plead,  
“ And with thy sister intercede  
    “ No adverse blast to send.  
“ I tremble, lest her wrath detain  
“ Our fleet from bounding o’er the main,

“ And lawless sacrifice ordain,  
 “ Not for the festal banquet slain,  
     “ But fraught with other doom,  
 “ Artificer of kindred strife,  
 “ And severing from her Lord the wife,  
     “ And bidding Vengeance come.  
 “ Wrath for a slaughtered child shall yearn,  
     “ And mindful still, in after time,  
 “ Rebounding, shall destroy in turn  
     “ The author of the crime;  
 “ And, Mistress of the dome, prepare  
 “ To quench her fierce desire, to lay her deep-  
     planned snare!”

Such the ills by Fate foreshown,  
 From its winged heralds known,  
 Doomed in future hour to fall,  
 Argos, on thy monarch's hall,  
 Mixed with blessings' choicest store,  
 Calchas prophesied of yore.  
 We his fears and hopes will share,  
 Pour the dirge, yet breathe the prayer,  
 “ Greece awhile must weep and wail;  
 “ May the right at last prevail.”

Jove! the race that dwell below,  
 Little of thy nature know;  
 Yet if thou wilt list to us,  
 Willing that we name thee thus,

Soothe my soul, that, pondering well,  
 Deems that none save thee can tell,  
 If securely it may throw  
 From its thoughts the load of woe.  
 He<sup>10</sup>, whose emblem well might be  
 Springing fount, or budding tree,

(<sup>10</sup>) This is not the only passage in Æschylus, in which he refers to the dynasties which had preceded that of Jove; in the Prometheus, the hero replies to Mercury, who had been sent to him from Jove:

Νέον νέοι κρατεῖτε, καὶ δοκεῖτε δὴ  
 ναίειν ἀπενθῆ πέργαμ'· οὐκ ἐκ τῶνδ' ἐγὼ  
 δισσοὺς τυράννοῦς ἐκπεσόντας ἠσθόμην;  
 τρίτον δὲ τὸν νῦν κοιρανοῦντ' ἐπόψομαι  
 αἰσχιστὰ καὶ τάχιστα.

Youthful, and young in power, ye think forsooth  
 To dwell unscathed within heaven's battlements;  
 Have I not seen two Tyrants thence cast down?  
 I shall behold the third, who now is Lord,  
 Meet with a quicker and a fouler fall!

It seems universally allowed, that the dynasty immediately preceding that of Jove, was Saturn's: who was expelled by Saturn is a point less agreed on; some say that Uranus and Ge (Heaven and Earth) first ruled; others ascribe original dominion to Ophion and Eurynome; in allusion to this tradition, Milton says of the fallen Angels:

—“Some tradition they dispersed

Among the heathen, of their purchase got,  
 And fabled how the Serpent, whom they call  
 Ophion, with Eurynome, the wide  
 Encroaching Eve perhaps, had first the rule  
 Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driven,  
 And Ops, ere yet Dictæan Jove was born.”

*Par. Lost. X. 578.*

This is the Mythology of Apollonius Rhodius:

Ἦειδεν δ' ὡς πρῶτον Ὀφίων Εὐρυνόμη τε  
 Ὀκειανὶς νιφόεντος ἔχου κράτος Οὐλύμπου.

ὥστε

Bold in battle, Lord of Heaven,  
 From his starry throne was driven :  
 Once he was ; now past away,  
 Hushed his boast, and sunk his sway.  
 He, who next on high was set,  
 Found a rival stronger yet ;  
 In the wrestling overthrown  
 Saturn's dynasty is gone.  
 Wisest he, who hymns to thee,  
 Jove, the song of victory !  
 Thou to Wisdom's fair abode  
 Leadest man thy rugged road,  
 Till he own thy wholesome rule :  
 All must learn in suffering's school.

*ὥστε βίη καὶ χερσίν, ὃ μὲν Κρόνος εἴκαθε τιμῆς,  
 ἢ δὲ ῥέη' ἔπεσον δ' ἐνὶ κύμασιν Ὀκεανῶν.  
 οἱ δὲ τέως μακάρεσσι θεοῖς Τιτῆσιν ἀνασσόν,  
 ὄφρα Ζεὺς ἔτι κοῦρος ἔτι φρεσὶ νήπια εἰδὼς  
 Δικταῖον ναίεσκεν ὑπὸ σπέος.*

First (they sung) Ophion's own  
 Was Olympus' starry throne ;  
 Daughter of the azure sea,  
 Shared his sway Eurynome :  
 He to Saturn quailed in fight ;  
 She acknowledged Rhea's might ;  
 Ocean to the vanquished gave  
 Refuge underneath his wave.  
 To the victor's bidding proud,  
 Titans, happy spirits, bowed ;  
 'Neath Dictæan cavern's shade,  
 Jove, an infant yet, was laid,  
 Ere his childhood caught the gleam  
 Of Ambition's after-dream.

E'en in sleep, pangs felt before,  
Treasured long in memory's store,  
Bring in visions back their pain,  
Melt into the heart again,  
By its crossed affections taught  
Chastened will and sobered thought:  
Thus is man, by sorrow's rod,  
Forced to bow his pride to God.

The Leader of the Grecian fleet,  
Thus by experience taught, resigned  
His will to Fortune's stroke unkind,  
Nor blamed the prescient Sage ;  
With Fate unable to compete,  
He calmed his stormy rage :  
While, gazing oft where Chalcis stood  
Across the frequent-ebbing flood,  
The host in Aulis lay :  
Ignoble leisure loathed the brave ;  
Keen blew those blasts from Strymon's wave,  
That sailors oft dismay,  
That drive the ship from port afar,  
Nor leave unseathed or rope or spar :  
With these pale Famine joined to mar  
The wasting flower of Grecian war.

But when by that reluctant Seer,  
Who pleaded Dian's will,  
Was taught the remedy of ill  
More than that ill severe.



The Atridæ heard the fatal sound ;  
 They struck their sceptres on the ground,  
 The tears they laboured to restrain  
 Gushed forth, and told each hero's pain. }  
 First spake the elder of the twain :

“ An evil lot is mine to choose,

“ Hard fate obedience to refuse,

    “ Hard fate to slay my child,

“ My home's bright ornament and pride ;

“ 'Twere hard if at the altar's side

“ A Father's hand were crimson dyed,

    “ With virgin gore defiled :

“ Still, to whichever part I lean,

“ Is sorrow's threatening aspect seen !

“ How may I leave my true allies ?

    “ How quit the host I lead ?

“ To lay the storm, and calm the skies,

“ They well may claim the sacrifice ;

    “ They well may bid her bleed !”

He spoke :—to heaven's control he bowed,

Like veering wind, his spirit proud,

Soon as fate's harness he had donned,

Was instant changed to fierce from fond ;

Nor more from passion's blast secure

Was all that's holy, all that's pure.

    The heart, once plotting foul offence,

    Once lent to evil rede,

    Soon gathers frantic confidence,

    Soon ventures desperate deed :

Reason to wildest zeal gave way;  
 He summoned strength his child to slay,  
 Victim, to loose his fleet, and aid  
 War to avenge a woman made.  
 Her piteous cries, her tender age,  
 In love with war those chieftains sage  
     But lightly recked of there;  
 Her father's self but little heeded  
 His own dear name, so softly pleaded,  
     But bade them breathe the prayer.  
 Like kid they lift her from the ground,  
 Her form in flowing drapery wound,  
     Her head declining:  
     Her features fair around  
     In haste the bands they bound,  
     Tightened to curb the sound  
     Of words repining,  
 To bar the bitter thought's egress  
 From lips the seat of loveliness,  
 Lest from her frantic grief should fall  
 A curse upon her Father's hall.  
 Her veil, in saffron-coloured flow,<sup>11</sup>  
 Trailing swept the plain below:

---

(<sup>11</sup>) If Professor Scholefield's interpretation be adopted, the original may be thus rendered:

Then while the gory drops distain  
 With purple dye the verdant plain.

Her pleading eyes shot Pity's dart,<sup>12</sup>  
 To rankle in each murderer's heart,  
 Like form by painter's fancy dreamed,<sup>13</sup>  
 So pale, so fair, so still she seemed.  
 She longed to speak — for well she knew  
     Those warriors standing by,  
 For them, in days of brighter hue,  
     She 'd breathed sweet melody.  
 Oft when she saw the brave resort,  
 And crowd her Father's princely court,  
 When the third cup at festal board<sup>11</sup>  
 Was crowned to smiling Fortune's lord,  
 (Since even bashful maiden may  
 Breathe pure affection's simple lay,)  
 She loved her Sire to greet with song,  
 And honour mid the reveller's throng.

(<sup>12</sup>) So Milton :

“ And from about her shot darts of desire  
 Into all eyes.”

*Par. Lost.* VIII. 62.

(<sup>13</sup>) Compare the description of Constance in *Marmion* :

“ And there she stood so calm and pale,  
 That, but her breathing did not fail,  
 And motion slight of eye and head,  
 And of her bosom, warranted  
 That neither sense nor pulse she lacks,  
 You might have thought a form of wax,  
 Wrought to the very life, were there,  
 So still she was, so pale, so fair.”

(<sup>11</sup>) The third libation was always offered to Jupiter Soter, and was an acknowledgment of prosperity, which was considered as a boon resulting from his protection.

What followed then I never saw ;  
Not mine to tell the tale :  
Yet may not Fate's unerring law,  
By Calchas uttered, fail.  
This just decree alone I know ;  
Man must be disciplined by woe.  
To me, whate'er of good or ill  
The future brings, since come it will,  
I'll bow my spirit, and be still.  
For why should I forestall my doom,  
And mourn o'er sorrows yet to come ?  
At length, by Fate's fulfilment, clear  
Shall those prophetic words appear :  
Till then, while singly thus we stand,  
The bulwark of our Apian land,  
Still shall my prayers to heaven ascend,  
That doubt in happiness may end.

ÆSCH. AGAM. 316.

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#### ARGUMENT.

THE Chorus, now assured of the capture of Troy, return thanks to Jove for having avenged the guilt of Paris, and affirm that punishment is always consequent on crime; they relate the departure of Helen, and the song of the minstrels on her flight, depicting the grief of Menelaus;—describe the sorrows which had been caused throughout Greece by the loss of heroes in the Trojan War, and the ill-will thence resulting against the Atridæ, of whose fall they express themselves apprehensive, inasmuch as they had caused the slaughter of many, thereby provoking the anger of the Gods. They conclude with a prayer that their own condition in life may be neither so high as to excite envy, nor so abject as to be exposed to insult.

PRAISE to thee, eternal King!  
 Thus thy grateful votaries sing.  
 And thou, blest Night, whose net was flung  
 O'er Ilion's towers, while old and young  
     Struggled in vain below,  
 Thine were the captive city's spoils,  
 In slavery's meshes wrapt, and toils  
     Of all-ensnaring woe.  
 Meekly my spirit bows to thee,  
 Jove, Lord of hospitality!  
     By thee was Retribution sent;  
     By thee at Paris' head  
 Long hath the bow been bent;  
     By thee the shaft was sped—  
 When the fatal hour was come,  
 Meet to execute his doom,  
 Thine arrow bounded to its mark aright,  
 Nor o'er the stars erroneous winged its flight.

Beneath the stroke of Jove they fell ;  
 No idly-fancied tale I tell ;  
     The task is mine,  
     With eagle eyne  
 To track the steps of wrath divine,  
     See God fulfil  
     His sovereign will,  
 Though man may mock his vengeance still.  
 There have been, whose rebellious pride  
 His righteous judgment has denied,  
 Nor owned the Gods in anger scan  
 Their worship trodden down by man.  
 But banished be the unholy thought,  
 The creed by impious Sceptics taught,  
 Bold sons of Luxury, who defy  
 And challenge thus the powers on high ;  
 Whose gorgeous halls their lords elate,<sup>1</sup>  
 With superfluity of state.  
 Mine be the spirit's sober frame,  
 That best may heaven's protection claim ;  
 The mere exemption from distress  
 Is all I ask of happiness ;

---

(<sup>1</sup>) If Professor Scholefield's reading of this very perplexed passage be preferred, it may be thus rendered :

If pampered e'er mid halls of state,  
     And overflowing stores,  
 The human heart, with pride elate,  
     Its bold defiance pours,  
 Children too late their parents' crime shall rue,  
 And Heaven to death the sinful race pursue.



For vainly Wealth's proud bulwarks tower,  
 When man, in insolence of power,  
 Justice, thy law disdains to know,  
 And dares with impious foot thine altar overthrow.  
 Oft luring with her dulcet song,  
 Temptation's eloquence is strong ;  
 Yet, treasured long, the meed of crime  
 Shall whelm the wretch in after-time ;  
 For vain the toil of human skill  
 To quench the lurid star of ill.  
 As, when experienced hands explore  
 If base alloy pollute the ore,  
 The brass, by long attrition tried,  
 Placed by the purer metal's side,  
 Displays at length the dingy hue,  
 That proves its former claim untrue ;  
 So Time's discerning hand hath art  
 To set the good and ill apart.  
 And he who, fleet in pleasure's race,<sup>2</sup>  
 The bird upon the wing will chase,

---

<sup>2</sup> If the pursuit of Helen by Paris is intended by this metaphor, a like thought has been more fully expressed in those well-known lines of the Giaour :

" As rising on its purple wing,  
 The insect Queen of Eastern spring,  
 Through emerald meadows of Cashmere,  
 Invites the young pursuer near," &c.

If, as is probable, the simile extends to the reckless pursuit of pleasure generally, it is prettily illustrated by the following Italian fable

Soon, for his folly's meed, may moan  
His country's ruin, and his own:

fable of De Rossi. A child is recalled from the chase of a bird by its mother:

“ E anelante e lassa, alfine,  
Già del colle sul confine,  
Dice: ‘ O madre, un vago augello,  
‘ Che poc’ alto ognor dal suolo,  
‘ D’ arboscello in arboscello  
‘ Dispiegava incerto il volo;  
‘ Inseguia; ch’ ogni momento  
‘ Mi pareva con man sicura  
‘ D’ afferrarlo; e quegli al vento  
‘ Dando l’ ale, a me si fura.  
‘ Breve è il vol, ma sempre nuovo,  
‘ Sì che i passi ognor rinnuovo:  
‘ Ma l’ augello ognor si svia.  
‘ Quanto mai, quanto sudore,  
‘ Ahi! mi costa, madre mia,  
‘ Quell’ augello ingannatore!’  
A colei, che irata accusa  
L’ augellin che l’ ha delusa,  
La prudente genitrice  
Pria sorride, e poi le dice,  
‘ Cara figlia, di que’ vanni,  
‘ Del sudor ch’ oggi spargesti,  
‘ Ah! col volgere degl’ anni  
‘ Il pensier vivo ti resti.  
‘ Qual tu errasti sconsigliata,  
‘ Per l’ augel che t’ ha ingannata,  
‘ Così l’ uomo errando va  
‘ Per la sua felicità.  
‘ Ognor prossima la vede,  
‘ D’ afferrarla ognor si crede;  
‘ Ma colei, spiegando l’ ale,  
‘ Ad un volo più lontano,  
‘ Corron sempre, e sempre in vano,  
‘ Fin che guingano i mortali,  
‘ Tra l’ inganno e tra la speme,  
‘ Infelici a l’ ore estreme.’ ”

No more his prayers the Gods delay,  
They sweep the reprobate away.

Disappointed of her game,  
Panting up the hill she came,  
But her story was begun,  
Ere the summit quite she won.  
"Mother! Mother! I have been  
"Such a chase across the green,  
"By a cruel bird outwitted,  
"Still from bush to bush it flitted,  
"Rising oft, but soon alighting,  
"Still avoiding, still inviting:  
"Now I thought it all my own,  
"In a moment it was gone:  
"Onward still my steps it drew,  
"Then it spread its wing and flew;—  
"What a world of pains it cost!  
"Now the pretty treasure's lost!"  
While the maid her tale repeated,  
Angry to be thus defeated,  
First the prudent mother smiled,  
Then bespoke her pouting child:  
"Let thy chase, my darling, give  
"Lesson to thee how to live.  
"From thine own pursuit and sorrow,  
"From that bird a warning borrow:  
"Rash and headlong, child, like thee,  
"Man pursues felicity.  
"Still illusive prospects cheer him,  
"Still he thinks the treasure near him,  
"When he on the prize would spring,  
"Bliss is ever on the wing;  
"Thus his weary life he spends  
"In a chase that never ends,  
"Hopes conceived and baffled ever,  
"Bootless quest and vain endeavour."

See also a little song of Goethe's, entitled *Die Freude*:

"Es flattert um die Quelle  
Die wechselnde Libelle,

Mich

Such was Paris—he, who sought  
 The court of Atreus' son ;  
 There was his work of treachery wrought,  
 There Helen wooed and won ;  
 There, holiest laws were cast aside  
 By thankless guest and faithless bride.

Mich frent sie lange schon ;  
 Bald dunkel und bald helle,  
 Wie der Chamäleon.

Bald roth, bald blau,  
 Bald blau, bald grün,  
 O dass ich in der Nähe,  
 Doch ihre Farbe sähe !

Sie schwirrt und schwebet, rastet nie !  
 Doch still, sie setzt sich an die Weiden.  
 Da hab' ich sie ! da hab' ich sie !  
 Und nun betracht' ich sie genau,  
 Und seh' ein traurig dunkles Blau.—  
 So geht es dir, Zerglied'rer deiner Freuden !"

Yon dragon-fly, on changeful wing,  
 In circles round the crystal spring,  
 See fluttering in the sun ;  
 She mocks my sight ;  
 Now dark, now bright,  
 Like the Chameleon.

Blushing now with ruddy hue,  
 Now a red and now a blue ;  
 Now confused and now more clear,  
 Might I but behold her near !  
 Whirring, flitting, restless thing,  
 Will she never fold her wing ?  
 On the meads she lights at last ;—  
 Now I hold thee, Captive, fast !  
 Yet no gaudy tints I spy,  
 Thou art but a dingy fly !  
 So truth his painted dream destroys,  
 Who would anatomize his joys.

To Sparta's sons a fatal gift,  
 A parting legacy she left ;  
 The conflicts of the spear and shield,  
 The terrors of the battle field,  
 The fleet's array ;—and ruin bore  
 For dowry to the Trojan shore.  
 Daring what none should dare, she sped,  
 And passed the gates with hurried tread,  
 Then, while aloud their dirges rung,  
 'Twas thus the household minstrels sung :  
     “ Woe for the courts of pride !  
     “ Woe for the slighted chief !  
     “ For haunts, by love once sanctified,  
     “ Now consecrate to grief !  
 “ Yet from her injured lord no word  
 “ Of passion's wild reproach is heard ;  
 “ Fixed in unconscious trance, his gaze  
 “ Yet seeks her as in other days,  
     “ And scarce believes her gone :  
 “ A shade will seem his halls to sway,  
 “ So will he pine and waste away,  
     “ For her o'er ocean flown.  
 “ No more delighted will he trace<sup>3</sup>  
 “ The sculptured marble's form of grace,

(3) The original admits also of the following version :

\* Nor now delighted will he trace  
 Her statue's imitative grace ;  
 The dull, cold stone may ill supply  
 The living richness of her eye.

" His longing eyes lack her :— to him  
 " All loveliness beside is dim.  
 " Then sorrow's phantom-train appears,  
 " An empty joy that leads to tears.  
 " The dream, with Fancy's colouring warm,  
 " Departs, an unsubstantial form,  
 " Glides through the arms that fain would clasp,  
 " And mocks the lover's eager grasp ;  
 " Then spreads aloft its airy wings,  
 " That wait on slumber's wanderings."

The literal translation is this : " The grace of the fair statues is hateful to him, and in poverty of eyes all beauty is departed." This is of course ambiguous ; and it is hard to say which interpretation is the most poetical ; but the one adopted in the text is perhaps the best borne out by the phrase in the original. If the poverty of eyes be referred to Menelaus, the expression must be understood as meaning that they were deprived of their greatest treasure, and the idea is illustrated by the lines of Byron :

——" She was his sight ;  
 For his eyes followed hers, and saw with hers,  
 Which coloured all his objects."

*The Dream.*

If the statues in which Menelaus is represented as taking no pleasure are supposed to be those of Helen, the poverty of eyes must be understood of the absence of living lustre ; and our own application of the epithet " rich " to eyes throws light on the passage. And we may remember that it is the appearance of the eye in the supposed statue of Hermione which peculiarly strikes her husband :

*Lc.* " The fixture of her eye has motion in't,  
 As we were mocked with art—"

*Pa.* " I'll draw the curtain——  
 My Lord's almost so far transported, that  
 He'll think anon it moves."

Such domestic sorrows met  
 Round the Spartan monarch's hearth :  
 Such as these, or darker yet,  
 Brood on other spots of earth,  
 By their guilty bridal sent :  
 All their martial aid who lent,  
 Greece, to thy proud armament,  
 Left, in halls with grief opprest,  
 Tearful eye, and aching breast,  
 Love, that, o'er the absent yearning,  
 Waits in vain their glad returning ;  
 For, instead of heroes, home †  
 Vases, ashes only come.

(4) The whole of the context is well illustrated by the following speech in Sophocles. It is that of Electra, on receiving the urn, supposed to contain the ashes of Orestes :

ὦ φιλότατου μνημείων ἀνθρώπων ἐμοί,  
 ψυχῆς Ὀρέστου λοιπὸν, ὡς σ' ἀπ' ἐλπίδων,  
 οὐχ ὧν περ ἐξέπεμπον, εἰσεδεξάμην.  
 νῦν μὲν γὰρ οὐδὲν ἔντι βαστάζω χεροῖν·  
 δόμων δὲ σ', ὦ παῖ, λαμπρὸν ἐξέπεμψ' ἐγώ.  
 ὡς ὄφελον πάροισιν ἐκλιπεῖν βίον,  
 πρὶν ἐς ξένην σε γαῖαν ἐκπέμψαι, χεροῖν  
 κλέψασιν ταῖνδε, κἀνασώσασθαι φύονου,  
 ὕπως θανάτων ἔκεισο τῇ τόθ' ἡμέρᾳ,  
 τύμβου πατρώου κοινὸν εἰληχῶς μέρος.  
 νῦν δ' ἐκτὸς οἴκων, κἀπὶ γῆς ἄλλης, φυγὰς,  
 κακῶς ἀπάλου, σῆς κισσιγνήτης δίχα·  
 κοῦτ' ἐν φίλῃσι χερσὶν ἢ τάλαινα' ἐγώ  
 λουτροῖς ἐκόσμησ', οὔτε παμφλέκτου πυρὸς  
 ἀνειλόμην, ὡς εἰκὸς, ἄθλιον βᾶρος.  
 ἀλλ' ἐν ξένησι χερσὶ κηδευθεῖς τάλας,  
 σμικρὸς προσήκεις ὕγκος ἐν σμικρῷ κύτει.  
 οἶ μοι τάλαινα τῆς ἐμῆς πάλαι τροφῆς

And Mars, who traffics with the slain,  
Whose hands the doubtful scale sustain,

ἀνωφελήτου, τὴν ἐγὼ θάμ' ἀμφὶ σοὶ  
πόνῳ γλυκεῖ παρέσχον· οὔτε γὰρ ποτε  
μητρὸς σὺ γ' ἦσθα μᾶλλον ἢ καμοῦ φίλος·  
οὔθ' οἱ κατ' οἶκον ἦσαν, ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τροφός·  
ἐγὼ δ' ἀδελφῆ σοὶ προσηυδώμην αἰεὶ.  
νῦν δ' ἐκκλέλοιπε ταῦτ' ἐν ἡμέρα μιᾷ  
θανόντα σὺν σοί. πάντα γὰρ ξυναρπάσας,  
ὤϊελλ' ὕπῳ, βέβηκας· οἴχεται πατήρ·  
τέθνηκ' ἐγὼ σοι. φροῦδος αὐτὸς εἶ θανών.  
γελῶσι δ' ἐχθροί· μαίνεται δ' ὑφ' ἡδονῆς  
μήτηρ ἀμήτωρ, ἧς ἐμοὶ σὺν πολλάκις  
φήμας λάθρα προῦπεμπες, ὡς φανοῦμενος  
τιμωρὸς αὐτός. ἀλλὰ ταῦθ' ὁ δυστυχήης  
δαίμων ὁ σὺς τε καμὸς ἐξυφείλετο,  
ὅς σ' ᾧδέ μοι προῦπεμψεν, ἀντὶ φιλιότητος  
μορφῆς, σποδὸν τε καὶ σκιὰν ἀνωφελῆ.

O sole memorial that my love retains,  
My doting love, a brother's dear remains !  
How fade the hopes with which I saw thee part,  
And fondly whispered comfort to my heart !  
Then light and joy about thy pathway shone ;  
'Tis nothing now round which my arms are thrown.  
Oh ! had I slept in death, before my hand  
Snatched thee from fate and sent to foreign strand !  
Thine in that hour had been a gentler doom,  
Thine, sacred slumber in thy father's tomb.  
But now from home afar 'twas thine to die,  
And heave in banishment thy latest sigh.  
No sister sought thine anguish to beguile,  
Decked thy pale corpse, nor, from the expiring pile,  
A mournful load, thy funeral vase conveyed :  
By foreign hands the wonted rites were paid,  
By strangers borne, I see thy dust return,  
A little burden in a little urn.  
Was it for this I watched thine infant charms,  
And blessed thee, while thy weight fatigued mine arms ?

For



When spears are met in fight,  
 When funeral flames have ceased to burn,  
 With air-light ashes fills the urn,  
     Sole relics left of might.  
 The bitter tears that weep the dead,  
 In anguish o'er that dust are shed  
     From many a kinsman's eye ;  
 And one they praise, as "skilled in strife,"  
 And one, that "reckless of his life,  
 "He, for another's faithless wife,  
     "Died fighting gallantly."  
 Not all declared, nor all concealed,  
 Half is the bosom's thought revealed,  
 And murmurs are in secret spread,  
 That light on the Atridæ's head.

---

For ne'er thy mother's love exceeded mine,  
 Nor I to menials would my charge resign.  
 Oft to mine ear the welcome accents came,  
 When thy fond lips invoked thy sister's name :  
 Now in one fatal moment all is flown,  
 And even memory's pleasures with thee gone ;  
 Thy fate, like tempest, o'er my spirit past,  
 And all my joys were swept before the blast.  
 My sire is gone ; and thou hast ceased to be ;  
 And I, though living deemed, expire in thee.  
 My foes deride ; in exultation wild,  
 My mother triumphs o'er her slaughtered child ;  
 No mother she !—How oft from thee I heard  
 Promise of vengeance, all too long deferred :  
 Our evil Genius stayed thy bright career,  
 And now in mockery sends thy relics here,  
 Relics that ill my brother's place supply,  
 While airy ashes meet my longing eye.

For not beneath their native sky  
May Græcia's comely warriors lie ;  
Where erst the Trojan ramparts frowned,  
Her mighty sleep in hostile ground.  
At home, sedition's voice is known  
By sullen, discontented tone,  
Whose muttered threatenings record  
A people's curse against their Lord.

Waits my soul in racking fear,  
That which night conceals to hear.  
For those, by whom 'are many slain,  
The Gods all-seeing mark :  
In time the Furies dark  
Turn them from Fortune's height again,  
Since not by virtue's aid they gained the steep,  
In lone obscurity to weep,  
For aye amid the ruined left,  
Of aid alike and hope bereft.

Ask not for too bright a name,  
Crave not too surpassing fame,  
For on the proud descends the bolt of heaven,  
And, launched against their eyes, Jove's thunderbolt  
is driven.

Ne'er fixed on me be envy's gaze,  
Not mine a city's walls to raze,  
To sway, a conqueror, or, a captive, pine ;  
A gentler lot than these, life's happy mean, be mine.

---

ÆSCH. AGAM. 664.

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#### THE ARGUMENT.

THE Chorus allude to the name of Helen, expressive (in Greek) of the evils she had caused. They draw a parallel between the joy her arrival at Troy had excited, and the sorrow resulting from its consequences; and exemplify it by the pleasure derived from the early playfulness, and the pain produced by the subsequent ravages of a young lion, which had been brought up as a domestic animal. They affirm that it was the guilt of Paris and Helen, not the prosperity of Troy, which caused the destruction of that city, though they allow that virtue is more frequently found in a lowly than an exalted station.

ÆSCII. AGAM. 661.

HELEN! who, in early youth,  
Named thee with too perfect truth?  
Was it not, from starry sphere,  
Some viewless spirit lingering near,  
Bade thy virgin title be  
Matched with thy dark destiny?<sup>1</sup>

---

(<sup>1</sup>) Puns on names were not considered by the Greek tragedians inconsistent with the dignity of tragedy. In the plays of Euripides, especially, they abound: and they have been admitted by our own most admired authors. Thus Massinger:

“Thy name is Angelo,  
And like that name thou art.”

*The Virgin Martyr.* Act II. Sc. I.

And Shakspeare:

“Admirable Miranda,  
Nay even the top of admiration.”

*The Tempest.* Act III. Sc. I.

And the Nun in Chaucer says of Saint Cecilia, that

“For pure chastnesse of virginitee,  
Or for she whiteness had of honestee,  
And grene of conscience, and of good fame  
The swote savour, Lillie was hire name.”

*Canterbury Tales.* 15556.

Two

Helen, wooed by warrior's spear,  
 Widow's curse, and orphan's tear,  
 Let thy name thy story tell:  
 Thou, who, like a yawning Hell,  
 In the abyss hast swallowed down  
 Flect and phalanx, tower and town!

From her richly-woven tent,  
 Forth, a faithless Bride, she went,  
 While, to waft her parting sail,  
 Earth-born Zephyr lent his gale.  
 Trackless passed the bounding bark  
 O'er the ocean's bosom dark:  
 Seeking for its wake in vain,  
 Came the fell pursuing train.  
 Many a shield the hunters bore,  
 Chasing those, whose dashing oar  
 Rested, where the leaf-crowned wood  
 Nods o'er Simoïs' silver flood:  
 With the hue of slaughter dyed,  
 Strife the venturous vessels plied.

Helen's coming well fulfilled  
 All that mighty Wrath hath willed,

---

Two other etymologies are then proposed of the saint's name, from *heven* and *lia*, and *heven* and *leos*, and both justified by an appeal to her character. Helen, in Greek, may be conceived to signify the destroyer, though the etymology is rather forced. The translation here given has no pretensions to originality.

When thy turrets, Troy, she sought,  
 Dearly loved, but dearly bought!<sup>2</sup>  
 Long treasured, late hath burst on thee

Dark vengeance from above,  
 For broken hospitality,  
 And desolated love ;  
 And Jove, who, throned on high,  
 Guards fire-side bliss below,  
 Hath changed thy bridal melody  
 To funeral notes of woe.

Free swelled the chaunt, when, mid thy proud array,  
 Her new-found kindred poured the hymeneal lay.

Other strains, for sorrow meet,  
 Ring through Priam's crumbling street ;  
 O'er her sons untimely dead,  
 Hath that ancient city shed  
 Many a tear ; and clasped in vain  
 Warrior-sons in battle slain,  
 And, taught to loathe the bridal song,  
 Mourned Paris' hapless wedlock long.

He, who the Lion's whelp hath nurs'<sup>3</sup>  
 At home, with fostering hand,  
 Finds it a gentle thing at first,  
 Obedient to command ;

---

(<sup>2</sup>) This is also intended to convey a pun in the original; the same word signifying wedlock and woe.

(<sup>3</sup>) A parallel passage occurs in Sir Walter Scott's "Abbot;"  
 the

Amid the playful children sporting,  
 The aged Sire's caresses courting,  
 Like infant, clasped in fond embrace,  
 Rubbing against the hand its face,  
     And fawning for its food :  
 Soon, other instincts may he trace,  
 The heirloom of its savage race,  
     Its native thirst for blood.  
 Requiring ill its master's care,  
 It banquets on forbidden fare,  
 On many a fleecy flock it falls,  
 Its rage the vassal train appals,  
     With gore the chambers flow ;  
 It ranges through the desolate halls,  
     Grim minister of woe !

Bride of Paris, such art thou !  
 To Ilion when thy venturous prow  
 First bore thee o'er the ocean brine,  
 What melting loveliness was thine !

---

the words are addressed by Henry Warden to the Lady of Avenel on the subject of Roland Græme : " You have brought into your bower a lion's cub ; delighted with the beauty of his fur, and the grace of his gambols, you have bound him with no fetters befitting the fierceness of his disposition. You have let him grow up as unawed as if he had been still a tenant of the forest, and now you are surprised and call out for assistance when he begins to rend, and tear, according to his proper nature." (*The Abbot*, Chap. III.) Wellauer has been followed in the application of this simile to Helen instead of Paris.



A spirit like the breathless calm,<sup>4</sup>  
 When summer's gentle air is balm ;  
 Eyes, darting many a tender glance,  
 An unassuming elegance,  
 Whose quiet charms new beauty lent<sup>5</sup>  
 To grace each costly ornament ;  
 Love's very flower, whose bloom invites,  
 Yet stings the gazer it delights.<sup>6</sup>—

(4) Compare Shakspeare :

“ They are as gentle  
 As zephyrs, blowing below the violet,  
 Not wagging his sweet head.”

*Cymbeline.* Act IV. Sc. 2.

(5) The original words, ἀκασκαῖον ἄγαλμα πλούτου, mean “ a quiet ornament of wealth.” These may imply nothing more than that Helen was modest amid the magnificence of her apparel ; and “ the ornament of wealth ” must then be considered as a periphrasis for “ costly array ; ” but the expression seems more poetical, if understood to convey the idea, that her quiet charms set off the queenly dress she bore. Compare Massinger :

*Fiorinda.* “ How does this dressing show ?

*Calaminta.* “ 'Tis of itself

Curious and rare—but borrowing ornament,  
 As it does from your grace that deigus to wear it,  
 Incomparable.”

*The Great Duke of Florence.* Act II. Sc. 1.

(6) Literally, “ eating the soul.” The word δάκνω, however, perhaps more commonly expresses the sudden infliction of a wound, than a constant and gradual gnawing. If this be true in the present instance, the passage may be illustrated by the following lines from Chaucer :

“ He cast his eyen upon Emelia,  
 And therewithal he blent and cried ah !  
 As though he stongen were unto the herte.”

*Palamon and Arcite.* 1079.

Soon was the blissful promise past!  
 Bitter thy wedlock's fruit at last;  
 Evil the day that saw thee come,  
 Inmate of Priam's peaceful home,  
 Sent by avenging Heaven's decree,  
 A Fury, not a Bride, to be!

Falsely, I ween, the Sages told,  
 In parables they framed of old,  
 That glad success and fortune high  
 Beget a fatal progeny.  
 They sung, that, in the destined hour,  
     To all who reign below,  
 Spring, from the ancient stem of power,  
     Unfailing shoots of woe.  
 I stand alone, yet heed them not,  
     For ne'er to righteous halls,  
 Though wealth adorn their master's lot,  
     Such evil offspring falls.

'Tis guilt alone that teems with sorrow,<sup>7</sup>  
 Who from her mother's hue her sombre tint doth  
     borrow,

---

(7) This reminds us of Milton's celebrated Allegory, (*Par. Lost.* II. 648,) in which he makes Sin the parent of Death, according to the expression of St. James, (i. 15.) "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." And the present passage is still more fully illustrated by one which Mr. Todd, in his note on Milton's lines, quotes from Latimer's Sermons: "Then came in Death and Hell; Sinne was their mother. Therefore they must have such an image as their mother Sinne would give them." This is a curious instance

And ancient deeds of bold offence  
Bring forth in other days fresh acts of violence!

Or soon or late, in heaven's appointed time,  
Awakes the wrathful child of crime,  
Spirit, by prowess uncontrolled,  
In all unholy carnage bold,  
Nurtured in murky courts of strife,  
Foul as the form that gave it life.

'Tis true that Justice oft is found,  
The smoke-dimmed cottage walls around  
    Shedding her purest light;  
From gilded palaces, where gain  
Leaves on its master's hand a stain,  
    She speeds her holy flight,  
    Disdainful stalking by,  
    In sullen majesty,  
Nor smiles on wealth that bears thy stamp, Iniquity!  
    But casts the counterfeit away,  
True to her task, each deed with meet reward to pay.

---

stance of the superiority of Æschylus to his contemporaries in his moral views. The opinion from which he expresses his dissent, that greatness, independent of conduct, provokes the envy and vengeance of the Gods, is frequent in the Greek writers, and especially in Herodotus.



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ÆSCH. CHOEPH. 20.

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#### THE ARGUMENT.

AN ominous vision having appeared to Clytæmnestra after the death of Agamemnon, she sends the Chorus, consisting of captive maidens, with libations, in hopes of averting the portended evil. In this Ode they lament their miserable condition, describe the horrible nature of the dream, and express their own unwillingness to offer gifts which must be ineffectual to atone for murder. They proceed to bewail the house of Agamemnon, and accuse the citizens of cowardice in submitting to Ægisthus, but confidently anticipate his fall, since crime is never ultimately unpunished. They conclude with bewailing the necessity laid upon them of concealing their sentiments.

OBEDIENT to my Queen's command,  
 With pure libations in my hand,  
     The regal halls I leave :  
 The shredded robe, the oft-dealt blow,  
 The bleeding cheek, whose furrows show  
 The handy-work of frantic woe,  
     Bear witness how I grieve.  
     Torn is the linen vest,  
     That veiled my snowy breast ;  
 And smiles around my lips no longer play ;  
     My heart, with care opprest,  
 Is fed on agony from day to day.

A cry the calm of midnight broke ;  
 From the dark chambers Terror spoke ;  
 Troubler of sleep !—with ghastly stare,  
 With breath of wrath, and bristling hair,  
 And accent shrill that pierced the ear.  
 Loud raved the dream-inspiring Scer !

Right heavily he sate, I ween,<sup>1</sup>  
 Above the chambers of the Queen.  
 The interpreters, their troth who plight  
 To spell the visions of the night,  
     From God an answer gave :  
 “ Sent forth by murdered man,” they said,  
 “ That form, to haunt the murderer’s bed,  
     “ Had issued from the grave.”  
 The impious Queen in vain these offerings sends,  
 To turn aside the ill that boding dream portends.

Earth! her graceless gifts I pour thee!  
 Earth, my mother! I adore thee:

(1) The idea of the evil Genius seating himself on the roof of the house he haunts is frequent in Æschylus. Thus, in the Agamemnon, the Furies are descried on the roof of Agamemnon by the gifted sight of Cassandra:

τὴν γὰρ στέγην τῆνδ' οὔ ποτ' ἐκλείπει χορὸς  
 ξύμφθογγος, οὐκ εὔφωνος· οὐ γὰρ εἶ λέγει.  
 καὶ μὴν πεπωκὼς γ', ὡς θρασύνεσθαι πλέον,  
 βρότειον αἶμα, κῶμος ἐν δόμοις μένει,  
 δῦσπεμπτος ἔξω, ξυγγόνων Ἐρινύων.  
 ὕμνοῦσι δ' ὕμνον, δώμασιν προσήμεναι,  
 πρῶταρχον ἄτην.

ÆSCH. *Agam.* 1157.

These halls a grisly band ne'er quit,—whose cry,  
 In concert still, yet lacketh melody;  
 There, drunk with human gore, the troop of hell,  
 The household Furies, ever revelling dwell;  
 Squat on the roof, with passion's flush they glow,  
 And chaunt, in fiendish songs, the origin of woe.

And soon after she discovers the children of Thyestes in the same situation:

ὄρατε



Yet scarce my tongue thy power may dare  
 To mock with ineffectual prayer :  
 Can aught remove the murderer's guilt ?  
 Can aught atone for life-blood spilt ?

Halls, o'erwhelmed in ruin rude !  
 Hearth, where countless sorrows brood !  
 Round you, now your Lord is slain,  
 Sunless, hateful shadows reign ;  
 Loyal Faith that once possessed  
 Every listening subject's breast,

δρᾶτε τούσδε τοὺς δόμοις ἐφημένους  
 νέους, δνεύρων προσφερεῖς μορφώμασιν ;  
 παῖδες, θανόντες ὡσπερὶ πρὸς τῶν φίλων,  
 χεῖρας κρεῶν πλήθοντες οἰκείας βουᾶς  
 σὺν ἐντέροις τε σπλάγχχν', ἐποίκτιστον γέμος,  
 πρέπους ἔχοντες, ὧν πατὴρ ἐγεύσατο.

Æsch. *Agam.* 1188.

See, on the roof they sit, like airy dreams,  
 And every form a murdered infant seems,  
 Slain by their friends, a mournful load they bear,  
 Their mangled entrails, once their father's fare.

And in the Supplices of Æschylus, 635.

διὼν ἐπιδόμενοι πράκτορά τε σκοπὸν  
 δυσπολέμητον, ὃν οὔτις ἂν δόμος ἔχοι  
 ἐπ' ἁρόφων μαιίνοντα· βαρὺς δ' ἐφίξει.

With prudent dread they learned to fear  
 Heaven's strong and wakeful minister :  
 When on the roof he sits,  
 Heavy he falls,  
 And ruin never quits  
 The haunted halls.

Faith, whose firmness seemed to mock  
 War and foul sedition's shock,  
 Hath past away;—the cravens bow  
 Their necks beneath usurpers now.  
 Man to success still court will pay,  
 Still honour Fortune's fickle sway,  
 Exalt her to the blest abodes,  
 A Goddess and above the Gods.<sup>2</sup>

(2) Compare with this a fragment of Æschylus :

τύχα μερόπων ἀρχὰ καὶ τέρμα.  
 τὸ καὶ σοφίας τιμὰν  
 βροτέοις ἐπέθηκας ἔργοις.  
 καὶ τὸ καλὸν πλέον ἢ κακὸν ἐκ σέθεν.  
 ἃ τε χάρις λάμπει  
 περὶ σὰν πτέρυγι χρύσειον  
 καὶ τὸ τεῦ πλάστιγγι δοθὲν  
 μακαριστότατον τελέθει,  
 σὺ δ' ἀμαχανίας πόρον εἶδες ἐν ἄλγεσι,  
 καὶ λαμπρὸν φάος ἄγαγες ἐν σκότῳ  
 προφερέστατα θεῶν. *Frag. Inc.*

O Chance, suggesting many a plan,  
 Attaining many an end for man,  
 How oft, when Wisdom's titles shine,  
 And Craft claims praise, the work is thine !  
 Our woe's our own ; from thee we borrow  
 More oft the taste of joy than sorrow.  
 Grace shines around thy golden wing,  
 Thy wand can bliss bestow,  
 Thy bounties to thy chosen fling  
 The brightest lot below.  
 And, when afflictions round us hover,  
 'Tis thine to point the way,  
 And, in that midnight gloom, discover  
 The opening light of day.  
 Well at thy shrine may mortals bow,  
 The mightiest of the Gods art thou.

But Justice holds her equal scales  
    With ever-waking eye ;  
O'er some her vengeful might prevails,  
    When their life's sun is high ;  
On some her vigorous judgments light,  
In that dread pause twixt day and night,  
    Life's closing twilight hour ;  
Round some, ere yet they meet their doom,  
Is shed the silence of the tomb,  
    The eternal shadows lower ;  
But soon as once the genial plain  
Has drunk the life-blood of the slain,  
Indelible the spots remain,  
    And aye for vengeance call,  
Till racking pangs of piercing pain  
    Upon the guilty fall.  
What balm for him shall potent prove,  
Who breaks the ties of wedded love ?  
And though all streams united gave  
The treasures of their limpid wave,  
    To purify from gore ;  
The hand, polluted once with blood,  
Though washed in every silver flood,  
    Is foul for evermore !

Hard Fate is mine, since that dark day,  
Which girt my home with war's array,  
And bore me from my father's hall,  
To pine afar, a captive thrall :

Hard Fate ! to yield to heaven's decree,  
And what I am not, seem to be ;  
Dissemble hatred, and control  
The bitter workings of the soul ;  
E'en to injustice feign consent ;  
Detest the wrong, but not prevent :  
Yet oft I veil my face, to weep  
For those who unavenged sleep ;  
Oft for my slaughtered lord I mourn,  
Chilled by the frost of grief, with secret anguish torn !

ÆSCH. EUMEN. 297.

#### ARGUMENT.

ORESTES, having been encouraged by the oracle of Apollo to slay his mother, is for the crime pursued by the Furies, who form the Chorus, and sing this Ode; in which they complain of the protection afforded to the criminal by Phœbus, and declare their own office and dignity.

WEAVE the wild dance; awake the song;<sup>1</sup>  
 Awake the strain severe,  
 And pour on mortal ear,  
 What mighty honours to our race belong.

---

(<sup>1</sup>) Obviously imitated from this, is the song of the Furies in a ballad of Schiller's:

“ Ein schwarzer Mantel schlägt die Lenden,  
 Sie schwingen in entfleischten Händen  
 Der Fackel düsterrothe Glut;  
 In ihren Wangen fließt kein Blut.  
 Und wo die Haare lieblich flattern,  
 Um Menschenstirnen freundlich weh'n,  
 Da sieht man Schlangen hier und Nattern,  
 Die giftgeschwoll'nen Bauche bläh'n.

“ Und, schauerlich gedreht im Kreise,  
 Beginnen sie des Hymnes Weise,  
 Der durch das Herz zerreißend dringt,  
 Die Bande um den Sünder schlingt.  
 Besinnungraubend, Herzbethörend,  
 Schallt der Erinnyen Gesang  
 Er schallt, des Hörer's Mark verzehrend,  
 Und duldet nicht der Leier Klang:

“ Wohl

Still in justice find we pleasure,  
 Meting right in strictest measure ;  
 He, whose hand from blood is pure,  
 From our wrath may rest secure ;  
 But the sinner, who would fain  
 Cover murder's crimson stain,  
 Still shall find his steps pursued  
 By inquisitors for blood :

“ ‘ Wohl dem, der frei von Schuld und Feble,  
 ‘ Bewahrt die kindlich reine Seele !  
 ‘ Ihn dürfen wir nicht rächend nah'n,  
 ‘ Er wandelt frei des Leben's Bahn,  
 ‘ Das wehe, wehe, wer verstohlen  
 ‘ Des Mordes schwere That vollbracht,  
 ‘ Wir heften uns an seine Sohlen,  
 ‘ Das furchtbare Geschlecht der Nacht !

“ ‘ Und glaubt er fliehend zu entspringen,  
 ‘ Geflügelt sind wir da, die Schlingen  
 ‘ Ihn werfend um den flücht' gen Fuss,  
 ‘ Dass er zu Boden fallen muss.  
 ‘ So jagen wir ihn, ohn' Ermatten,  
 ‘ Versöhnen kann uns keine Reu,  
 ‘ Ihn fort und fort bis zu den Schatten,  
 ‘ And geben ihn auch dort nicht frei.' ”

*Die Kraniche des Ibycus.*

A sable vest each round her flings,  
 Each in her fleshless fingers swings  
 A lurid torch, that dusky glows ;  
 Within their veins no life-blood flows.  
 And where the graceful ringlets stray,  
     Round man's more kindly aspect floating,  
 There only snakes and adders play,  
     Their loathsome forms with venom bloating.

Round



Due to the unavenged dead  
 Our malison devotes his head.  
 Night! from whom, with vital breath,  
 Came my lot, in life and death,  
 To be for every dark offence  
 Instrument of recompense,  
 Mother! to my prayer attend;  
 Shall Latona's offspring rend  
 From my grasp the destined prey,  
 Steal the matricide away?

Round in the awful ring they spin,  
 The measure of the hymn begin,  
 That tears its way the heart to wound,  
 And flings its bands the sinner round.  
 It robs the wits, the heart it blasts,  
     Loud pealed by the infernal choir,  
 The marrow of the hearer wastes,  
     Nor brooks the music of the lyre.

“Blest, who, from guilt and error free,  
 Keeps the heart's childlike purity!  
 He walks life's path secure from fear,  
 We dare not draw in vengeance near.  
 Woe, woe to him, who dares conceal  
     His heavy crime, the deed of blood!  
 We fasten on his flying heel,  
     We dog him, Night's tremendous brood.

“And if he think to spring away,  
 We wave our wing, we net our prey,  
 Around his feet our toils are cast,  
 And he must sink to earth at last.  
 Unwearied thus we urge the chase,  
     Nor penitence can aught appease,  
 On to the shades, still on we race,  
     Nor grant him even there release.”

O'er the victim we repeat<sup>2</sup>  
 Dirges for our office meet ;  
 Might is in that jarring note  
 From the yelling Furies' throat ;  
 It can bind the soul in sadness,  
 Blast the brain with blighting madness,  
 Wither budding beauty's bloom,  
 Hurry to an early tomb :

(<sup>2</sup>) Euripides describes the Furies in a very similar manner :

δρομάδες ὦ πτεροφόροι  
 Ποτνιάδες θεαί,  
 ἀβάκχευτον αἰ θίασον ἐλάχετ' ἐν  
 δάκρυσι καὶ γόοις,  
 μελαγχρῶτες Εὐμενίδες αἰ τε τὸν  
 ταναῶν αἰθέρ' ἀμπάλλεσθ', αἵματος  
 τινύμεναι δίκαν, τινύμεναι φόνον,  
 καθικετεύομαι, καθικετεύομαι,  
 τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονος γόνον ἐάσατ' ἐκ-  
 λαθέσθαι λύσσας μυνιάδος φοιτα-  
 λέου.

EUR. *Orest.* 307.

Ye, upon rapid wing who speed,  
 Ye, who the mystic dances lead,  
 Whom awe-struck man reveres ;  
 Wild Bacchanals in all save joy,  
 For ne'er may mirth your song employ,  
 But woe and sighs and tears !  
 Swart Furies ! whom your pinions bear,  
 Flapping amid the expanse of air ;  
 Exacted by whose vengeful crew  
 Is punishment to murder due,  
 Receive my prayer—let madness wild  
 Quit Agamemnon's wretched child,  
 And sweet oblivion wipe away  
 The memory of his pangs to-day.

Never harp's responsive chord  
 Quivers when that strain is poured.  
 When the web of Fate was spun,  
 First my service was begun ;  
 Him I tend, who, spurning laws,  
 Blood bath shed without a cause,  
 Till he lie entombed in earth ;  
 (Such mine heir-loom from my birth,)  
 Nor in Hades shall he be  
 From the pangs of torture free.

Not to me to touch was given  
 Pure inhabitants of heaven,  
 Not to taste the social feast,  
 Not to wear the snow-white vest ;  
 When, in household mask, a foe<sup>3</sup> }  
 Deals the dark assassin's blow, }  
 Mine to work his overthrow !  
 Straight our crew is slipped on him,  
 Straight his glory waxeth dim,  
 Straight his ancient might is fled,  
 Vanquished by the gore he shed.  
 Jealous of the lot we share,  
 We forbid the suppliant's prayer

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(<sup>3</sup>) Literally, "When Mars domesticated slays a friend." In accordance with this idea, which makes Mars the God of assassination as well as of war, Chaucer places in the temple of that deity,

"The smiler with the knif under the cloke."

*Palamon and Arcite.*

Other Deities to own —  
Vengeance is for us alone !  
Smeared with gore, and marked by fate,  
Objects of eternal hate,  
We are exiles, forced to rove  
From the blessed courts of Jove.

Heavy, pouncing from aloft,  
Swoop we on the victim oft,  
He, beneath the incumbent load,  
Faints and totters on his road ;  
Though be his beneath the sky  
Fame and princely majesty ;  
All his honours waste and wane  
At the coming of our train,  
When, in sable drapery wound,  
We tread the mystic dance around :  
Down he sinks, and knows not who  
The deed of retribution do.  
Such the clouds that crime can roll  
Darkling round the guilty soul ;  
Deeds of horror thus can blind  
Reason's ray that lights the mind,  
Till upon the murderous halls  
Judgment unexpected falls.

Plots of vengeance frame we still,  
Strong to execute our will :

Awful to the dead and living,  
Unforgetting, unforgiving,  
Guided not by Phœbus fair,  
Lit by torches' lurid glare,  
Banished from the starry sphere,  
Honoured not by love but fear,  
Lives, I ween, no mortal wight,  
Who may mock our chartered right.  
Right, the sister-Fates approve,  
Sanctioned by the Powers above.  
Though we dwell the earth beneath,  
In the sunless realms of death,  
Yet, amid that dark domain,  
Honoured is our ancient reign.



ÆSCH. EUMEN. 468.

ARGUMENT.

THE Furies, apprehensive lest Orestes, whom they pursued in order to torture him as a matricide, should be rescued from them by Apollo, appeal in the following Ode against such an exertion of divine power, by showing the baneful consequences of abolishing their influence.



IF you matricide prevail,  
 Straight from their old foundations hurled,  
 The laws of ancient right shall fail,  
 And other statutes rule the world :  
 So from fear of vengeance free,  
 Shall men combine to work iniquity.  
 By children pierced, the parent's breast shall bleed ;  
 Children, who never rue the deed.  
 No watchful Furies, in that evil time,  
 Shall spring in secret on the miscreant's head ;  
 No more our wrath pursue the murderer's crime ;  
 Each shall strange horrors hear, each wail his dead,  
 And comfort speak in vain, while woes abound,  
 Against whose might no more sure remedy is found.

Stricken then by woe severe,  
 Let none repeat the empty call :  
 " Justice, and throned Furies, hear !"  
 Fallen, Justice, then shall be thine hall !

Then the sire's, the matron's grief  
 Vainly in bitter wails may seek relief;  
 Conscience, once wakeful on the bosom's throne,  
     Shall mark his dread dominion gone.  
 Sufferings the soul to temperance inure;  
     Man learns from sorrow wisdom's sober lore;  
 What states or men, if sin could still secure  
     The sunshine of the breast, would right adore?  
 Praise not despotic rule, yet cursed be,  
 Where punishment is not, the life of anarchy!

God stable strength assigns  
 To moderation:—all beside  
     May vary as his will inclines,  
 But trouble eye is born of pride.  
     To the sober soul is given  
 The happiness it seeks in prayer of Heaven.  
 Bow down to Justice:—Mortal man, attend!  
     Low at her spotless altar bend,  
 Nor spurn with impious foot, allured by gain,  
     Her holy shrine;—for retribution's day,  
 Fraught with the bitter, certain meed of pain,  
     Waits but its time the guilty to repay.  
 Then, ever duteous, on thy parents wait,  
 Still to the stranger ope thy hospitable gate.

Thus, if Fate forbid it not,  
 Thy virtuous course shall blessings win;  
     Ruin can never be the lot  
 Of him who turns his steps from sin:

But the bold in impious cause,  
Who marred fair order, mocked at righteous laws,  
Shall drift at length before destruction's gale,  
    With shivered mast, and shattered sail;  
He wrestles mid the whirlpool,—strives to call  
    On the deaf God, who, heedless of his prayer,  
Laughs at the boaster who defied a fall,  
    Now tangled in the inevitable snare.  
Perished for aye, and wrecked on Justice' shoal,  
Unwept, unknown he lies :—above, the billows roll.



SOPH. ŒD. TYR. 151.

#### ARGUMENT.

IN consequence of a pestilence, which raged at Thebes, the Oracle of Apollo had been consulted: the Chorus, consisting of Theban old men, sing this Ode, after the return of the Messengers from Delphi, but before the answer of the God is divulged. They express their anxiety to learn its import, describe the miserable state of the city, and invoke the tutelary Deities to protect them from Mars, to whom they impute the present plague.

SWEET voice of Jove ! that from the golden shrine  
Of Delphi's seat divine  
To sparkling Thebes art come, say, what may be  
The import of thy tale, thou word of destiny ?

Quick thy hidden lore unrol ;  
Soothe my racked and thrilling soul.  
Strong to smite, and skilled to heal,  
Delian Lord ! the truth reveal.  
Burns my throbbing heart to know  
If thou wilt dry the bitter tears  
That o'er my wasted country flow,  
Or now, or in revolving years ;  
In mercy to my pangs, thy secret tell,  
Bright child of golden Hope, mysterious Oracle !

First of all the Powers on high,  
Hear me, Jove's immortal child,

Pallas of the azure eye !

Hear me, huntress of the wild !  
Thou, who, mid the wrangling mart,  
Idol of each Theban heart,  
Shrined on throne of living light,  
Bearest sway in sceptred might ;  
Archer Lord, whose arrows fly,  
Winged with lightning, through the sky ;  
Ye guardian three,  
Appear and be  
Averters of dark destiny !

If ever to our fainting cry  
Ye lent a willing ear,  
If ever erst ye drove afar  
The flames of pestilence and war,  
In woe's forlorn extremity,  
Again, again appear !

Round the fated city press  
Sorrows dark and numberless ;  
Nipt with desolating pain,  
Sickly fades her blooming train,  
Nor weapon of sage thought is near,  
Whereon to stay our trust, as warrior on his spear.

The nurslings of the genial earth  
Wane fast away,  
The children, blighted ere the birth,  
See not the day,



And the sad mother bows her head,  
And, with her treasure lost, sleeps mid the crowded  
dead.

One upon another driven,  
Fleeter than the birds of heaven,  
Fleeter than the fire-flood's might,  
Rush they to the realms of night,  
Where, beyond the western sea,  
Broods the infernal Deity,  
While our city makes her moan  
O'er her countless children gone.

Blasted in its life's young morn,  
Unwept is laid the infant newly born ;  
Contagion spreads its murderous breath,  
The lap of earth is fraught with death ;  
Mothers, o'er their loved ones bending,  
Brides, their snowy bosoms rending,  
Round the holy altars kneeling,  
Torn by keen convulsive feeling,  
Change oft the suppliant cry to wild despair,  
While sobs succeed to drown the meek, still voice of  
prayer !

Then haste thee from above,  
Thou golden daughter of all-seeing Jove !  
Bid fly afar  
The frantic Lord of desolating war ;

Not armed with brazen shield,  
Meet for the mailed field,  
He stems the battle's terrible array,  
His darkling hands dispense  
The shafts of pestilence,  
And flame and tumult mark his devious way.

Bid him 'neath the billows cower,  
In Amphitrite's spacious bower,  
Or where loud the waters roar,  
Lashing Thracia's lonely shore :  
Unpitying he, —if midnight shade  
Some pledge of love should spare,  
His noisome darts by day invade,  
And leave all blighted there.

Lord of the starry Heaven,  
Grasping the terrors of the burning levin !  
Let thy fierce bolt descend,  
Scathe the Destroyer's might, and suffering Thebes  
befriend.

Speed thee here, Lycean King,  
Archer, from whose golden string  
Light the unerring arrows spring,  
Apollo, lend thine aid !  
And come, ye beams of wreathed light,  
Glancing on the silent night,  
In mazy dance, on Lycia's height,  
When roves the Huntress Maid !

Thou, the golden chaplet fair  
Braiding mid thy clustering hair,  
To thy native haunts repair,  
    Thy name that gave ;  
Thou, whose brow the wine-lees stain,  
Thou, to whom, on star-lit plain,  
Evoe ! sing the frenzied train,  
    Bacchus the brave !  
With thy torch of pine defy,  
(Hated by the powers on high,)  
War's unhallowed Deity :  
    Haste thee to save !



SOPH. ŒD. TYR. 856.

#### ARGUMENT.

THE Thebans, in order to remove the pestilence which afflicted them, were enjoined by Apollo to discover the murderer of Laius their former king. Circumstances led to the belief, that Œdipus, then supposed to be the son of Polybus, was the guilty person; but this seemed contrary to a former oracle of Apollo, which declared that Laius should be slain by his own son. The Chorus, apprehensive lest this apparent contradiction should cause scepticism, describe in the following Ode the immutability of Divine law, and the evil consequences of pride; they pray that their own city may remain free from this sin, and that Jove may vindicate the truth of the suspected oracle.

MAY Fate accord to me,  
 In word and deed, that hallowed purity,<sup>1</sup>  
 Whose laws were framed on high,  
 Born in the heavenly chambers of the sky;

(<sup>1</sup>) This passage recalls to our mind the following beautiful lines from Wordsworth's Excursion:

“ But, by the storms of circumstance unshaken,  
 And subject neither to eclipse nor wane,  
 Duty exists;—immutably survive,  
 For our support, the measures and the forms,  
 Which an abstract Intelligence supplies,  
 Whose kingdom is, where time and space are not.”

P. 134.

See also the well-known passage of Sophocles, Antig. 449.

οὐδὲ σθένειν τοσοῦτον φόβῳ τὰ σὰ  
 κηρύγμαθ' ὥστ' ἀγραπτα κάσφαλῆ θεῶν  
 νόμιμα δύνασθαι θνητῶν ὑνθ' ὑπερδραμεῖν.  
 οὐ γάρ τι νῦν γε κάχθεις, ἀλλ' ἄει πότε  
 ζῆ ταῦτα, κοῦδεῖς οἶδεν ἐξ ὕτου φάνη.

I never decem'd decrees by mortals given  
 Annul the sure, unwritten laws of Heaven:  
 Nor of to-day nor yesterday they came,  
 Through immemorial ages still the same;  
 Their vital strength still fresh, their date unknown,  
 Nor changed by Senates, nor by Kings o'erthrown.

Olympus gave them birth,  
 They sprang not from the mortal race of earth ;  
     No time their might o'erthrows,  
 Never may Lethe lull them to repose ;  
     Nor feeble age oppress  
 The unchanging God, that dwells in thoughts of  
     Holiness.

Pride genders despot rule ;  
 Pride, bred in pampered school,  
 Oft with bloated pomp doth diet,  
 Surfeited with reckless riot :  
 Climbing oft, she seeks to dwell <sup>2</sup>  
 Throned on Fortune's pinnacle ;  
 Hurried from the summit straight  
 Down the vast abrupt of Fate,

---

(<sup>2</sup>) If the reading and interpretation of Brunck should be adopted, the original may thus be rendered :

Biddeth oft her votaries dwell  
 Throned on Fortune's pinnacle,  
 Then from highest realms of bliss  
 Hurls them to the dark abyss :  
 From the beetling mountain's brink,  
 Down the vast abrupt they sink,  
 Dashed against the barren coast,  
 Where the darkling steps are lost.

Perhaps Gray thus understood the passage, and imitated it in his Ode on the distant Prospect of Eton College :

“ Ambition this shall tempt to rise,  
     Then hurl the wretch from high,  
 To bitter scorn a sacrifice,  
     And grinning infamy.”



Hurled from highest realms of bliss,  
Sinks she in the dark abyss,  
Dashed against that rugged coast,  
Where the darkling steps are lost.  
Hard though be the task assigned thee,  
Let not pride, my country, blind thee;  
Be thy lot by Heaven decreed  
Eager service, bounteous meed.  
God, in whom for aye I'll trust,  
Holds his shield before the just!  
But for the man, whose heart is known  
By haughty deed and lofty tone,  
Whose bosom justice never feared,  
Nor temples of the Gods revered,  
Spurning Heaven, and rapt in self,  
Led by sordid lust of pelf,  
One, who hath not kept him back  
From pollution's fatal track,  
Unto him may Fate dispense  
Pride's unfailing recompense.  
Conscience! thou to such canst deal  
Keener stroke than blade of steel;  
Else, if man may Heaven defy,  
If sleeps the vengeance of the sky,  
Why the idle chaunt prolong?  
Still be the dance, and hushed the song!

Far, Phœbus, let thy praises swell,  
Man learn thy truth, and own thine oracle;

Else, never more,  
If thou be faithless known,  
May we in Abæ's courts adore,  
Or Delphi's central throne,  
Never, at Olympian shrine,  
Own the Lord of life divine.

If rightly, Jove, thy praise we sing,  
Universal nature's King,  
Turn not thy wakeful eye away,  
Nor let man mock thy everlasting sway.  
Mark how he, in impious hour,  
Doubts of thy prophetic power,  
Doubts the tale thy Seers of old  
Of the slaughtered monarch told;  
How, by dark mistrust beguiled,  
He dares to scorn thy Delian child;  
How from the rebel world are driven,  
The holy rites, the homage due to heaven.

---

SOPH. CED. COL. 674.

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THE ARGUMENT.

ŒDIPUS, having in his wanderings reached Colonos, a hill near Athens, is addressed in the following Ode by the Chorus, which consists of old men of Attica. They describe the beautiful scenery of the spot, and the blessings of their country, especially celebrating its olives, steeds, and fleet.

STRANGER, thou art standing now  
 On Colonos' sparry brow :<sup>1</sup>

---

(<sup>1</sup>) This chorus is made peculiarly interesting by the fact, that Colonos was the birth-place of Sophocles, and by a well-known story, recorded by Plutarch. The sons of Sophocles, in his old age, in order to obtain possession of his property, attempted to prove that the decay of his intellect rendered him incapable of managing his affairs. The Poet answered triumphantly by reciting this beautiful piece, which he had recently composed. It is interesting to compare, with the description of scenery it contains, the account given by Hughes:—"All the images in that exquisite Chorus of Sophocles, where he dilates with rapture upon the beauties of his native place, may still be verified. The Crocus, the Narcissus, and a thousand flowers, still mingle their various dyes, and impregnate the atmosphere with odours: the descendants of those ancient Olives, on which the eye of Morian Jupiter was fixed in vigilant care, still spread their broad arms, and form a shade impervious to the sun. In the opening of the year the whole grove is vocal with the melody of the Nightingale, and at its close, the purple clusters, the glory of Bacchus, hang around the trellis-work with which the numerous cottages and villas are adorned." . . . . "This terrestrial Paradise owes its beauty and fertility to the Cephissus, from whose perennial fountains it is irrigated." (HUGHES' *Travels in Greece*, I. 295.) Lord Byron has made poetical use of the little change which has taken place in the scenery and productions of Greece :

" Yet

All the haunts of Attic ground,  
Where the matchless coursers bound,

“ Yet are thy skies as blue, thy crags as wild ;  
Sweet are thy groves, and verdant are thy fields,  
Thine olive ripe as when Minerva smiled,  
And still his honied wealth Hymettus yields,” &c.

*Childe Harold. Canto II. 87.*

It is again referred to by Lebrun :

“ Ah! de ses fils perdus la Grèce est attristée,  
Mais pour la consoler la nature est restée ;  
Mais sons son beau soleil, son sol, fécond encor,  
Sourit même à des mains avides de culture,  
Mais des bois d'olivier y donnent leur trésor,  
Mais l'oranger prodigue y répand son fruit d'or,  
La vigne ses raisins, le myrte sa verdure,  
Le glatinier ses fleurs ; les platanes épais  
Près des sources encor se plaisent à s'étendre,  
En dômes transparens, leurs rameaux n'ont jamais  
Sur la terre laissé tomber un jour plus tendre :  
Et ces riches vallons, aux sites enchanteurs,  
Où du sommet des monts l'œil charmé se repose,  
Jamais au lit des eaux n'ont vu du laurier-rose  
Serpenter plus rians les méandres de fleurs.”

*Voyage en Grèce.*

Greece weeps her children vanished from her plains,  
Her only solace, Nature, yet remains ;  
Still shines her radiant sun : her fertile soil  
Smiles e'en to bless the peasant's niggard toil :  
Laden with treasures, groves of olive shoot,  
The lavish orange yields its golden fruit,  
The vine her clusters ;—mid the myrtle bowers  
Still richly glow the red pomegranate flowers,  
Arching aloft in many a leafy dome,  
Beside the founts the plane-tree finds its home,  
Nor ever gleamed athwart its sheltering bough  
A purer air, a softer sun than now ;  
Ne'er in those vales, o'er whose enchanted maze,  
From some tall cliff the eye delighted strays,  
The laurel-rose, in bed of waters laid,  
More laughing wreaths of gadding flowers displayed.

Boast not, through their realms of bliss,  
Other spot as fair as this.

Frequent down this greenwood dale,  
Mourns the warbling nightingale,<sup>2</sup>

(<sup>2</sup>) Compare Milton:

“ See there the olive groves of Academe,  
Plato’s retirement, where the Attic bird  
Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long.”

*Par. Reg. IV.*

On which passage Dunster remarks:

“The Nightingale is with peculiar propriety introduced in this description of the Academe; in the neighbourhood of which we learn from Pausanias (Lib. 1. c. 30) lay the place called Colonus Equestris, which Sophocles has made the scene of his Œdipus Coloneus, and which he celebrates as particularly abounding with Nightingales, v. 19 and v. 704.”—The other passage of this play alluded to is the answer of Antigone to her father:

χωρος δ' ὅδ' ἱερὸς, ὡς σάφ' εἰκάσαι, βρύων  
δάφνης, ἐλαίας, ἀμπέλου· πυκνόπτεροι δ'  
ἔσω κατ' αὐτὸν εὐστομοῦς ἀηδόνες.

This spot seems sacred to some Power divine;  
Here bloom the bay, the olive, and the vine.  
Within its deep retreats, on frequent wing,  
The Nightingales their tuneful descant sing.

The general suffrage of poets seems to have ascribed melancholy to the song of the Nightingale. Thus Euripides, *Helen*, 1107.

σὲ τὰν ἐναυλείοις ὑπὸ δενδροκόμοις  
μουσεῖα καὶ θάκουσ ἐνίζουσεν ἀναβυόσω,  
σὲ τὰν αἰδοτάταν ἕρνηθα μελωδῶν  
ἀηδόνα δικρύεσσεν,  
ἔλθ' ᾧ διὰ ζουθῶν γενῶν ἐλελιζομένῃ,  
θρήνοις ἔμοῖς ξυνεργός,  
Ἐλένας μελέας πόνους.

Sad bird, whose tuneful haunts are made  
Beneath the deepest covert's shade,

Where

Nestling mid the thickest screen  
 Of the ivy's darksome green ;  
 Or where, each empurpled shoot  
 Drooping with its myriad fruit,

Where shrubs their tresses weave above  
 The sweetest minstrel of the grove :  
 Sad, tearful Nightingale, whose note,  
 Thick-warbled, swells thy dusky throat ;  
 Come, thy melodious dirges pour,  
 And Helen's griefs with me deplore ;  
 The captive maids, the woes of Troy  
 May well thy plaintive song employ.

So also Milton :

“ Where the love-lorn Nightingale  
 Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well.”

*Comus*, 234.

And Shakspeare :

“ Here I can sit alone, unseen of any,  
 And to the Nightingale's complaining notes,  
 Tune my distresses, and record my woes.”

*Two Gent. of Verona*, Act V. Sc. 4.

But see Coleridge's Poem on the Nightingale :

“ Most musical, most melancholy bird !  
 A melancholy bird ? Oh ! idle thought !  
 In nature there is nothing melancholy.  
 But some night-wandering man, whose heart was pierced  
 With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,  
 Or slow distemper, or neglected love,  
 (And so, poor wretch ! filled all things with himself,  
 And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale  
 Of his own sorrow,) he, and such as he,  
 First named these notes a melancholy strain :  
 And many a poet echoes the conceit.”

In this opinion he is supported by Chaucer :

“ Then dothe the Nightingale her might  
 To makin noise and singen blithe.”



Curled in many a mazy twine,  
 Blooms the never-trodden vine,<sup>3</sup>  
 By the Gods' protecting power,  
 Safe from sun and storm and shower.  
 Bacchus here, the summer long,  
 Revels with the Goddess throng,  
 Nymphs who erst, on Nyssa's wild,  
 Reared to man the rosy child.<sup>4</sup>

(<sup>3</sup>) It may be reasonably doubted whether the laurel, or rather bay, is not the shrub intended by Sophocles: in one of the hymns attributed to Homer, it is mentioned, in conjunction with the ivy, as forming the garland of Bacchus. (See the passage quoted in the note on line 22.) If this interpretation be adopted, the lines may be thus rendered:

Or where round the laurel bush  
 Thousand clustering berries blush,  
 Nursling of the joyous God,  
 Ne'er by mortal footstep trod.  
 Never Summer's angry glare  
 Lays its leafy honours bare,  
 And the storm, that scathes the plain,  
 Sweeps its verdant boughs in vain.

(<sup>4</sup>) Compare Homer's Hymn to Bacchus:

ὄν τρέφον ἠΰκομοι νύμφαι παρὰ πατρὸς ἀνικτος  
 δεξάμεναι κύλποισι, καὶ ἐνδυκέως ἀπίταλλον  
 Νύσσης ἐν γυάλοις· ὃ δ' ἀέξετο πατρὸς ἔκητι  
 ἄντρῳ ἐν εὐώδει μεταρίθμιος ἀθανάτοισιν.  
 αὐτὰρ ἐπειδὴ τόνδε θεαὶ πολύῤῃμον ἔθρεψαν,  
 δὴ τότε φοιτίζεσκε καθ' ὑλήεντας ἐναύλους  
 κισσῶ καὶ δάφνη πεπυκασμένους· αἱ δ' ἄμ' ἔποντο  
 Νύμφαι, ὃ δ' ἐξηγεῖτο· βρόμος δ' ἔχεν ἄσπετον ὕλην.

In Nyssa's vales the bright-haired Nymphs caressed  
 And clasped the immortal infant to their breast;  
 Where perfumed breezes sighed, the boy was laid,  
 Watched by his sire, beneath the grotto's shade;

There

Here Narcissus, day by day,  
 Buds, in clustering beauty, gay,  
 Sipping aye, at morn and even,  
 All the nectar dews of heaven,  
 Wont amid your locks to shine,  
 Ceres fair and Proserpine.<sup>5</sup>  
 Here the golden Crocus gleams,  
 Murmur here unfailing streams,  
 Sleep the bubbling fountains never,  
 Feeding pure Cephisus river,

---

There reared to manhood by the Goddess throng,  
 The future theme of many a grateful song,  
 He loved along the woody dells to stray,  
 Bind round his brow the ivy and the bay,  
 With those fair Nymphs attendant, far to rove,  
 And fill with festive song the echoing grove.

It is proper to mention, that Nyssa is not specified by Sophocles as the place where Bacchus was cherished by the Nymphs.

(<sup>5</sup>) According to Homer, it was the beauty of the Narcissus which principally attracted Proserpine in the fields of Nyssa :

*νάρκισσόν θ', ὅν ἔφυσε δόλον καλυκάπιδι κούρη  
 Γαῖα Διὸς βουλήσι χαρίζομένη πολυδέκτη,  
 θαυμαστὸν γανῶντα, σέβας δέ τε πᾶσιν ιδέσθαι  
 ἀθανάτοις τε θεοῖς ἠδὲ θνητοῖς ἀνθρώποις·  
 τοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ ρίζης ἑκατὸν κᾶρα ἐξεπεφύκει·  
 κηῶδει τ' ὀδμῇ πᾶς τ' οὐρανὸς εὐρύς ὑπερθεν  
 γαῖά τε πᾶς ἔγέλασσε καὶ ἄλμυρὸν οἶδμα θαλάσσης.  
 ἦ δ' ἄρα θαμβήσας ὀρέξατο χερσὶν ἅμ' ἅμφω  
 καλὸν ἄθυρμα λαβεῖν· χάνε δὲ χθῶν εὐρυάγνια  
 Νύσιον ἀμπεδίον, τῇ ὕρουσεν ἄναξ πολυδέγμων  
 ἵπποις ἀθανάτοισι, Κρόνου πολυάνυμος υἱός.*

Earth heeded Jove ; to Pluto lent her aid,  
 And bade Narcissus shine to lure the maid ;

Whose prolific waters daily  
 Bid the pastures blossom gaily,  
 With the showers of spring-tide blending,  
 On the lap of earth descending.  
 Here the Nine, to notes of pleasure,  
 Love to tread their choral measure,  
 Venus, o'er these flowrets gliding,  
 Oft her rein of gold is guiding.

Now a brighter boast than all  
 Shall my grateful song recall;  
 Yon proud shrub, that will not smile,  
 Pelops, on thy Doric isle,<sup>6</sup>

In splendour strange its beauteous head it raised,  
 And Gods and mortals wondered as they gazed:  
 On one light stalk a hundred flowrets hung,  
 Far on the breeze its odorous scent was flung;  
 Heaven's wide expanse with joy the perfume quaffed,  
 The verdant earth, the briny ocean laughed;  
 The admiring maiden strained her eager grasp,  
 But sought in vain the lovely toy to clasp;  
 Quaked all the plain;—earth yawned;—the King of Death  
 Rose, drawn by steeds immortal, from beneath.

(<sup>6</sup>) Pindar speaks of the olive as originally flourishing among the Hyperboreans, and thence conveyed by Hercules to Elis:

Ἄ τε Πίσα με γεγωνεῖν τᾶς ἀπὸ  
 θεύμοροι νίσσοντ' ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους αἰοδαί,  
 ὧ τινι, κραινῶν ἐφετμὰς  
 Ἑρακλέους προτέρας,  
 ἀτρεκῆς Ἑλλανοδίκας γλεφάρων  
 Αἰτωλῶδς ἀνήρ ὑψόθεν  
 ἀμφὶ κόμασι βάλοι γλαν-  
 κόχρου κόσμον ἐλαίας. τάν ποτε

<sup>6</sup>Ἴστρου

Nor on Asiatic soil,  
 But unsown, unsought by toil,  
 Self-engendered, year by year,  
 Springs to life a native here.  
 Tree the trembling foeman shuns,  
 Garland for Athena's sons,<sup>7</sup>

Ἰστρου ἀπὸ σκιαρῶν παγῶν ἔνεικεν  
 Ἀμφιτρωνιάδας,  
 μῆμα τῶν Ὀλυμπία κάλλιστον ἄλων,  
 δᾶμον Ἵπερβορέων πέισας, Ἀπόλ·  
 λωνος θεράποντα. ὕγε  
 πιστὰ φρονέων, Διὸς αἴτει πανδόκῳ  
 ἄλσει σκιάρῳ τε φύτευμα  
 ξυγὸν ἀνθρώποις, στέφανόν τ' ἄρετῆς. *Pind. Ol. III. 17.*

Pisa bids me breathe the lay,  
 Pisa, from whose hallowed plains  
 Proceed the godlike minstrel strains,  
     For him who wins the day;  
     Around his throbbing brow,  
     Obedient to decrees  
     Of ancient Hercules,  
 See the Eleian arbiter display  
     The silvery olive bough;  
 The olive, that from Ister's shore  
 Alcmena's son in triumph bore,  
 Where o'er the chilling stream it wove,  
 Mid Hyperborean tribes, an ever-verdant grove.  
 True votaries of the Delian God,  
     They gave it to the Hero's prayer;  
 Amid Olympia's wood, by thousands trod,  
     To rear its branches fair;  
 For weary limbs wreathing an arbour's shade,  
 And, for the victor's brow, a wreath untaught to fade.

(<sup>7</sup>) The word παιδοτρόφου admits of the passage being rendered thus:

Terror of the adverse host,  
 Food our babes delight in most.

May the olive long be ours,  
 None may break its sacred bowers,  
 None its boughs of silvery grey  
 Young or old may bear away :  
 Morian Jove, with look of love,  
 Ever guards it from above,  
 Blue-eyed Pallas watch unsleeping  
 O'er her favourite tree is keeping.

Swell the song of praise again ;  
 Other boons demand my strain,  
 Other blessings we inherit,  
 Granted by the mighty Spirit ;  
 On the sea and on the shore,  
 Ours the bridle and the oar.

Son of Saturn old ! whose sway  
 Stormy winds and waves obey,  
 Thine be honour's well-earned meed,  
 Tamer of the champing steed :  
 First he wore on Attic plain  
 Bit of steel and curbing rein.<sup>8</sup>

---

(<sup>8</sup>) The allusion here is to the well-known contest between Pallas and Neptune. See *Ov. Met.* VI. 70.

"Cecropia Pallas scopulum Mavortis in arce  
 Pingit, et antiquam de terræ nomine litem.  
 Bis sex cœlestes, medio Jove, sedibus altis  
 Augustâ gravitate sedent. Sua quemque Deorum  
 Inscribit facies. Jovis est regalis imago.

Oft too o'er the waters blue,  
 Athens, strain thy labouring crew ;  
 Practised hands the bark are plying,  
 Oars are bending, spray is flying,  
 Sunny waves beneath them glancing,  
 Sportive Nereids round them dancing,  
 With their hundred feet in motion,  
 Twinkling mid the foam of ocean.

---

Stare Deum pelagi, longoque ferire tridente  
 Aspera saxa facit, medioque è vulnere saxi  
 Exsiluisse ferum ; quo pignore vindicet urbem.  
 At sibi dat clypeum, dat acutæ cuspidis hastam ;  
 Dat galeam capiti ; defenditur ægide pectus.  
 Percussamque suâ simulat de cusptide terram  
 Prodere cum baccis fœtum canentis olivæ :  
 Mirarique Deos : Operi victoria finis."

Next in the web, in mimic strife,  
 Pallas and Neptune start to life,  
     Mars' Hill appears in view ;  
 To judge the combat throned and crowned,  
 Twelve Gods august are seated round,  
     And each a portrait true.  
 Jove in the midst, most like a king,  
 " The centre of the glittering ring,"  
     And He, the Lord of Ocean ;  
 His trident deals its heaviest shock,  
 The steed emerges from the rock,  
     The crags are all in motion :  
 And next, the Goddess stands revealed,  
 With ægis, helmet, spear, and shield,  
     A Maid, armed cap-à-pie,  
 She wounds the soil,—the shrub strikes root,  
 The silvery olive sheds its fruit ;  
     The Gods the prize decree ;  
 Thenceforth for aye shall Cecrops' plain,  
 With olives crowned, the name retain  
     Of that kind Deity.

SOPH. ŒD. COL. 1048.

#### THE ARGUMENT.

CREON, having conveyed away by force the daughters of Oedipus, is pursued by Theseus with an army. During their absence the Chorus sing the following Ode: they express a wish to join the Athenian host; conjecture the course probably pursued by them; predict their victory, and invoke the assistance of the Gods.



WAFT me hence, and set me down,  
Where the lines of battle frown;  
Waft me, where the brazen shout  
Of the Lord of War rings out  
On the Pythian coast, or where  
Flickering torches wildly glare,  
Where on mystic rites have smiled  
Ceres, and her honoured child.  
Many a priest attends their shrine,  
Sprung of old Eumolpus' line,  
While discretion's golden key<sup>1</sup>  
Locks their lips in secrecy.  
Round the virgin-sisters twain  
Soon shall fall the crowded slain,

---

(1) Compare Hamlet, I. 3.

“ 'Tis in my memory locked,  
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.”

Theseus soon, in mailed might,  
 Wake the terrors of the fight.  
 Now, I ween, in haste they glide  
 Cœa's snowy rocks beside;  
 There, beneath the western sky,  
 Swift their straining coursers fly,  
 Rapid roll their whirling cars;  
 Fleeter speeds pursuing Mars;  
 Theseus' train is on its way,  
 Keen to grasp the destined prey;  
 Every bit like lightning glancing,  
 Every mailed knight advancing,  
 Every charger's arched neck  
 Princely spoils and trappings deck.  
 Yours the vow for victory won,  
 Hippian Pallas! Rhea's son!  
 Thou, who, throned in coral caves,  
 Claspest earth, and rulest waves!<sup>2</sup>  
 Is the awful stillness past?  
 Have they closed in fight at last?  
 Answer, my prophetic soul!  
 Thou canst secret fate unrol.  
 Soon, I ween, shall warrior sword,  
 Wielded by Athena's lord,

---

(<sup>2</sup>) Compare King John, V. 2.

"O nation! that thou couldst remove!  
 That Neptune's arms, who clippeth thee about,  
 Would bear thee from the knowledge of thyself."

Free the maid, by sorrow bowed,  
Mocked and scorned by brethren proud :  
Thus shall righteous Jove to-day  
Judge for her the dubious fray ;  
So, across my spirit's dreams  
Joy anticipated gleams.  
Might I, like the soaring dove,  
Roam the aërial fields above,  
Her, who, borne on tempest wings,  
Forth with rustling pinion springs,  
Sweet it were, from clouds on high,  
Battle's changeful tide to spy.  
Jove ! whose everlasting sway  
Heaven's unchanging Gods obey,  
Jove ! before whose piercing eyes  
Bare each thing created lies,  
Let not, on the conflict plain,  
Theseus spread his toils in vain ;  
Grant to Athens' champions brave  
Might to vanquish, strength to save.  
Pallas ! Jove's majestic child,  
Phœbus ! hunter of the wild,  
Dian ! still the woodland wooing,  
Still the dappled stag pursuing,  
Archer lord, and mountain maid,  
Haste ye, haste ye to our aid !



SOPH. CED. COL. 1218.

ARGUMENT.

THE Chorus take occasion from the misfortunes of Œdipus  
to moralize on the condition of man.

SOPH. CED. COL. 1218.

---

THERE are, who would the life of man  
Protract beyond its little span :  
But dreaming fools seem such to me,  
And hoarders up of vanity.  
Man is but brought by length of years  
More nigh a land of grief and tears ;  
Vainly he casts his eyes around,  
To search for joy, that is not found,  
While still, with fond desires possest,  
Repines his over-yearning breast.  
One only healing hour remains,  
The hour when Hades' monarch reigns,  
When Fate, without the bridal choir,  
Without the dance, without the lyre,  
And Death, man's comforter and friend,  
Appear, his weary course to end.

Of all the dreams of bliss that are,  
Not to be born is best by far;<sup>1</sup>

(<sup>1</sup>) Compare Ecclesiastes iv. 2, 3. — “Wherefore I praised the dead, which are already dead, more than the living, which are yet alive. Yea, better is he than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.”

See also the following passage of Milton :

“Better end here unborn,—why is life given  
To be thus wrested from us? rather why  
Obtruded on us thus? who, if we knew  
What we receive, would either not accept  
Life offered, or soon beg to lay it down,  
Glad to be so dismissed.”

Compare also the following lines of Lamartine :

“J’ai vécu, j’ai passé ce désert de la vie,  
Où toujours sous mes pas chaque fleur s’est flétrie,  
Où toujours l’espérance, abusant ma raison,  
M’a montré le bonheur dans un vague horizon;  
Où, du vent de la mort les brûlantes haleines  
Sous mes lèvres toujours tarissaient les fontaines.  
Qu’un autre, s’exhalant en regrets superflus,  
Redemande au passé ses jours qui ne sont plus,  
Pleure de son printemps l’aurore évanouie,  
Et consente à revivre une seconde vie.  
Pour moi, quand le destin m’offrirait à mon choix  
Le sceptre du génie, et le trône des rois,  
La gloire, la beauté, les trésors, la sagesse,  
Et joindrait à ses dons l’éternelle jeunesse,  
J’en jure par la mort, dans un monde pareil,  
Non ! je ne voudrais pas rajeunir d’un soleil.  
Je ne veux pas d’un monde, où tout change, où tout passe,  
Où, jusqu’au souvenir, tout s’use et tout s’efface,  
Où tout est fugitif, périssable, incertain,  
Où le jour du bonheur n’a pas de lendemain.”

Yes, I have strayed along life’s desert road;  
Daily the flowrets withered where I trod;

Still



Next best, by far the next for man,  
To speed as fast as speed he can,

Still Bliss was placed by cheating Hope in view,  
But, with the horizon fleeting, still withdrew ;  
Beneath my lips I've felt the fountains fail,  
Drained by the blast of Death's destructive gale.  
In vain regret, their woes let others pour,  
Ask of the past the days that are no more,  
Weep for the morning of their spring-tide fled,  
Consent anew life's weary path to tread.  
For me, though lavish Fate should make my own  
The crown of genius, or the monarch's throne,  
Fame, beauty, wealth, the instinctive glance of truth,  
And add to all her gifts eternal youth,  
By Death I swear, while thus life's course is run,  
I'd not be younger by a single sun.  
I cannot love a world, where all betrays,  
All changes, passes, Memory's self decays,  
On Joy's brief day where never morrows rise,  
All fleets and fades, all vacillates and dies.

Equally melancholy sentiments with regard to human life pervade most of the Greek poets. See, among many other passages, Eurip. Med. 1193.

τὰ θνητὰ δ' οὐ νῦν πρῶτον ἠγοῦμαι σκιάν,  
οὐδ' ἂν τρέσας εἶποιμι, τοὺς σοφοὺς βροτῶν  
δοκοῦντας εἶναι καὶ μεριμνητὰς λόγων  
τούτους μεγίστην μωρίαν ὀφλισκάνειν.  
θνητῶν γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἐστὶν εὐδαίμων φύσει·  
ἄλβου δ' ἐπὶ βρῦέντος, εὐτυχεστέρος  
ἄλλου γένοιτ' ἂν ἄλλος, ἄλβιος δ' ἂν οὐ.

'Tis sad experience bids the thoughtfu say,  
The things of earth, like shadows, fleet away.  
Those wisest deemed, who, wrapped in study, pore  
O'er nature's mysteries, or on learning's lore,  
Who waste life's hours amid sequestered schools,  
Rank but the first among the train of fools.  
None, none are blest!—Wealth pampers mortal lo  
And Fortune smiles, but happiness is not.

And

Soon as his eyes have glanced on earth,  
To where he was before his birth!

And a fragment of Menander :

——— τοῦτον εὐτυχέστατον λέγω,  
ὅστις θεωρήσας ἀλύπως, Παρμένων,  
τὰ σεμνὰ παντ' ἀπῆλθεν, ὅθεν ἦλθεν, ταχὺ,  
τὸν ἥλιον τὸν κοινὸν, ἄστρ', ὕδωρ, νέφη,  
πῦρ· τ' αὐτὰ, κἂν ἑκατὸν ἔτη βιώσεται,  
ὄψει παρόντα, κἂν ἐνιαυτοὺς σφόδρ' ὀλίγους,  
σεμνοτέρα τούτων ἄτερ' οὐκ ὄψει ποτέ.  
πανήγυριν νόμισόν τιν' εἶναι τὸν χρόνον,  
ὃν φημί, τοῦτον, τὴν ἐπιδημίαν ἄνω,  
ὄχλον, ἀγοράς, κλέπτας, κυβείας, διατρίβας.  
ἂν πρῶτος ἐξέλθης, καταλύσεις βελτίον·  
ἐφόδι' ἔχων ἀπῆλθες, ἐχθρὸς οὐδενί,  
ὁ προσδιατρίβων κοπιάσας ἀπέλασε.  
κακῶς τε γηρῶν, ἐνδεῆς τοῦ γίνεται,  
βεμβύμενος ἐχθροὺς εὖρ', ἐπεβουλεύθη πόθε·  
οὐκ εὐθανάτως ἀπῆλθεν ἐλθὼν εἰς χρόνον.

He is the happiest man, whose eye,  
Just glancing nature's majesty,  
The sun's impartial light,  
The fire, the clouds, the deep,  
The twinkling stars of night,  
Is straightway closed in sleep.

Whose footsteps to the distant bourne  
From whence he came, with speed return.

For though on earth a hundred years he range,  
He shall not look on nature's change ;  
The elements, the heavens so fair,  
That met his infant gaze,  
A more majestic beauty wear,  
Than ought beside displays.

Life is a fair, where thousands jostle,  
Where all is dice, and thieves, and bustle,  
All tumults fierce, and wranglings loud ;  
And we are pilgrims mid the crowd.

Who

For when unthinking youth is nigh,  
Girt with thin forms of levity,

Who would not long such scene to leave,  
Ere strife or losses bid him grieve?  
To be the first his home to win,  
Or rest him in some quiet inn?  
The lingerer finds but toils unceasing,  
Sorrows, and wants, and foes, increasing:  
No certain joy, no changeless friend;  
A darker life, a bitterer end.

The opposite views which may be taken of human life are prettily contrasted in the following Epigrams:

ποίη τις βιώτοιο τάμοι τρίβον; εἰν ἀγορῇ μὲν  
νείκεα καὶ χαλεπαὶ πρήξιες· ἐν δὲ δόμοις  
φροντίδες· ἐν δ' ἀγοραῖς καμάτων ἄλις· ἐν δὲ θαλάσῃ  
τάρβος· ἐπὶ ξείνης δ', ἦν μὲν ἔχης τί, δέος·  
ἦν δ' ἀπορῆς, ἀνιηρόν· ἔχεις γάμον; οὐκ ἀμέριμνος  
ἔσσει· οὐ γαμέεις; ζῆς ἔτ' ἐρημότερον.  
τέκνα πόνοι· πῆρωσις ἀπαις βίος· αἰ νεότητες  
ἄφρονες· αἰ πολλαὶ δ' ἔμπαλιν ἀδρανέες.  
ἦν ἄρα τοῖς δισσοῦν ἐνὸς αἵρεσις, ἢ τὸ γενέσθαι  
μηδέποτ', ἢ τὸ θανεῖν αὐτίκα τικτόμενον.

Tell me in what state of life,  
Man may ever happy be?  
In the mart is wrangling strife,  
In his home anxiety.  
Howsoe'er his course be planned,  
Still vexation shall he reap,  
Toils fatigue him on the land,  
Terrors wait him on the deep;  
Wilt thou rove? if wealth be thine,  
Thou mayst be the robber's prey;  
If without it, thou mayst pine,  
Cheerless, on thy lonely way.  
If by wedded love attended,  
Thou shalt have increase of care;

What woes are absent from his train?  
 What shapes of labour and of pain?  
 There muster Envy and Debate,  
 Malice and Battle, Strife and Hate;

Art thou single? unbefriended,  
 Thou must sink beneath despair.  
 Woe from children shalt thou gain,  
 Yet without them must thou mourn;  
 Youth is Folly's idle reign,  
 Age is feeble and forlorn.  
 This the best that can befall,  
 Either not to be at all,  
 Or from life received to fly,  
 And as soon as born to die.

παντοίην βίότοιο τάμοις τρίβον· εἰν ἀγορῇ μὲν,  
 κήδεα καὶ πινυται πρήξιος· ἐν δὲ δόμοις,  
 ἄμπαυμ· ἐν δ' ἀγοραῖς φύσιος χάρις· ἐν δὲ θαλάσση  
 κέρδος· ἐπὶ ξείνης, ἣν μὲν ἔχης τί, κλέος·  
 ἦν δ' ἀπορῆς, μόνος οἶδας· ἔχεις γάμον; οἶκος ἄριστος  
 ἔσσεται· οὐ γαμέεις; ζῆς ἔτ' ἐλαφρότερον  
 τέκνα πόθος· ἀφροντίς ἄπαις βίος. αἱ νεότητες  
 ῥωμαλέαι· πολιαὶ δ' ἔμπαυιν εὐσεβέες.  
 οὐκ ἄρα τῶν δισσῶν ἐνὺς αἴρεσις, ἢ τὸ γενέσθαι  
 μηδέποτ', ἢ τὸ θανεῖν αὐτίκα τικτόμενον.

Man may find life's pathway brightened,  
 If he will, where'er he roam;  
 In the mart his mind's enlightened,  
 Rest refreshes him at home;  
 Howsoe'er his course be planned,  
 He shall still enjoyment reap;  
 Nature smiles upon the land,  
 Gain is gathered from the deep.  
 Wilt thou rove?—if wealth be thine,  
 All will thy behest obey;  
 Art thou poor?—none need divine  
 The secret, if thou still art gay.

Till comes, the butt of scoffers' scorn,  
 That lot, the last, the most forlorn,  
 With none to aid, to love, to know,  
 Age, with his household, Woe on Woe!<sup>2</sup>

If by wedded love attended,  
 Comfort smiles around thy hearth;  
 If without, till life is ended,  
 Thine is liberty and mirth.  
 Joy from children mayst thou gain;  
 Childless, thou from care art free;  
 Youth is Vigour's healthful reign,  
 Age is fraught with piety.  
 'Tis *not* the best that can befall,  
 Either, not to be at all,  
 Or from life received to fly,  
 For life is all felicity.

There is a passage of Aristophanes, in which he seems to have collected most of the phrases by which the Greek Tragedians express the wretchedness of man :

Ἄγε δὴ φύσιν ἄνδρες ἀμαυρόβιοι, φύλλων γενεᾶ προσόμοιοι,  
 ὀλιγοδρανέες, πλάσματα πηλοῦ, σικωιδέα φύλ' ἀμενηνά,  
 ἀπτήγες ἐφημέριοι, ταλαὶ βροτοί, ἄνερες εἰκελόνειροι.

Man, clouded o'er with grief!  
 Thon moulded thing of clay;  
 Man, fading as the leaf,  
 The creature of a day;  
 Weak nestling, wretched, dying,  
 Imbecile, made to moan,  
 A shadow quickly flying,  
 A dream, just seen and gone!

(2) Gray employs a metaphor somewhat similar :

“ The painful family of Death,  
 More hideous than their Queen.”

*Ode on the Prospect of Eton College.*

But

Beneath whose weight opprest, decline  
 The years of Œdipus and mine.  
 As billows, by the tempest tossed,  
 Burst on some wintry northern coast,  
 So, toppling o'er his aged form,  
 Descends the fury of the storm ;  
 The troublous breakers never rest ;  
 Some, from the chambers of the West,  
 Some, from the orient sun, or where  
 At noon he sheds his angry glare,  
 Or where the stars, faint twinkling, light  
 The gloomy length of Arctic night.

But the expression of Sophocles is best illustrated by Chaucer :

“ With Elde Labour and eke Travaile  
 Lodgid bene, with Sorowe and Wo,  
 That nevir out of her court go,  
 Paine and Distresse, Sicknesse and Ire,  
 And Melanc'ly, that angry sirc,  
 Ben of her palais senatours,  
 Groning and Grutching her herbegeours :  
 The day and night her to tourment,  
 With cruill Deth thei her present,  
 And tellin her erliche and late,  
 That Deth stondesth armid at her gate ;  
 Then bring thei to her remembraunce  
 The foly deeds of her enfaunce.”

*Romaunt of the Rose, 4997—5009.*

SOPH. ANTIG. 332.





MANY a wile hath nature taught  
 By instinct's secret call ;  
 But man, with sovereign reason fraught,<sup>1</sup>  
 In cunning passeth all.

(<sup>1</sup>) A train of reflection very similar to this occurs in Herschel's Introduction to the Study of Natural Philosophy, chap. i.—“Man is the undisputed lord of the creation. The strongest and fiercest of his fellow-creatures, the whale, the elephant, the eagle, and the tiger, are slaughtered by him to supply his most capricious wants, or tamed to do him service, or imprisoned to make him sport. The spoils of all nature are in daily requisition for his most common uses, yielded with more or less readiness, or wrested with reluctance, from the mine, the forest, the ocean, and the air. Such are the first-fruits of reason.” Menander, in the following lines, playfully maintains the opposite opinion :

“Ἀπαντα τὰ ζῶ' ἔστι μακροβιώτερα,  
 καὶ νοῦν ἔχοντα μᾶλλον ἀνθρώπων πολὺ.  
 τὸν ὕνον ὄρᾶν ἔξεστι πρῶτα τουτονί.  
 οὗτος κακοδαίμων ἐστὶν ὁμολογουμένως.  
 τούτῳ κακὸν δι' αὐτὸν οὐδὲν γίγνεται,  
 ἃ δ' ἡ φύσις δέδωκεν αὐτῷ, ταῦτ' ἔχει.

'Tis his, across the foam-white tide,  
 Before the wintry blast to ride,  
 Though billows round him swell and roar,  
 He skims along from shore to shore.  
 The Goddess Queen of eldest birth,  
 Undying, inexhausted Earth,

*ἡμεῖς δὲ, χωρὶς τῶν ἀναγκαίων κακῶν.  
 αὐτοὶ παρ' αὐτῶν ἕτερα προσπυρίζομεν.  
 λυπούμεθ'· ἂν πτάρη τις· ἂν δ' εἴπη κακῶς.  
 ὀργιζόμεθ'· ἂν ἴδῃ τις ἐνύπνιον, σφόδρα  
 φοβούμεθ'· ἂν γλαυξ ἀνακράγῃ, δεδοίκαμεν.  
 ἀγωνίαι, δόξαι, φιλοτιμίαι, νόμοι,  
 ἅπαντα ταῦτ' ἐπίθετα τῇ φύσει κακά.*

If character's distinctive features  
 Attentively you scan,  
 You'll find that e'en the dullest creatures  
 Have all more wit than man!  
 You shaggy ass, on thistles fed,  
 Is wretched, all agree;  
 And yet it truly may be said,  
 He's far more blest than we.  
 He takes what Nature's hand bestows,—  
 And Nature still is kind,  
 But oh! Man's wishes and his woes  
 Are not by her confined:  
 Opinion's difference, passion's strife,  
 Oppression's iron hand,  
 Ambition's ever restless life,  
 Heed not her mild command.  
 If haply your next neighbour sneeze,  
 You start, and cry, "God bless you!"  
 An angry word can mar your ease,  
 A boding dream distress you.  
 If hoots the owl, bird of fate,  
 It wakes your superstition;  
 Such fancied ills will man create,  
 To darken man's condition.

He wears with toil from year to year,  
He guides the steed, and turns the share.  
The silly birds, an easy prey,  
The fowler bears entrapped away.  
The hunter clears the covert's side ;  
By fisher's art the depths are tried,  
Where for the finny race are set  
The meshes of the folded net.  
The beast that stalks the mountain bare,  
Or makes amid the fields his lair,  
O'ermastered lies by reason's plan,  
And yields to all-inventive man.  
The steed beneath the yoke is prest,  
Fast-bound amid his shaggy crest ;  
The bull, that roamed the hill-top free,  
Bows to unwonted slavery.  
And gifted man himself hath taught  
Utterance of speech and airy thought,  
Hath learnt to govern fierce debate,  
And sway the councils of a state ;  
And when, upon the frozen ground  
Chill winter sheds its shafts around,  
He shuns, while stormy seasons lower,  
Neath structured roof the inclement hour.  
For shifting Fortune's shock prepared,  
No moment finds him off his guard ;  
And, though at last to Death he quail,  
That only foe who must prevail,

Yet can his wit devise escape  
From fell distemper's varied shape.  
Outstripping hope, man hath at will  
Invention quick, and subtle skill,  
Now framing good, now fostering ill. }  
If faithful to his country's laws,  
True to his oath in righteous cause,  
    High be his place and fame ;  
But if from honour's side he stray,  
Impatient of her kindly sway,  
    Sunk be his outcast name ;  
For such no love my bosom knows,  
Nor such shall at my hearth repose.

SOPH. ANTIG. 579.

#### ARGUMENT.

THE Chorus, attributing the misfortunes of Antigone, who was about to suffer for disobeying Creon, to the crimes of the Labdacidæ, her ancestors, describe the manner in which the sins of the fathers are visited on the children. They represent the law that punishment must follow transgression as a consequence of the immutability of Jove; and show how productive it is of sorrows to the human race, since most men are beguiled into the pursuit of evil.

How blest are those, untaught to drain  
Retribution's cup of pain!  
Sorrow's heaven-commissioned shock  
Can the mightiest palace rock.  
Tremble then the deep foundations;  
Then, through countless generations,  
Gathering on to son from sire,  
Higher raves the storm and higher!  
As when inclement blasts of Thrace  
    Heave from its depths the ocean,  
        Scudding in rapid race,  
        Through its darkling caves,  
        The swelling waves  
Set the stormy sands in motion:  
Each after each, with sullen roar,  
Sweeps the abyss's miry floor,  
    The waters splash,  
    The billows lash  
The groaning, echoing shore.

See the troubles reviving,  
 O'er Labdacus shed,  
 See woes of the living  
 Join woes of the dead!

The father's life in anguish ends,  
 Fate's heir-loom to the son descends :  
 For the God, in secret lurking,  
 Still their overthrow is working.  
 The last shoot of that ancient tree  
 Was budding fair as fair might be,  
 And, beaming o'er it, seemed to shine  
 The fostering light of love divine :  
 Frenzy of spirit and folly of tongue  
 O'er it anew the cloud have flung.

The infernal band  
 Its downfall planned :  
 With gory scythe and unrelenting hand  
 See from the shades the Furies hie ;  
 Its buds they crop,  
 Its branches lop,  
 And leave the sapless stem to die.

Shall judgment be less strong than sin ?  
 Shall man o'er Jove dominion win ?  
 No! sleep beneath his leaden sway  
 May hold but things that know decay.  
 The unwearied months with Godlike vigour move,  
 Yet cannot change the might of Jove.



Compassed with dazzling light,  
 Throned on Olympus' height,  
 His front the eternal God uprears,  
 By toils unwearied, and unaged by years.  
 Far back through seasons past,  
 Far on through times to come,  
 Has been and still must last  
 Sin's never-failing doom :  
 Doom, whence with countless sorrows rife  
 Is erring man's tumultuous life.  
 Some, heeding hope's beguiling voice,  
 From virtue's pathway rove,  
 And some deluded make their choice  
 The levities of love.

Heedless they dream through pleasure's hour,  
 Nor mark the outstretched arm of power,  
 Till sure revenge its victim claims,  
 And burst their trance the scorching flames :  
 For well and wisely was it said,  
 That all, by Heaven to sorrows led,  
 Perverted by delirious mood,  
 Deem evil wears the shape of good,<sup>1</sup>

(<sup>1</sup>) Erfurdt quotes the following old Iambic lines in illustration of this sentiment :

ὅταν γὰρ ὀργῇ δαιμόνων βλάβητι τινά,  
 τοῦτ' αὐτὸ πρῶτον ἐξαφαιρέϊται φρενῶν  
 τὸν νοῦν τὸν ἐσθλόν, εἰς δὲ τὴν χεῖρω τρέπει  
 γνώμην, ἵν' εἰδῆ μηδὲν ὦν ἀμαρτάνει.

Chase the fair phantom, free from fears,  
And waken to a life of tears !

---

When on some mortal's fated head  
The wrath of vengeful Heaven is shed,  
The Gods first banish from his soul  
Reflection's merciful control,  
And lull his senses in the trance  
Of soft, beguiling ignorance ;  
Unconscious moves he mid the gloom,  
Nor knows his sin, nor dreads his doom.

SOPH. ANTIG. 777.

#### ARGUMENT.

ANTIGONE had been condemned to death for burying her brother contrary to the commands of Creon. Hæmon, son of Creon, betrothed to Antigone, defends her cause against his father. The Chorus in this Ode take occasion hence to describe the irresistible power of Love, and express their sympathy with Antigone and Hæmon.

UNCONQUERED LOVE! whose mystic sway  
Creation's varied forms obey,<sup>1</sup>

(<sup>1</sup>) Compare the following fragment of Sophocles :

ὦ παῖδες, ἢ τοι Κύπρις, οὐ Κύπρις μόνον,  
ἀλλ' ἔστι πολλῶν ὀνομάτων ἐπάνυμιος.  
ἔστιν μὲν Αἴδης. ἔστι δ' ἀφθιτος βία,  
ἔστιν δὲ λύσσα μαινὰς, ἔστι δ' ἕμερος  
ἄκρατος, ἔστ' οἰμωγμός. ἐν κείνῃ τὸ πᾶν,  
σπουδαῖον, ἡσυχαῖον, ἐς βίαν ἄγον.  
ἐντήκεται γὰρ πνευμόνων ὕσσις ἐνι.  
ψυχῇ τίς οὐχὶ τῆσδε τῆς θεοῦ βωρά :  
εἰσέρχεται γὰρ ἰχθύων πλωτῶ γένοι·  
ἔνεστι δ' ἐν χέρσου τετρασκελεῖ γονῆ·  
νωμᾶ δ' ἐν οἰωνοῖσι τοῦκείνης πετρὸν.  
ἐν θηρσίν, ἐν βροτοῖσιν, ἐν θεοῖς ἄνω.  
τίν' οὐ παλαίους' ἐς τρις ἐκβάλλει θεῶν :  
εἴ μοι θέμις, θέμις δὲ τᾶληθῆ λέγειν,  
Διὸς τυραννεῖ πνευμόνων, ἄνευ δορός·  
ἄνευ σιδήρου πάντα τοι συντέμενται  
Κύπρις τὰ θνητῶν καὶ θεῶν βουλεύματα.

A thousand titles Venus bears,  
A thousand changing forms she wears ;  
Now passion wild ; now frenzied madness ;  
Now strength, now death, now plaining sadness :



Thy magic warps the right to wrong,  
 And troubles now the kindred throng ;  
 The look of love, yon destined bride  
     Darts from her pleading eye,  
 A subtle counsellor, hath vied  
 With mighty laws and pryncedom's pride,  
     And won the victory ;

Melancholy), "Love is a madness;—that lovers are madmen, no one will deny."

So also Byron :

    " Who loves, raves :—'tis youth's frenzy."

Compare Metastasio :

    " Sperar senza consiglio,  
     Temer senza periglio,  
 Dar corpo all' ombre, e non dar fede al vero :  
     Figurar col pensiero  
     Cento vani fantasmi in ogni istante,  
 Sognar vegliando, e mille volte il giorno,  
     Morir senza morire,  
     Chiamar gioja il martire,  
 Pensar ad altri, ed obbliar se stesso,  
     E far passaggio spesso  
 Da timor in timor, da brama in brama,  
 E quella frenesia che amor si chiama."

To hope where hope is vain,  
 To fear, from danger free,  
 To trust in shadows, then again  
     To doubt reality.  
 To nurse, each idle hour that flies,  
 A thousand fickle fantasies ;  
 To dream awake ; to pine away,  
     Yet bless the pangs that kill ;  
 To die a thousand times a day,  
     And yet be living still ;

For in that supplicating gaze  
The Queen of Love resistless plays.

I feel my stern resolves relent ;  
    Too harsh those mandates seem ;  
My tears, within their fountain pent,  
    Flow forth a gushing stream,  
    To think that o'er thy woes,  
    Sad maiden, soon must close  
The chambers of the dead, where all for aye repose.

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Each struggling thought of self to smother  
In ceaseless musings on another ;  
From hope to hope with restless mind,  
    From fear to fear to rove ;  
Such is the frenzy that mankind  
    Deck with the name of Love !



SOPH. ANTIG. 1102.

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THE ARGUMENT.

TIRESIAS having declared that heavy judgments would fall on Creon, King of Thebes, for his treatment of Antigone, the Chorus, in the following Ode, entreat Bacchus to come either from Parnassus or Eubœa to the aid of Thebes, the country of Semele his mother.

O THOU, by many a name adored,  
 Thy Theban mother's glory,  
 Son of the Thunderer! Guardian lord  
 Of bright Italia famed in story!

King of the Eleusinian vale,  
 Where Ceres' bounties never fail,<sup>1</sup>

(<sup>1</sup>) Bacchus is frequently associated with the mysteries of Ceres. See Eurip. Ion. 1074.

αἰσχύνομαι τὸν πολὺῦμνον  
 θεὸν, εἰ περὶ καλλιχόροισι παγαῖς  
 λαμπάδα θεωρὸν εἰκάδων  
 ὄψεται ἐννύχιος ἄπνος ἄν,  
 ὅτε καὶ Διὸς ἄστερωπὸς  
 ἀνεχόρευσεν αἰθῆρ,  
 χορεύει δὲ Σελάνα  
 καὶ πεντήκοντα κόραι  
 Νηρέος, αἱ κατὰ πόντον  
 ἀενάων τε ποταμῶν  
 δίνας χορευόμεναι  
 τὰν χρυσοστέφανον κόρον  
 καὶ ματέρη σερμάν.

Bacchus! throned mid Thebe's walls,  
 Mother of thy bacchanals,  
 Where the pure Ismenus flows,  
 Where the dragon-race arose!  
 Oft, on the doubly-crested height,  
 Where nymphs of Corycus delight  
     To revel on the green;  
 Where flows Castalia's sacred stream,  
 The smouldering fires, that nightly gleam,<sup>2</sup>  
     Thy Godlike form have seen:

I blush lest Bacchus mark our throng;  
     Bacchus, theme of many a song;  
 When maids in mystic ring are dancing,  
 When, on the sacred day advancing,  
 Our torches round the well are glancing.  
 For fixed are aye his wakeful eyes  
 On Ceres' midnight mysteries.  
     When the moon, beside the waters,  
     Dances with the starry air;  
 When speed in troops old Nereus' daughters,  
     To tread a choral measure there;  
 They who, deep in ocean's caves,  
 Or amid the restless waves  
 Of streams that roll their chafing tide,  
 By some perennial fount supplied,  
     Whirling oft in dances wild,  
     The giddy torrent stem,  
 For hallowed Ceres and her child,  
     Queen of the golden diadem!

(<sup>2</sup>) Compare Eurip. Phœn. 226.

ὦ λάμπουσα πέτρα πυρὸς  
 δικόρυφον σέλας ἰπὲρ ἄκρων  
 Βακχείων, Διονύσου  
 οἴνα θ', ἃ καθαμέριον

And Nysa's verdant banks, where twine<sup>3</sup>  
The ivy and the clustering vine,

στάξεις τὸν πολύκαρπον οἰ-  
νάνθας ἰεῖσα βότρυν,  
ζάθεά τ' ἀντρα δράκοντος, οὐ-  
ρειαί τε σκοπιαί θεῶν,  
νιφόβολόν τ' ὕρος ἱερὸν, εἰ-  
λίσσων ἀθανάτας θεοῦ  
χορὸς γενοίμαν ἄφοβος,  
παρὰ μεσόμφαλα γύαλα Φοί-  
βου, Δίρκαν προλιποῦσα.

Thou crag, that towerest o'er the height,  
Where Bacchus loves to stray,  
Where, shed from either summit, light  
Mysterious seems to play ;  
Thou vine, with thousand clusters hung,  
Whence, daily, wine is welling ;  
Ye haunted scenes the cliffs among,  
Thou cave, the dragon's dwelling ;  
Thou snow-clad hill! O might I flee  
To tread the sacred dance on thee,  
And far from Dirce's fountains roam,  
To view Apollo's central home!

And Eurip. Ion. 713.

ἵνα τε δεираδες Παρνασοῦ πέτρας  
ἔχουσαι σκόπελον οὐράνιον θ' ἔδραν,  
ἵνα Βάκχαιος, ἀμφιπέτρους ἀνέχων πεύ-  
κας, λαιψηρὰ πη-  
δᾶ νυκτιπόλοις ἄμμι σὺν Βάκχαις.

There Olympus' cliffs arise,  
Crag, that tower to meet the skies,  
Bacchus there, in either hand,  
Waves at night the pine-tree brand,  
Lightly o'er the summits bounding ;  
Bacchanals their lord surrounding.

(<sup>3</sup>) At Nysa, in Eubœa, was said to be a vine, remarkable for the miraculous rapidity with which its grapes ripened. It is probably alluded

Have sent thee forth, while round thee rung  
 Evoc ! from many a votary's tongue,  
 To view that city of the earth,  
     The most beloved by thee ;  
 Thebes, home of her who gave thee birth,  
     The lightning-blasted Semelè.

Fell Plague, with iron hand,  
 Now grasps that fated land :  
 Preserver ! speed with healing step to save,  
 Or down Parnassus' slope, or o'er the booming wave.

alluded to in the passage of the Phœnissæ quoted above ; and again in the following fragment of the Thyestes of Sophocles :

*\*Εστι γάρ τις έναλία πόλις  
 γῆς Εὐβοείας, ἔνθα Βάκχειος βότρυς  
 ἐπ' ἡμᾶρ ἔρπει· πρῶτα μὲν λαμπρᾶς ἔω  
 κεκλημάτωται χῶρος· οὐρανῆς δέμας  
 εἶτ' ἡμᾶρ αὖξει μέσσον, ὕμφικος τρόπον,  
 καὶ κλίνεται γε, κάποπερκούται βότρυς·  
 δείλη δὲ πᾶσα τέμνεται βλαστουμένη  
 καλῶς ὑπάρει, κἀνακιρνῶται ποτόν.*

Upon Eubœa's coast is seen  
 A wondrous vine to shoot,  
 At sunrise 'tis with tendrils green,  
     At sunset dark with fruit ;  
 At dawn it spreads its leaves around,  
     At noon-tide blooms its flower,  
 And soon with grapes its boughs are crowned,  
     That ripen every hour :  
 And now more soft, now purple grown,  
     The clusters lade the vine,  
 And when the evening shades draw on,  
     The peasant quaffs the wine.

Thou that in mystic measures ledest  
The fire-breathing orbs on high,  
Thou that with ear attentive heepest  
Thy Bacchant's midnight minstrelsy !  
Appear, thou radiant boy,  
Great son of Jove, bright lord of joy !  
Thy frenzied throng, thy Naxian maidens, bring,  
Who, whirled in dizzy mazes, sing,  
Throughout the livelong night, thee, their immortal  
King !





SOPH. TRACH. 94.

ARGUMENT.

HERCULES having remained long absent from his home, the Chorus in this Ode express their desire to know where he may be lingering, and attempt to console Deianeira.

THEU flaming Sun! whom spangled Night,<sup>1</sup>  
 Self-destroying, brings to light,  
 Then lulls to sleep again ;

(1) Compare a fragment of Stesichorus (Ed. Giles) :

Ἄελιος δ' Ὑπεριονίδας δέπας  
 ἔσκατέβαινε χρύσειον,  
 ὕφρα δι' ὠκεανῶο περάσας  
 ἀφίκοιθ' ἱερᾶς ποτὶ βένθεα  
 νυκτὸς ἔρεμνᾶς,  
 ποτὶ ματέρα, κουριδίων τ' ἄλοχον,  
 πάϊδας τε φίλους.

The Sun, Hyperion's child, behold,  
 Now launched upon his bowl of gold,  
 Through Ocean bound to take his flight  
 To the dusky caves of holy Night,  
 Where flock his children round his side,  
 Where dwell his mother and his bride.

The "bowl of gold" is explained by the following passage of  
 Mimnermus : speaking of the sun, he says,

τὸν μὲν γὰρ διὰ κῦμα φέρει πολυήρατος εὐνή  
 κόϊλη, Ἡφαίστου χερσὶν ἑλληλαμένη

Bright Herald, girt with beaming rays,  
 Say, where Alcmena's offspring strays;<sup>2</sup>  
 Say, lurks he on the main?  
 Or lays his head to rest,  
 On Europe or on Asia's breast?  
 In pity deign reply,  
 Thou of the lordly eye!

χρυσοῦ τιμηέντος, ὑπόπτερος, ἄκρον ἐφ' ἕδωρ  
 εὐδονθ' ἀρπαλέως, χάρου ἀφ' Ἑσπερίδων,  
 γαῖαν ἐς Αἰθίοπων· ἵνα οἱ θοδὸν ἄρμα καὶ ἵπποι  
 ἐστῆς, ὄφρ' Ἡὼς ἠριγένεια μόλῃ  
 ἐνθ' ἐπέβη ἐτέρων ὀχέων Ὑπερίονος υἱός.

In a hollow couch he lays his head,  
 To skim the sea's dominions,  
 Of precious gold is framed the bed,  
 And launched on airy pinions.  
 'Twas wrought of old by Vulcan's hand,  
 It wafts through Ocean lightly,  
 From Hesperus' maids to Æthiop land  
 Hyperion slumbering nightly.  
 There are his steeds and chariot stowed,  
 Till early morn arise,  
 Then quits his midnight shell the God,  
 And mounts again the skies.

(2) Compare Homer, Hymn to Ceres, 62.

Ἡέλιον δ' ἵκοντο, θεῶν σκοπὸν ἠδὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν,  
 στὰν δ' ἵππων προπάροιθε, καὶ εἶρετο διὰ θεάων·  
 Ἡέλι' αἰδεσσαί με θεάς ὑπερ, εἴ ποτε δὴ σεὺ  
 ἦ ἔπει ἢ ἔργῳ κραδίην καὶ θυμὸν ἴηνα·  
 κοίρην, ἣν ἔτεκον, γλυκερὸν βάλος, εἶδεῖ κυδρῆν,  
 τῆς ἀδιωγῆν ὑπ' ἄκουσα δι' αἰθέρου ἀτρυγέτοιο  
 ὥστε βιαζομένης, ἀτὰρ οὐκ ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσιν.  
 ἀλλὰ σὺ γὰρ δὴ πᾶσαν ἐπὶ χθόνα καὶ κατὰ πόντον  
 αἰθέρος ἐκ δίης καταδέρκεαι ἀκτίνεσσιν,  
 νημερτέως μοι ἐνισπε, φίλον τέκος, εἴ που ὑπώπας,  
 ὅστις νόσφιν ἐμείο λαβὼν ἀέκουσαν ἀνάγκη  
 οἴχεται ἡὲ θεῶν ἢ καὶ θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων.

They

His bride, erst won by desperate fray,  
 Muses where lies his dangerous way ;  
 Like some sad bird, her soul is set  
 On constancy and vain regret :  
 Sleep never seals those eyes, where woe  
 Lies all too deep for tears to flow,  
 While thought and boding Fancy's dread  
 Flit ever round her lonely bed.

Oft when the northern blast,  
 Or southern winds unwearied rave,  
 Ye see the ocean cast -  
 In quick succession wave on wave ;

---

They reached at length the Sun's abode,  
 The faithful spy of man and God,  
 They stood before his steeds ;  
 Then thus the Goddess spoke :—" If e'er,  
 " When brooded o'er thee anxious care,  
 " I've soothed by word or deeds ;  
 " Grant in return a mother's prayer,  
 " Where is my child ? oh ! tell me where !  
 " No sweeter bud might bless the eye,  
 " Glorious her beauty shone,  
 " Through the waste of air her hurried cry,  
 " A voice of struggling agony,  
 " I heard, but heard alone.  
 " I saw her not :—but thou the maze  
 " Of earth and air canst spy,  
 " From heavenly æther dart thy rays  
 " Their searching scrutiny.  
 " Tell me then, for thou canst say,  
 " Who bore by force the maid away ?  
 " Who matured the fatal plan ?  
 " Was it God, or mortal man ?"

So, to whelm old Cadmus' son,  
 Rush redoubled labours on,  
 Thick as round the Cretan shore  
 The swoln and turbid billows roar :  
 Yet his step from Pluto's halls  
 Still some unerring God recalls.  
 My Queen! disdain not thou to brook  
 My chidings kind, and soft rebuke,  
 Nor cast away, in morbid mood,  
 The cheering hope of future good.  
 For universal nature's lord,  
 Saturn's great son, by all adored,  
 Enjoyment willed not to bestow  
 On human lot, unmix'd with woe :  
 Grief and delight, in endless change,<sup>3</sup>  
 Round man in mazy circles range,

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(<sup>3</sup>) Compare the following passage from Sackville :

" Then looking upwards to the heaven's leames,  
     With nightes starres thick powdred every where,  
 Which erst so glistened with the golden stremes  
     That golden Phœbus spread down from his sphere,  
 Beholding darke, oppressing day so neare :  
 The sodaine sight reduced to my mind  
 The sundry chaunges that on earth we finde."

See also *Cornelia*, (Dodsley's *Old Plays*,) vol. ii. p. 253.

" The wide world's accidents are apt to change,  
     And tickle Fortune stays not in a place ;  
 But like the clouds continually doth range,  
     Or like the sun that hath the night in chace.  
 Then as the heavens, by whom our hopes are guided,  
     Do coast the earth with an eternal course,

Like never-setting stars, that roll  
 In ceaseless courses round the pole.  
 Soon spangled night must yield to day,  
 Soon wealth, soon trouble flits away ;  
 In turn, so fixed the eternal plan,  
 Bliss and bereavement wait on man.  
 My Queen! on hope thy soul be stayed,  
 Nor yield thee to despair ;  
 When hath not Jove his children made  
 His providential care ?

We must not think a misery betided  
 Will never cease, but still grow worse and worse.  
 When icy Winter's past, then comes the Spring,  
 Whom Summer's pride with sultry heat pursues ;  
 To whom mild Autumn does earth's treasure bring,  
 The sweetest season that the wise can chuse.  
 Heaven's influence was ne'er so constant yet,  
 In good or bad as to continue it.

See also Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy :

" 'Tis most absurd and ridiculous for any mortal man to look for a perpetual tenour of happiness in this life ; 'tis like a chequer table, black and white :

' *Invicem cedunt dolor et voluptas.*'

He that knows not this, and is not armed to endure it, is not fit to live in this world ; he knows not the condition of it, where, with a reciprocal tie, pleasure and pain are still united, and succeed one another in a ring."





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EURIP. HEC. 444.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE following Ode is supposed to be sung by a Chorus of Trojan women, who, after the capture of their city, had fallen to the lot of the conquerors as slaves.

EURIP. HEC. III.

Τῆου gale! thou ocean gale!  
 That waftest light our shallop o'er the waves.  
 Where shall the fluttering sail  
 Convey a weeping band of captive slaves?

Shall Dorian land,  
 Or Pthian strand  
 Inure our youth to toil,  
 Where, sire of mighty waters, feeds  
 Apidanus the flowery meads?  
 Or shall the loudly-dashing oar  
 Conduct us, mid the billows' roar,  
 To weep on Delian soil?  
 Where palms<sup>1</sup> their earliest bloom display,  
 Where rears its sacred shade the bay,

(1) Compare Hom. Hym. in Apol. Del.

χαῖρε, μάκαιρ' ὦ Λητοῖ. ἐπεὶ τέκες ἀγλαὰ τέκνα,  
 Ἄπόλλωνα τ' ἄνακτα καὶ Ἄρτεμιν ἰοχέειραν,  
 τὴν μὲν ἐν Ὀρτυγίῃ, τὸν δὲ κραναῇ ἐνὶ Δήλῳ,  
 κεκλιμένη πρὸς μακρὸν ὕρος καὶ Κύνθιον ὄχθον,  
 ἀγχοτάτω φοίνικος ἐπ' ἰνώπειοι ρέεθροις.

Hail! Latona, blessed for ever!  
 Mother of a peerless pair!

That erst on lorn Latona smiled,  
 Now loves to grace her deathless child,  
 Must we, mid Dian's virgin ring,  
 Her bow and golden fillet sing?  
 Or shall our lot be fixed by Fate,  
 Within Minerva's Attic gate,  
 To bid the forms with meaning rife  
 Start on the canvass forth to life?  
 Deck the rich web with patterns quaint,  
 Thy mimic chargers, Pallas, paint,  
 And yoke them to thy radiant car,  
 Or trace the 'Titans' impious war,  
 Who sunk to sleep beneath the brand  
 The Thunderer launched from either hand?

My children! take my parting tear;  
 Take it, mine ancient sires!  
 My land! where rages Græcia's spear,  
 Mid ruin, smoke and fires:  
 Now Europe's handmaid! — far from thee,  
 They'll taunt me as a slave;  
 Oh! ill exchange such agony  
 For chambers of the grave!

---

For who may shun Diana's quiver?  
 Or who Apollo's wrath can bear?  
 She in Ortygia's isle was born;  
 He on Delos' rocks forlorn;  
 Though long the steep, and dark the brow  
 Of frowning Cynthus seem,  
 Yet there the palm its friendly bough  
 Spreads o'er Inopus' stream.

EURIP. HEC. 886.

ARGUMENT.

THE following Ode is supposed to be sung by captive Trojan women, after they had reached the Thracian Chersonesus on their way to Greece.

MY native Troy! to future ages,  
Thine ancient title none shall tell,  
The City of the Impregnable!  
The spear, the spear, within thee rages;  
Dark lowers the cloud of Greeks around thee:  
Ne'er, ne'er again  
May I tread thy plain;  
Shorn are the towers that crowned thee.  
Soiled is the vest that bound thee  
With ashes' foulest stain.

The fatal hour was midnight's calm,  
When the feast was done, and sleep, like balm,  
Was shed on every eye;  
Hushed was the choral symphony,  
The sacrifice was o'er;  
My Lord to rest his limbs had flung,  
His idle spear in its place was hung,  
He dreamed of foes no more:

And I, while I lost my listless gaze  
 In the depth of the golden mirror's blaze,  
     That my last light task was aiding,  
 Was wreathing with fillets my tresses' maze,  
     And with playful fingers braiding.

There came a shout !  
 Through the noiseless city the cry rung out ;  
 " Your homes are won, if ye scale the tower,  
 " Sons of the Greeks ! is it not the hour ? "

I caught the wild alarm ;  
     I fled arrayed  
     Like Dorian maid,  
 With a single vest thrown o'er me ;  
 At Dian's shrine my suit preferred,  
 But ill my prayer the Goddess heard,  
     They slew my Lord before me ;  
 I was dragged along by a ruffian arm.  
     To the briny deep they bore me :  
 Thence, as the vessel o'er the wave  
     Heaved on its homeward way,  
 To Troy one parting look I gave,  
     Then sunk and swooning lay.

Helen ! I woke to curse thy sins,  
 Base sister of the Godlike twins ;  
 Thee and thy craven Paris, nursed  
 Mid Ida's hinds and herds, I cursed.



Your wedlock, demon-planned,  
Hath driven me forth to roam,  
Hath swept me from my father's land,  
Unhoused me from my home.  
Wedlock! — nay, let its title be  
That foul fiend's dark malignity!  
But ne'er may Helen, o'er the billow,  
Be safely borne to Greece,  
Nor in her father's palace, pillow  
That guilty head in peace.



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EURIP. PHŒN. 781.

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#### ARGUMENT.

POLYNICES, son of Œdipus, having formed an alliance with Adrastus, King of Argos, marched to attack his brother Eteocles, who disputed with him the sovereignty of Thebes. The Chorus, resident in that city, but composed of Phœnician women, sing, on occasion of this war, the following Ode to Mars, and contrast the ancient glory of Thebes with the troubles which had overwhelmed it since the accession of the house of Labdacus.

EURIP. PHOEN. 781.

AUTHOR of woes, relentless Mars!  
    Busied in death and strife,  
How with the feast of Bacchus, jars  
    Thy madding life!  
Not in the festal ring, mid beauty's bloom,  
    Thy tresses loosely float;  
Nor thine the liquid note,  
    The lotus-breathed strain,  
    That bids the graceful train  
The mazy steps resume.

    War's armed hosts are thine;  
The Argive Champions press on Thebe's line,  
    Kindled by thy flaming breath,  
Thou leader of the dance of death,  
    Whose only music is the cry  
Of battle's joyless revelry!  
Ne'er was it thine to rear  
The ivy-wreathed spear,

Nor roam, in fawn-skin<sup>1</sup> clad, the mountain side ;  
 The car, the bit, the sword,  
 Own thee their restless lord,  
 To thee obedient wheels the trampling charger's  
 pride.

Now, beside Ismenus' stream,  
 For thee the horseman's trappings gleam ;

(<sup>1</sup>) This was the peculiar dress of Bacchus. Compare a passage attributed by Macrobius (Saturnal. I.) to Euripides, but still extant in the Frogs of Aristophanes :

*Διόνυσος ὄσ, θύρσοισι καὶ νεβρῶν δοραῖς  
 καθαπτὸς, ἐν πεύκαισι Παρνασσὸν καταπηδᾷ χορεύων.*

Around his limbs the fawn-skin wearing,  
 The spear enwreathed with ivy bearing,  
 While the torch of pine in his hand is glancing,  
 See Bacchus on Parnassus dancing.

And in the following lines, quoted as Orphic by Macrobius (ibid.) in which the sun is identified with Bacchus, the God is described as thus arraying himself :

*πρῶτα μὲν ἀργυφέαις ἐναλίγκιον ἀκτίνεσσιν  
 πέπλον φοινίκεον πυρίκελον ἀμφιβαλέσθαι·  
 αὐτὰρ ὑπερθε νεβροῖο παναίολου εὐρὸ καθᾶψαι  
 δέρμα πολύστικτον θηρὸς κατὰ δεξιὸν ἄμον,  
 ἀστρων δαιδαλέων μίμημ' ἱεροῦ τε πόλιιο.*

First the God around him threw  
 A flame-like robe of crimson hue,  
 Bright as are the glowing rays  
 That stream from the sun in summer days.  
 Next across his shoulders drawn  
 Was the dappled skin of mountain-fawn,  
 By whose thousand spangles a type was given  
 Of the stars that gem the holy heaven.

By thee inspired, the Argive foes  
 The children of the earth oppose;  
 Marauding chiefs! their daily meal  
 'Tis theirs to purchase by their steel,  
 Nor quail, though massy walls defy  
 The prowess of their chivalry.

Strife! a mighty Goddess thou;  
 By thy severe decree,  
 O'erwhelmed with troubles, bow  
 The doomed Labdacidæ.

Cithæron! mid whose heaven-blest grove,  
 A thousand beasts in freedom rove,  
 Eye of Dian!<sup>2</sup> nurse of snow!  
 Why, mid thy thickets budding wild,  
 Was laid the infant-heir of woe,  
 Jocasta's outcast child?

(<sup>2</sup>) Compare Milt. Par. Reg. IV.

"Athens, the eye of Greece," &c.

And the well-known passage of Catullus:

"Peninsularum Sirmio, insularumque  
 Ocelle, quascunque in linguentibus stagnis,  
 Marique vasto fert uterque Neptunus,  
 Quàm te libenter, quàmque lætus in viso,  
 Vix mi ipse credens Thyniam, Bithynosque  
 Liquisse campos, et videre te in tuto."

Sirmio, where nature softly smiles,  
 Eye of peninsulas and isles!  
 Thou fairest spot the waters lave,  
 In tranquil lake or tossing wave.

Of sufferings presage meet,  
E'en then the golden clasp wounded his tender feet.

Why, from thy wood-girt crown,  
Flew the fell monster down,  
The accursed Sphynx, a virgin's grace assuming ?  
Why (by the Nine abhorred)  
Was her dread descant poured,  
To early death the sons of Cadmus dooming ?  
When, on these our walls descending,  
When, her crooked talons bending,  
    With her prey in rapid flight,  
She soared to realms of unapproached light,  
When Hades' monarch found in her,  
Against the Theban race, his chosen minister !

See ! on sorrow's ancient stock  
    Anew the buds of strife are blowing,  
Our homes, our city, feel the shock,  
    The sons of Œdipus o'erthrowing.  
For the silent lapse of time  
Cannot change thy nature, crime !

---

Thou fairest spot by Neptune found,  
Far as the shores his empire bound ;  
Returning from Bithynia's snows,  
How at thy sight my bosom glows,  
Yet scarce believes that I can be  
Escaped from Thrace, restored to thee !



Wedlock that the Gods forbid  
 Ne'er shall be of trouble rid,  
 Ne'er may righteous Heaven approve  
 Offspring of unholy love.

Yet wert thou great of old ;  
 Far in my childhood's home, thy glory, Thebes, was  
 told :

How, when, gorged with many a feast,  
 Fell the purple-crested beast,  
 From thy teeming sod released,

His teeth's armed offspring sprung ;  
 How each proud, immortal guest,  
 Fair Harmonia's bridal blest ;  
 How, by a master's finger prest,

The harp enchanted rung ;  
 'Tis Amphion's charmed lay,—  
 See the stones his lyre obey,  
 And, mid the rising turrets, play

Two never-failing streams ;  
 There flows, in herbage-margined bed,  
 The rill, from Dirce's fountain fed ;

Here bright Ismenus gleams :  
 And horned Io, loved of yore  
 By Jove, Cadmean monarchs bore ;  
 And thousand, thousand blessings fell,  
 Thebes, on thy favoured citadel,  
 Thy citadel, now glancing down

On that wild camp of Mars, that girds thee like a  
 crown.



EURIP. MED. SIS.

ARGUMENT.

MEDEA, deserted by Jason, resolves to kill her children, and then to take refuge with Ægeus, King of Athens. The Chorus dissuade her from the murder by representing the beauty and sanctity of Athens.

BLESSED from the olden time,  
 Cradled in a sunny clime,<sup>1</sup>  
 Culling from each holy dell,  
 In every age impregnable,  
 Brightest wisdom's precious fare,  
 Gliding through their dazzling air,  
 Sons of Heaven, with courtly grace,  
 Bloom the Erechtheidan race.  
 There Pierian maids of yore  
 Yellow-haired Harmonia bore ;  
 Venus there a pearly draught  
 From the pure Cephisus quaffed,

(<sup>1</sup>) Compare Milton, Par. Reg. IV.

“ on the Ægean shore a city stands,  
 Built nobly, pure the air and light the soil.”

We learn from Cicero, that the superiority of Attic wit was referred in some measure to the clearness of the atmosphere in Attica.

Then athwart the flowery vales  
 Wafted softly tempered gales,  
 Rosy garlands, perfume breathing,<sup>2</sup>  
 Mid her mazy tresses wreathing.  
 All her loves attendant came,  
 And with wisdom blent, to frame  
 Perfect virtue, that should be  
 Graceful in its purity!

(<sup>2</sup>) Compare Chaucer's description of Venus :

" A citole in hire right hand hadde she,  
 And on hire hed, ful semely for to see,  
 A rose garland, fresh and well smelling."

*Knight's Tale.* 1961.

Compare also the following fragment attributed to Sappho :

αἰ τοῖς ἀνθεσιν ἤθελεν ὁ Ζεὺς ἐπιθεῖναι βασιλέα, τὸ ρόδον  
 ἀν τῶν ἀνθέων ἐβασίλευε. γῆς ἐστὶ κόσμος, φυτῶν ἀγλαΐσμα,  
 ὀφθαλμὸς ἀνθέων, ἐρύθμα λειμῶνος, κάλλος ἀστράπτον· ἔρωτος  
 πνέει, Ἀφροδίταν προξενεῖ, εὐειδέσι φύλλοις κομᾶ. εὐκινήτοις  
 πετάλοισι τρυφᾷ· τὸ πετάλον τῷ Ζεφύρῳ γελᾷ.

If Jove should make a Queen of flowers,  
 The rose his queen should be ;  
 The ornament of summer bowers,  
 The pride of earth is she.  
 Eye of flowrets ! meadow's glow,  
 Dazzling like lightning glare,  
 Thence fraught with love sweet odours blow,  
 And Venus nestles there.  
 Her leaflets float like airy tresses,  
 Her buds the roving gale caresses ;  
 Those buds that coyly love to play,  
 And Zephyr with a smile repay.

Shall then that city of the waters,  
 That land, to righteousness a friend,  
 Admit among her spotless daughters,  
 The mother that her children slaughters?

Mark to what thy counsels tend :  
 To mercy let thy murderous purpose bend.

See us, to dissuade thee, kneeling,  
 And no more, thy bosom steeling,  
 Nerve thine arm, and blunt thy feeling. }

How can that eye,  
 On thy doomed offspring fixed, be tearless still and  
 dry?

How, when thy pity they implore,  
 And suppliant fall thy feet before,  
 Canst thou thy delicate hand imbrue in infant gore?





EURIP. HIP. 1270.



EURIP. HIP. 1270.

VENUS! thy eternal sway  
All the race of man obey;  
Heaven's unbending spirits own  
Thralldom of thy power alone.<sup>1</sup>  
Waving o'er thee as he flies  
Painted plumes of thousand dyes,  
Love on rapid pinion speeds;  
Now he flits o'er flowery meads,

(<sup>1</sup>) Compare Anac. Frag.

Ἔρωτα γὰρ τὸν ἀβρὸν  
μέλπομαι, βρύοντα μίτρας  
πολυανθέμοις αἰείδων.  
ὄγῃ καὶ θεῶν δυναστῆς,  
ἥδε καὶ βρότους δαμάζει.

Love my lyre shall now employ;  
Love, the soft and pampered boy,  
Wreathed with bands of thousand flowers,  
Nurslings of the spring-tide hours;  
Tyrant he of Gods above;  
Mortals bear the yoke of Love.

Now where, softly murmuring, flow  
 Ocean's briny waves below;  
 When from high, in frenzy wild,  
 Swoops thy golden-gleaming child,<sup>2</sup>

(<sup>2</sup>) Different genealogies of Love are given by the Greek writers. According to Plato (*Symposium*), he is the son of Poverty and Contrivance. Compare Aristoph. *Av.* 694.

Χάος ἦν, καὶ νύξ, ἔρεβός τε μέλαν πρῶτον, καὶ Τάρταρος εὐρύς.  
 γῆ δ', οὐδ' ἀήρ, οὐδ' οὐρανὸς ἦν· ἐρέβους δ' ἐν ἀπέροσι κόλποις  
 τίκει πρῶτιστον ὑπηνέμιον νύξ ἢ μελανόπτερος ὦν.  
 ἐξ οὗ περιτελλομένοις ὥραις ἔβλασθεν Ἔρως ὁ ποθεινός,  
 στίλβων νῶτον πτερύγοιιν χρυσαῖν, εἰκὼς ἀνεμώκεσι δίναις.  
 οὗτος δὲ χάει πτερόεντι μιγείῃς νυχίῳ κατὰ Τάρταρον εὐρὺν  
 ἐνεόττευσε γένος ἡμέτερον, καὶ πρῶτον ἀνήγαγεν ἐς φῶς,  
 πρότερον δ' οὐκ ἦν γένος ἀθανάτων, πρὶν Ἔρως συνέμιξεν ἅπαντα.

In former times, so legends tell,  
 Lived Chaos, Darkness, Night, and Hell,  
 A lonely band, before that Earth,  
 Or Air, or Light, or Heaven had birth.  
 Then Night reclined on Darkness' breast  
 Her raven wing, and built her nest;  
 There, sheltering in the boundless shade,  
 A solitary egg she laid.  
 The egg is hatched: from out it springs  
 Young Love, with golden gleaming wings,  
 Fleet as the driving wind;  
 In Tartarus' palace, by his side,  
 Moved Chaos dark, his winged bride,  
 Thence sprung our feathered kind;  
 Nor ye the ancient lineage scorn,  
 Of Love the Gods themselves were born.

Compare also Simmias Rhodius:

οὔτι γε Κύπριδος παῖς,  
 ὠκυπέτας δ' αὐτὸς Ἔρως καλεῦμαι  
 οὔτι γὰρ ἔκρηνα βία, πᾶν δ' ἐπράνα πειθοῖ.  
 εἵκει ἐμοὶ γαῖα, θαλάσσης τε μυχὸς, χάλκεος οὐρανὸς τε,  
 τῶν ἐγὼ ἐκνοσφισάμαν ὠγύγιον σκᾶπτρον, ἔκρινον δὲ θεοῖς θέμιστας.

Though

Beasts that roam the mountain side,  
 Tenants of the ocean tide,  
 Man, and every race, that earth<sup>3</sup>  
 Gently fosters from their birth ;

Though fleet my wing, and Love my name,  
 I am not Cytherea's son ;  
 Not mine to kindle Passion's flame,  
 But gentle hearts by me are won.  
 The earth, the sea, the brazen heaven,  
 Are all to my dominion given ;  
 The sceptre of the Gods I stole,  
 And sit supreme and rule the whole.

(2) Compare Homer's Hymn to Venus :

Μοῦσά μοι ἔννεπε ἔργα πολυχρύσου Ἄφροδίτης,  
 Κύπριδος. ἦτε θεοῖσιν ἐπι γλυκὴν ἕμερον ἄρσεν,  
 καὶ τ' ἑδαμάσσατο φῦλα καταθνητῶν ἀνθρώπων,  
 οἰωνούς τε διπτετές καὶ θηρία πάντα,  
 ἡμὲν ὄσ' ἠπειρος πολλὰ τρέφει ἠδ' ὅσα πόντος,  
 πᾶσιν δ' ἔργα μέμηλεν ἐϋστεφάνου Κυθερείης.  
 τρισσὰς δ' οὐ δύναται πεπιθεῖν φρένας οὐδ' ἀπατήσται·  
 κούρην τ' αἰγίοχοιο Διὸς γλαυκῶπιδ' Ἀθήνην·  
 οὐ γάρ οἱ ἄδεν ἔργα πολυχρύσου Ἄφροδίτης,  
 ἀλλ' ἄρα σὶ πόλεμοί τε ἄδων καὶ ἔργον Ἄρηος  
 ὕσμῖνάι τε μάχαι τε, καὶ ἄγλαι ἔργ' ἀλεγύνειν.  
 πρώτη τέκτονας ἀνδρας ἐπιχθονίους ἐδίδαξεν  
 ποιῆσαι σατίνας τε καὶ ἄρματα ποίικιλα χαλκῶ.  
 ἦ δέ τε παρθενικὰς ἀπαλόχρους ἐν μεγάροισιν  
 ἄγλαι ἔργ' ἐδίδαξεν ἐπι φρεσὶ θεῖσα ἐκάστη.  
 οὐδὲ ποτ' Ἀρτέμιδα χρυσηλάκατον κελαδεινὴν  
 δάμνυται ἐν φιλότῃ φιλομμειδῆς Ἀφροδίτῃ.  
 καὶ γὰρ τῇ ἄδε τόξω καὶ σφῆρσι θῆρας ἐναίρειν,  
 φόρμιγγές τε χοροὶ τε διαπρύσιυί τ' ὕλολυαὶ  
 ἄλσεά τε σκιδόντου δικαίων τε πτόλις ἀνδρῶν.  
 οὐδὲ μὲν αἰδοίῃ κούρη ἄδεν ἔργ' Ἀφροδίτης,  
 Ἰστίῃ. ἦν πρώτην τέκετο Κρόνος ἀγκυλομήτης,  
 πόντιαν, ἦν ἐμῶντο Πυσειδάων καὶ Ἀπόλλων·

All the burning sun can spy,  
Own the Hunter's witchery;

*ἦ δὲ μάλ' οὐκ ἔθελεν, ἀλλὰ στερεῶς ἀπέειπεν,  
ᾤμουσε δὲ μέγαν ὄρκον, ὃ δὴ τετελεσμένος ἐστίν,  
ἀψαμένη κεφαλῆς πατρὸς Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο,  
παρθένος ἔσσεσθαι πάντ' ἤματα, διὰ θεῶν.*

Muses! your sweetest warblings wake  
For golden Aphrodite's sake:  
She o'er the Gods soft love can shed,  
She mortal man controls;  
And birds and beasts her influence dread,  
And Ocean's scaly shoals.  
At thy bidding bow they down,  
Goddess of the radiant crown!  
Three only of the heavenly band  
Can thy persuasive wiles withstand.

The blue-eyed Pallas, chaste and wise,  
Golden Venus still defies.

The battle, the rattle  
Of helmet and spear,  
The story of glory  
To her are most dear.

She taught the smith to frame for war  
The wain and brazen-studded car;  
And maids, who lend to her attention,  
Learn industry and quick invention.

And vainly Venus may caress  
The golden arrow's patroness,  
For Dian eye will hear unheeding  
The laughter-loving Goddess pleading.

The bow, the chace,  
The forest race,  
The harp, the lyre, the dance;  
The greenwood gay,  
The loud hurra,  
Alone her soul entrance.

And

All his Paphian mother fear ;  
Empress ! all thy sway revere !

---

And vainly too has Venus smiled  
On Vesta, Saturn's eldest child ;  
To win the modest maiden's love,  
Phœbus and Neptune jointly strove :  
But "No," still "No," fair Vesta said ;  
And, touching Jove's immortal head,  
She swore from wedlock still to fly,  
A maiden live ; a maiden die.





EURIP. ALC. 447.

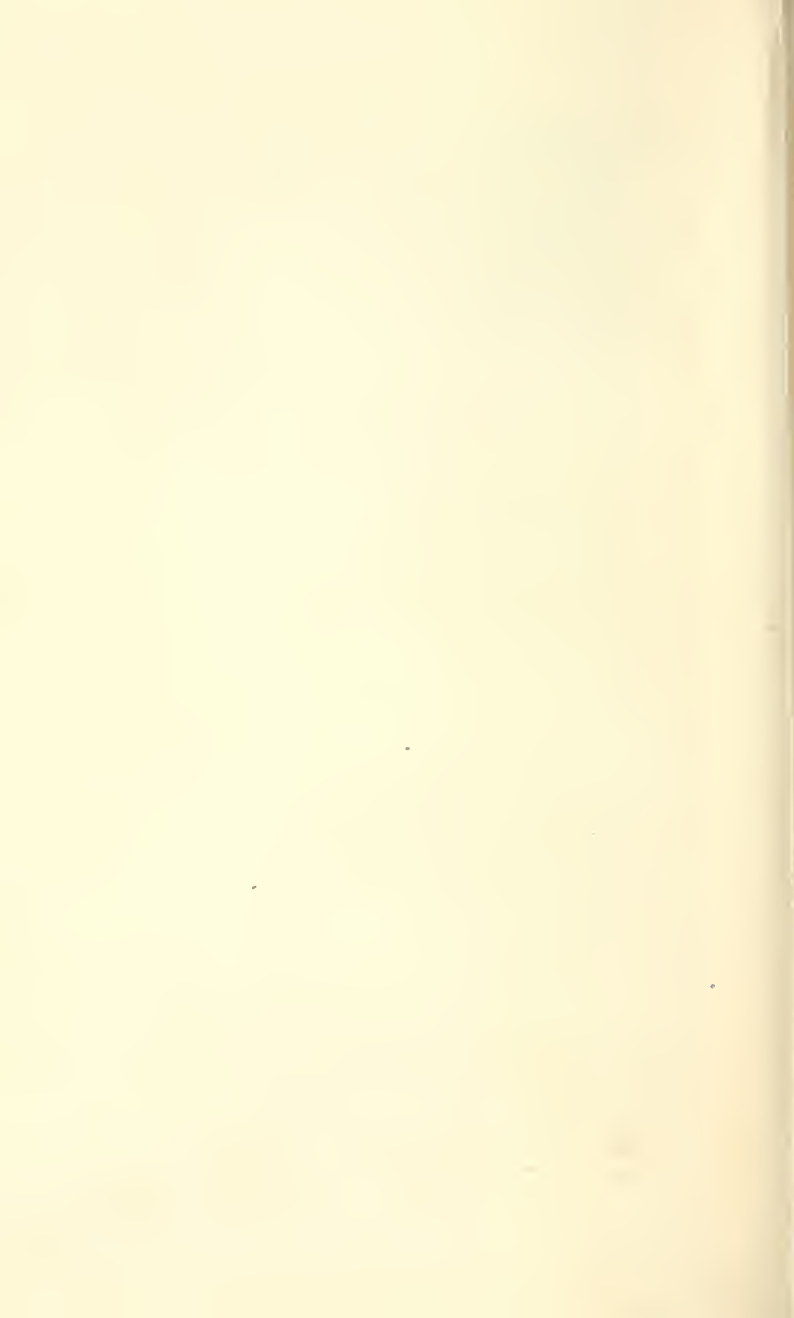
ARGUMENT.

THE Chorus, in the following Ode, lament the fate, and applaud the generosity, of Alcestis, who had consented to die, in order to procure immortality for her husband Admetus, King of Phœæ.

FAREWELL to thee! mid Pluto's halls,  
Where never garish sunbeam falls,  
Still, if my prayers are answered, blest,  
Daughter of Pelias, sweetly rest!  
And let the God of raven hair  
Own thee the brightest spirit there;  
Let him, the aged pilot, learn,  
Who, seated in his shallop's stern,  
The pale ghosts, thronging in his bark,  
Ferries o'er Acheron's waters dark,  
Bride half so true his skiff before  
Ne'er wafted to the sable shore.  
Thy praise shall swell to mountain shell,  
And dirges due thy virtues tell;  
Thy name inspire the minstrel choir,  
The music of the seven-stringed lyre,  
At Sparta, when the circling year  
Brings round the gay Carneian cheer,

Beneath the moon's unwearied light,  
 That gladdens through the live-long night ;  
 At Athens, where each radiant tower  
 Sparkles with Fortune's golden dower ;  
 So meet a theme for minstrel's dream  
 The story of thy death shall seem.  
 Oh! might I break the fatal chain,  
 That links thee to that dim domain, }  
 And woo thee back to light again ! }  
 Did no Cocytus interpose,  
 Did Hell's tall portals e'er unclose,  
 How swiftly should my oar be plied }  
 O'er that dark river's troublous tide ; }  
 For thou hast been the truest bride  
     That time hath ever known :  
         No other wife  
         Her husband's life  
         Hath ransomed with her own.  
 Light let them lay the turf above thee,  
 And if in death he cease to love thee,  
 If e'er he gaze on other charms,  
 Or press another in his arms ;  
 His children's hate and mine shall be  
 Meed of his infidelity.  
 No mother's love endured the grave,  
 Her child from yawning fate to save,  
     No father bore his doom ;  
 Though grey their locks, and death drew nigh,  
 For him they proffered not to die ;

But thou, in life's enchanting spring,  
When all thy charms were blossoming,  
    Hast sought, for him, the tomb.  
Be mine a bride as fond, as true,  
Then might I bid life's cares adieu ;  
But scarce on mortal lot may shine  
The blessing of a love like thine.



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EURIP. ALC. 581.

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#### ARGUMENT.

ADMETUS, soon after the death of his wife Alcestis, having entertained Hercules, the Chorus, in the following Ode, applaud his self-command, and relate his former hospitality to Apollo.



HALL of Admetus ! 'neath whose shade  
 Ever the pilgrim's form is laid,  
 To him thy portals still are free,  
 Still proffer hospitality.  
 Thy courts to tread, the Pythian king,  
 Who deftly strikes the tuneful string,  
     In sylvan garb arrayed,  
 Forsook his home beyond the sky ;  
 A shepherd boy, he loved to hie,  
 Piping his pastoral melody,  
     Along the winding glade.  
 Charmed by the magic of his lay,  
 In peace beside their fleecy prey,  
     The spotted lynxes stood ;<sup>1</sup>

(1) Compare a fragment of Simonides :

τοῦ καὶ ἀπειρέσιαι  
 πωτῶντ' ὕρνιθες ὑπὲρ κεφαλᾶς, ἀνὰ δ'  
 ἰχθύες ὀρθοὶ κυανέου ἐξ ὕδατος ἄλλοντο,  
 καλᾶ σὶν ἀοιδᾶ.

About

From Othrys' wood-encircled crown,  
 A grisly band, sped trooping down  
     Grim lions, smeared with blood.  
 The dappled fawn, that harp to hear,  
 Came tripping, where the groves of fir  
     Hang their green tresses high ;  
 With light elastic step she flew,  
 And bade the covert shades adieu,  
     To list that symphony.  
 Restored to heaven, the grateful guest  
 His master's flocks with increase blest,  
 Whose mansion towers in princely pride,  
 Bright Bœbe's limpid lake beside.  
 Far stretch his tillage and his plains ;  
 The limit to his fair domains  
 Lies westward, where the Lord of light  
 Stables his steeds in realms of night,  
     Molossia's sky beneath ;  
 His eastern bound, where Pelion braves  
 The fury of Ægean waves,  
 Nor friendly creek, nor harbour saves  
     The baffled crew from death.  
 And now, while yet the tear-drops flow,  
 Fresh gushing for his widowed woe,

---

About his head flocked many a bird,  
 The fish beneath the waters heard,  
 And leapt from out the dark blue sea,  
 To list the minstrel's melody.

Bowed by the stroke of recent ill,  
He bids the stranger welcome still ;  
Still opes his hospitable door,  
As freely as in days of yore.  
For generous souls, whate'er befall,  
Still list to duty's social call ;  
And virtue's sons, in saddest mood,  
Are yet considerate as good.  
Oh! well I trust rich meed shall be  
From heaven to bless his piety.



EURIP. ALC. 983.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE following Ode is a dirge on Alcestis, addressed to  
Admetus.

OFT my steps have roamed among  
 All the airy realms of song,  
 Learnt through wisdom's maze to wind,  
 Yet availeth not my mind  
 Remedy 'gainst Fate to find.<sup>1</sup> }  
 Not all the drugs that Orpheus sage  
 Recorded in his Thracian page,  
     From her decree can save ;  
 Not Phœbus, who the art divine  
 Of life-restoring medicine  
     To Æsculapius gave.

(<sup>1</sup>) Compare Simmias Rhod.

ἐγὼ γὰρ γενόμεν, ἀνίκ' ἔκριν' Ἀνάγκη,  
 πάντα δὲ τὰς εἴκε φρυδαῖσι λυγραῖς  
     ἔρπετα, πανθ' ὄσ' ἔρπει  
     δι' αἰθέρας  
     χάους τε.

For I was born when Fate decreed ;  
 Fate, to whose gloomy mandates cede  
 All beings that existence share,  
 From Chaos dark to cloudless Air.

Stern Goddess! at her altar's side  
 The votary kneels in vain,  
 And vainly clasps her statue's pride,  
 And heaps his victims slain.<sup>2</sup>  
 Oh! never may she bid me bow  
 More lowly to her yoke than now.  
 E'en Jove, the everlasting God,  
 Whate'er he sanctions by his nod,  
 Through her performs, and needs her skill  
 To execute his sovereign will :<sup>3</sup>  
 Her might can bend Chalybian steel,  
 Her rugged spirit will not feel.

(<sup>2</sup>) A similar sentiment with regard to Death occurs in a fragment of Æschylus:

*μόνος θεῶν γὰρ Θάνατος οὐ δῶρων ἐρᾷ,  
 οὐτ' ἂν τι θύων, οὐτ' ἐπισπένδων λάβοις·  
 οὐ βωμὸς ἐστίν, οὐδὲ πιαωνίζεται.  
 μόνου δὲ Πειθῶ δαιμόνων ἀποστατεῖ.*

For Death alone, unbending King,  
 No altars smoke, no pæans ring;  
 And Death alone will neither prize  
 Libation, gift, nor sacrifice;  
 And Death, of all the Gods, alone,  
 Heeds not Persuasion's dulcet tone.

(<sup>3</sup>) Compare Chaucer, (Palamon and Arcite, 1665.)

“The destince, ministre general,  
 That executeth in the world over al  
 The purveiance that God hath sen beforen,  
 So strong it is, that though the world had sworne  
 The contrary of a thing by ya or nay,  
 Yet sometime it shall fallen on a day,  
 That falleth nat eftē in a thousand yere.”



The fettering clasp  
 Of her iron grasp<sup>4</sup>  
 Its links hath bound  
 Thy form around:  
 Be patient;—for thy tears are vain,  
 They may not wake the dead again;<sup>5</sup>

(<sup>4</sup>) Compare Milman, (Martyr of Antioch.)

“ They bind me  
 With the hard fetters of their arms.”

(<sup>5</sup>) This sentiment is prettily expressed, and commented on, in the following little poem of Schiller's:

“ Der Eichwald brauset,  
 Die wolken ziehn,  
 Das Mägdlein sitzt  
 An Ufer's Grün,  
 Es bricht sich die Welle mit Macht, mit Macht,  
 Und sie seufzt hinaus in the finstre Nacht,  
 Das Auge vom Weinen getrübet.

“ ‘ Das Herz ist gestorben,  
 ‘ Die Welt ist leer,  
 ‘ Und weiter gibt sie  
 ‘ Dem Wunsche nichts mehr.  
 ‘ Du Heilige, rufe dein kind zurück,  
 ‘ Ich habe genossen das irdische Glück,  
 ‘ Ich habe gelebt und geliebet.’

“ ‘ Es rinnet der Thränen  
 ‘ Vergeblicher Lauf;  
 ‘ Die Klage, sie wecket  
 ‘ Die Todten nicht auf;  
 ‘ Doch nenne, was tröstet und heilet die Brust,  
 ‘ Nach der süssen Liebe verschwundener Lust,  
 ‘ Ich, die Himmlische, will's nicht versagen.’

“ ‘ Lass rinnen der Thränen  
 ‘ Vergeblicher Lauf!  
 ‘ Es wecke die Klage  
 ‘ Den Todten nicht auf,  
 ‘ Das süsseste Glück für die tramende Brust,

E'en heroes, of immortal sire  
And mortal mother born, expire.<sup>6</sup>

‘Nach der schönen Liebe verschwundener Lust,  
‘Sind der Liebe Schmerzen und Klagen.’”

The clouds are flitting,  
The oak-woods roar,  
And the maiden is sitting  
On Ocean's shore ;  
And the waves of the billowy sea  
Are dashing mightily, mightily ;  
On the murky night floats out her sigh,  
And tears are in her troubled eye.

- “ My heart's life has perished,  
“ The world is a void,  
“ With nought to be cherished,  
“ Or wished, or enjoyed.  
“ Then, Holy Mother! hear, and call  
“ Thy child to her home above ;  
“ The cup of bliss, I have drained it all—  
“ I have lived ; and lived to love.”
- “ The tears thou art weeping  
“ Stream, maiden, in vain ;  
“ Tears woo not the sleeping  
“ To earth back again.  
“ But say, what can heal the broken-hearted,  
“ When the soft delight of love is parted ;  
“ Say, and, if such a balm there be,  
“ I will send that balm from above for thee.”
- “ Let the tears I am weeping  
“ Stream on, though in vain ;  
“ True, they woo not the sleeping  
“ To earth back again.  
“ But the sweetest balm for the broken-hearted,  
“ In their dreary waste of years,  
“ When the soft delights of love are parted.  
“ Is love's lament, and tears !”

(<sup>6</sup>) Mention is made by the classical authors of several mortal deities ; see, particularly, a curious fragment of Hesiod :

Oh! she was dear  
 While she lingered here,  
 She is dear now she rests below ;  
 And thou mayst boast  
 That the bride thou hast lost  
 Was the noblest earth can show.

We will not look on her burial sod,  
 As the cell of sepulchral sleep,  
 It shall be as the shrine of a radiant God,  
 And the pilgrim shall visit that blest abode,  
 To worship, and not to weep.  
 And as he turns his steps aside,  
 Thus shall he breathe his vow,  
 " Here slept a self-devoted bride,  
 " Of old to save her lord she died ;  
 " She is a spirit now ;

*ἐννέα τοι ζῶει γενεὰς λακερύζι κορώνη,  
 ἀνδρῶν ἡβώντων· ἔλαφος δέ τε τετρακόρωνος·  
 τρεῖς δ' ἐλάφους ὁ κύραξ γηράσκειται· αὐτὰρ ὁ φοῖνιξ  
 ἐννέα τοὺς κόρακας· δέκα δ' ἡμεῖς τοὺς φοῖνικας  
 νύμφαι εὐπλόκαμοι, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο.*

Nine generations lives the crow,  
 As human generations flow ;  
 The stag, the years of four crows numbers,  
 Ere, spent with age, in death he slumbers ;  
 Three stags the raven oft survives ;  
 The Phœnix lasts nine ravens' lives :  
 But we, whom flowing tresses grace,  
 We Nymphs, the Thunderer's mortal race,  
 E'en than the aged Phœnix stronger,  
 Are blest with lives full ten times longer

“ Hail, bright and blest one ! grant to me  
“ The smiles of glad prosperity ! ”  
So shall he own her name divine,  
So bend him at Alcestis' shrine.

EURIP. ELEC. 180.

ARGUMENT.

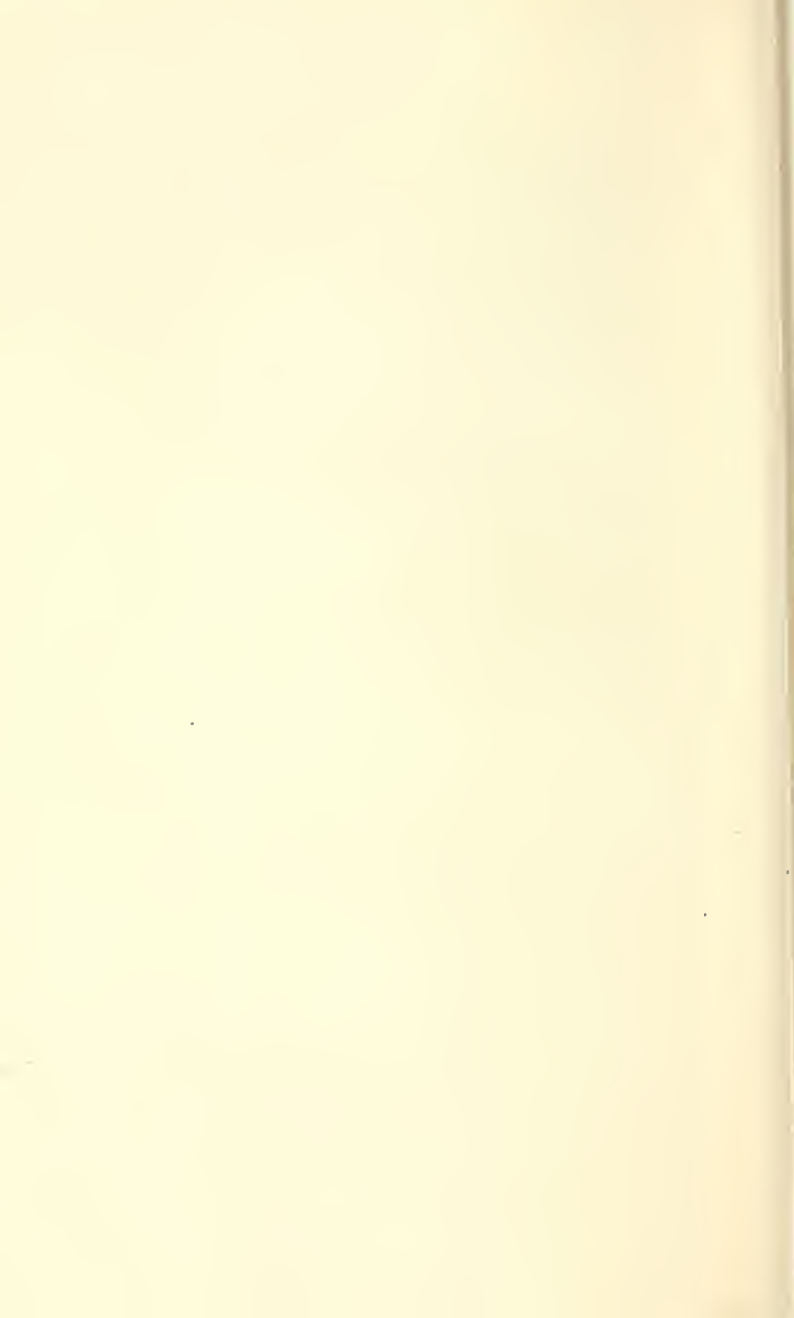
The following Ode is sung by a Chorus of Argive women,  
after the death of Agamemnon.

GLORIOUS fleet! by countless oars  
Wafted to the Trojan shores,  
In whose wake across the main  
Danced the Nereid's sprightly train,  
While in time, with lute and lyre,  
Moved the Dolphins' darting choir  
Round the purple-beaked prow,  
Fraught with precious freight wert thou.  
- Borne by thee to Simoïs banks,  
Agamemnon saw his ranks,  
Deeming 'Troy already won  
By the might of 'Thetis' son.  
From Eubœa's stormy waters,  
'Trooped for him old Nereus' daughters;  
Arms from Vulcan's forge they brought,  
On the golden anvil wrought.  
Up the steep ascent they hied,  
Ossa's wood and Pelion's side.

Where the prospect wide to spy,  
Listless nymphs in summer lie ;  
Where the ocean Nereid's child  
Roamed with Chiron through the wild,  
Fleet of foot, and framed for war,  
Soon to glean his country's star.  
Once from wandering man I learned,  
One from Iliion fresh returned,  
When his weary shallop lay,  
Moored in Nauplia's friendly bay,  
All the wondrous forms revealed,  
Son of Thetis, on thy shield,  
Figures at whose lurid glow  
Shook for dread the stoutest foe.  
On the rim, above the deep,  
Seemed with feathered feet to sweep  
Perseus, from successful toils  
Hasting with the Gorgon's spoils,  
With the herald from above,  
Sylvan son of Maia's love.  
In the midst his circle bright  
Kindled Helios, source of light,  
By his winged coursers drawn :  
And the stars that lead till dawn-  
Mystic dances through the air,  
Pleiads, Hyads, all were there,  
With their concentrated blaze,  
Blinding Hector's dazzled gaze.



On the golden helm were seen,  
With their prey their claws between,  
Sphynxes, theme of many a dirge.  
On the bossy buckler's verge  
Seemed a lioness to speed,  
Chasing thee, Pirene's steed.  
On the spear, four chargers bounding,  
Dust in clouds their flanks surrounding,  
Yet the warrior, thus arrayed,  
Atreus' princely son obeyed.  
Atreus' son! where is he now?  
Broken is thy bridal vow,  
Wedded wife, — by thee he bled!  
Vengeance hovers o'er thy head:  
Choked with gore shall be thy breath,  
Swift and violent thy death!



---

EURIP. ELEC. 699.

ARGUMENT.

The Chorus relate the following Story to Clytæmnestra, after  
the murder of Agamemnon.

THERE is a tale my mother told;<sup>1</sup>  
 The peasant knows it still,  
 Who well has conned the legends old  
 Of Argos' haunted hill.

'Tis said that Pan, whose sylvan reed  
 Oft echoes down the glade,  
 A golden lamb of wondrous breed  
 To Atreus' courts conveyed.

---

(<sup>1</sup>) The interpretation given by Barnes has been here followed, though perhaps the construction of the original more fully warrants the following version:

'Tis stored among the legends old  
 Of Argos' haunted hill,  
 That Pan, who loves along the wold  
 His sylvan notes to trill,  
 Pan, patron of the wax-bound reed,  
 To Atreus gave a lamb,  
 Of golden fleece and wondrous breed,  
 Beside its gentle dam.

In piercing tone, from steps of stone,  
The herald cried : " Come all,  
" Nor fear to see the prodigy  
" That decks your monarch's stall."

Then Atreus' kin came trooping in,  
Where gold-wrought shrines were raised ;  
And up and down Mycenæ's town  
The kindled altars blazed.

The pipe, the Muses' willing slave,  
Afar its music flung,  
Responses tuneful voices gave,  
" The golden Lamb " they sung.

Yet false those shouts that rose to heaven  
Of Atreus' happiness,  
His faithless wife the lamb had given  
Her paramour to bless.

Thyestes to the forum came,  
And loudly 'gan to call,  
" The lamb of golden fleece I claim,  
" 'Twas plac'd within my hall."

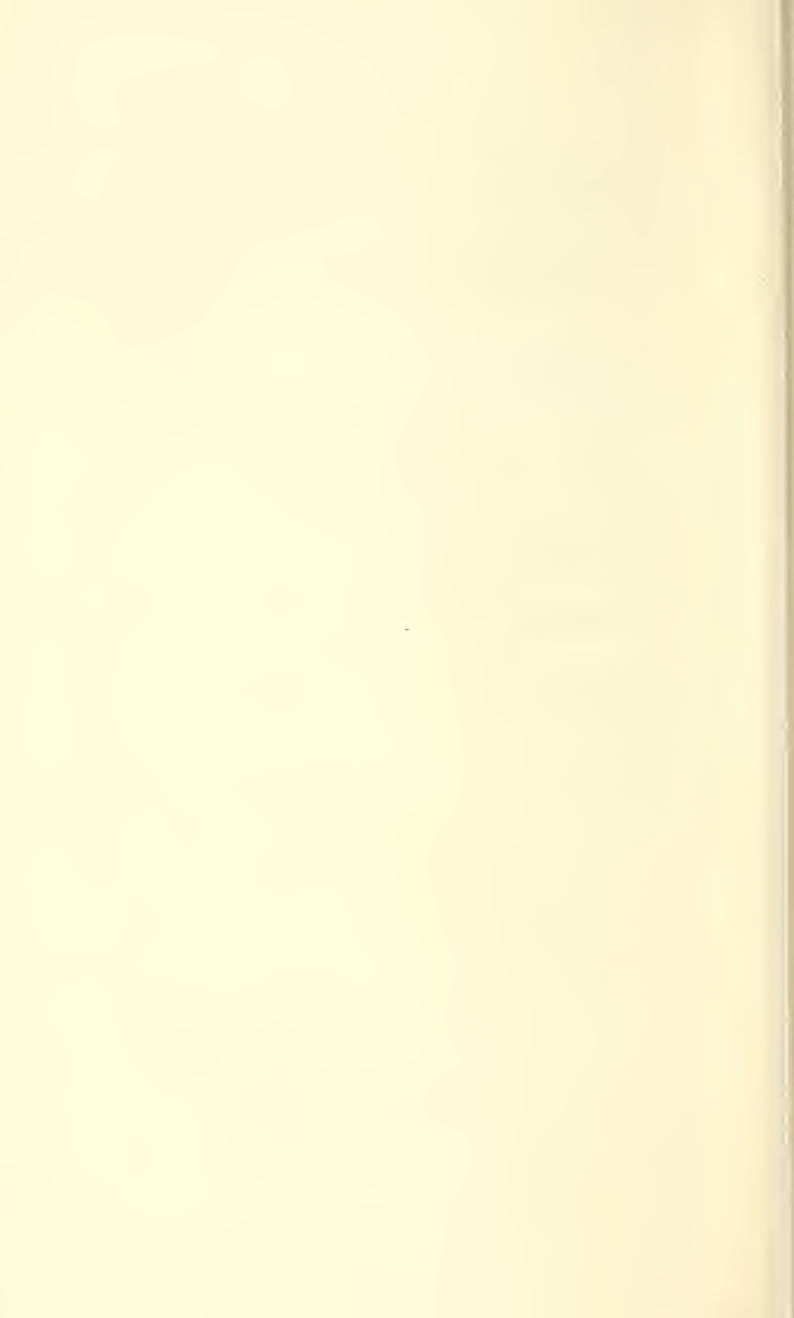
Then, then the cars of shining stars  
Were from their courses drawn,  
The sun's fair light was hid in night,  
And veiled the eye of dawn.

The clouds 'gan roll to the Northern Pole,  
So bade the voice of Jove;  
Swift to his rest in the burning West  
The furious Day-God drove.

And Ammon's seat by the parching heat  
A shrivelled desert grew,  
No drop of rain on the thirsty plain,  
No drop of genial dew.

I scarce give credence to the tale,  
That yonder glorious Sun  
Would let his golden beams grow pale,  
For aught by mortals done.

Yet well such tales, what waits the breach  
Of heaven's great laws, record;  
Thee, high-born Dame, they could not teach,  
For thou hast slain thy Lord.





---

EURIP. TROAD. 795.

---

#### THE ARGUMENT.

THE Chorus, consisting of Trojan women, lament the capture of their city, first by Hercules and Telamon, and afterwards by Agamemnon; and expostulate with Jove and Aurora for not having protected them, for the sake of Ganymede and Tithonus.

EURIP. TROAD. 795.

FROM Salaminian shore,  
Where waves unwearied roar,  
Where the bee banquets on the flowery down,  
Whence rise those banks to view  
Where first the olive grew,  
Minerva's gift, her radiant city's crown,  
Linked with Alcmena's archer-son,  
Went forth to high emprise the princely Telamon.

He marshalled Græcia's flower  
To storm the Trojan tower ;  
Wroth for his plundered steeds, he sailed the main ;  
His rowers found repose  
Where Simoïs smoothly flows,  
And bound their cables on the Mysian plain ;  
Their leader grasped the shaft and bow,  
That doomed thy heart's best blood, Laomedon, to  
flow.

The forts that Phœbus raised  
In lurid splendour blazed,  
The breath of flame in crimsoned vapors gushed;  
Twice, Troy, thy crashing wall  
Hath tottered to its fall,  
Twice with thy children's blood the spear hath  
blushed!

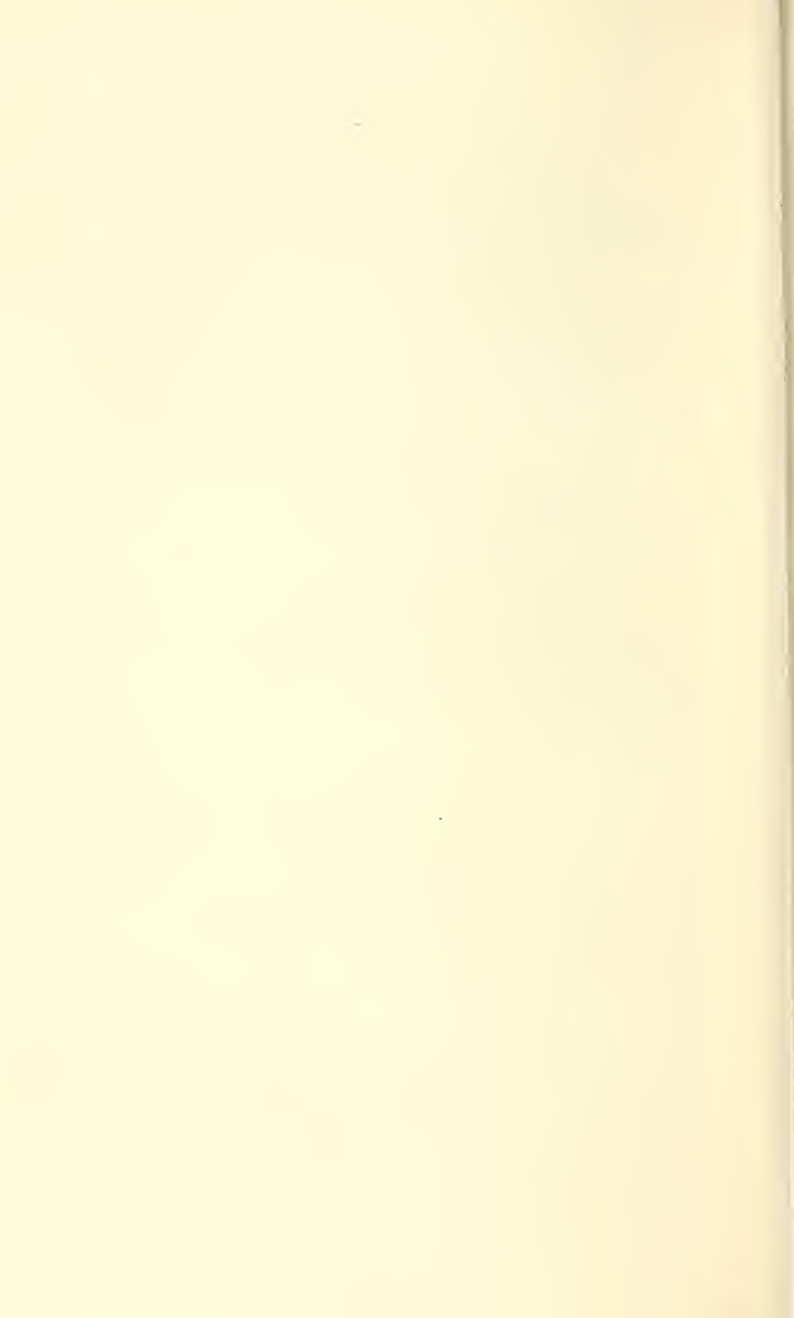
What boots it then, that, borne on high,  
Bright Ganymede fulfils such honoured ministry?

His delicate steps above  
Glide o'er the courts of Jove,  
His hand in golden cups is nectar pouring,  
While fire consumes on earth  
The land that gave him birth,  
While wail her hollow shores, her fate deploring,  
And, sad as robb'd bird's plaint, the moan  
Is made for matrons grey, for husbands, children  
gone.

The bath, which saw him lave  
In its translucent wave,  
The courts where he has played are vanished now:  
Yet still unruffled grace  
Beams on his blooming face,  
And calm as summer is his cloudless brow,  
Though Grecian spear hath desolate made  
His haunts of rosy youth, by Priam's sceptre swayed.

Love! Love! who, darting down  
To this our Phrygian town,  
Didst woo and win the favourites of heaven,  
By thy auspicious ties,  
Which bound us to the skies,  
What hopes of shielding tenderness were given!  
Yet both their earthly kindred scorn,  
Alike the Thunder's Lord, the early-waking Morn.

She, on her silver wings,  
Gladness to mortals brings,  
But marks unpitying this deserted shore;  
Though erst her golden car,  
Studded with many a star,  
Hence to her bower her Dardan bridegroom bore;  
Yet Ilion sinks, the victor's prey,  
Nor Heaven vouchsafes to aid, nor charms her griefs  
away!



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EURIP. IPH. IN AUL. 1025.

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#### ARGUMENT.

IPHIGENIA, having been enticed to Aulis, where she was to be sacrificed, under pretence of being given in marriage to Achilles, on her arrival discovers the deception. The Chorus, in the following Ode, contrast the splendour which attended the bridal of Thetis, with the melancholy fate reserved for Iphigenia.



EURIP. IPH. IN AUL. 1025.

MERRILY rose the bridal strain,  
With the pipe of reed, and the wild harp ringing,  
With the Libyan flute, and the dancer's train,  
And the bright-haired Muses singing.

On the turf elastic treading,  
Up Pelion's steep with an airy bound  
Their golden sandals they struck on the ground,  
While the mighty Gods were feasting round,  
As they sped to Peleus' wedding.  
They left Pieria's fountain,  
On the leaf-crowned hill they stood,  
They breathed their softest, sweetest lays  
In the bride's and bridegroom's praise.  
Re-echoed the Centaur's mountain,  
Re-echoed Pelion's wood.

The golden goblets crowned the Page,  
The 'Thunderer's darling boy,  
In childhood's rosy age  
Snatched from the plains of Troy.

Where on the silvery sand  
The noon-tide sun was glancing,  
The fifty Nereids, hand in hand,  
Were in giddy circles dancing.

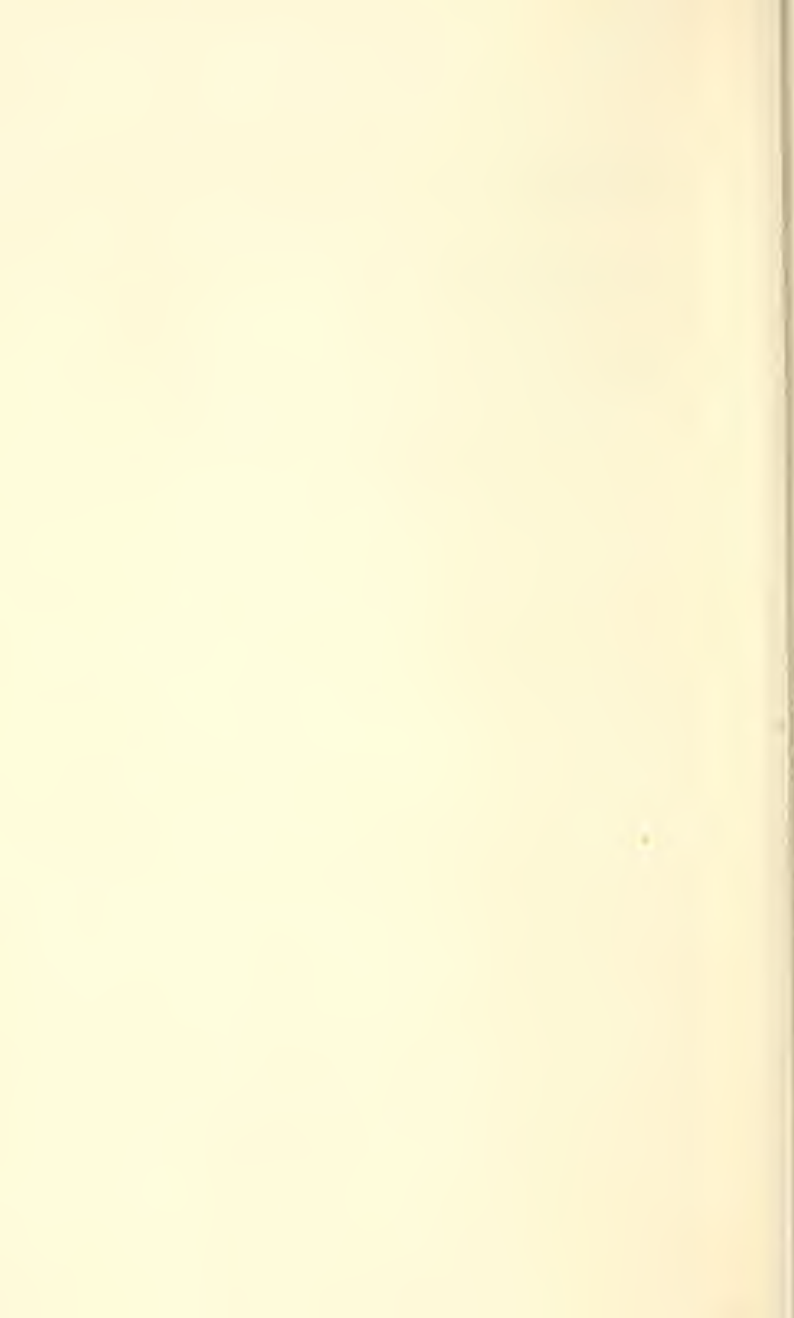
The Centaur's tramp rung up the hill,  
To feast with the Gods they trooped in haste,  
And, at the board by Bacchus graced,  
The purpling bowl to fill.  
Grassy wreath and larch's bough  
Twined around each shaggy brow.

Daughter of Nereus, loud to thee  
Chaunted the maids of Thessaly.  
Their song was of a child unborn,  
Whose light should beam like summer morn,  
Whose praise by the Delian seer was sung,  
And hymned by Chiron's tuneful tongue.

“ Thetis, mark thy warrior-son,  
“ Girt with many a Myrmidon,  
“ Armed with spear and flaming brand,  
“ Wasting Priam's ancient land.  
“ He shall ne'er to foeman quail ;  
“ He shall case his limbs in mail,  
“ Casque, and greaves, and breast-plate's fold,  
“ All by Vulcan wrought of gold,  
“ Moulded in the forge of heaven,  
“ By his goddess-mother given.

“ His shall be a hero’s name,  
“ Godlike might, and deathless fame.”

Thus the Gods propitious smiled  
On Peleus and the ocean child;  
Lady! not such nuptial wreath  
    Shall Argives bid thee wear,  
But, with the flowers of death,  
    Entwine thy clustering hair.



---

EURIP. IPH. IN TAUR. 1059.

---

ARGUMENT.

THE following Ode is sung by Grecian women who attended Iphigenia, when Priestess of Diana, in the Tauric Chersonese; and is occasioned by the prospect of Iphigenia's return to Greece without them.

EURIP. IPH. IN TAUR. 1059.

SWEET Halcyon! on the rocky verge  
Of cliffs that hang above the surge,  
Chaunting thy melancholy dirge<sup>1</sup>

(<sup>1</sup>) Compare Moschus, Id. III. 37.

Ὀὐ τόσον εἰναλίσαισι παρ' ἄοσι μύρατο δελφίν,  
Ὀὐδὲ τόσον ποκ' αἴεισεν ἐνὶ σκοπέλουσι ἀηδῶν,  
Ὀὐδὲ τόσον θρήνησεν ἀν' ἄρεα μακρὰ χελιδῶν,  
'Αλκύνος δ' οὐ τύσσον ἐπ' ἄλγεσι ἴαχε Κήϋξ,  
Ὀὐδὲ τόσον γλαυκοῖς ἐνὶ κύμασι Κηρύλος ᾄδεν,  
Ὀὐ τόσον ἀφοισιν ἐν ἄγκεσι παῖδα τὸν Ἄουδ,  
'Ιπτάμενος περὶ σῶμα, κινύρατο Μέμνονος ὕρνις,  
"Ὀσσον ἀποφθιμένωι κατωδύραντο Βίωνος.

Oh! ne'er before on Ocean shore  
So loud did dolphin wail,  
Nor in the shade of rocky glade  
So plained the nightingale ;  
Ne'er skimming down the leafy hollow,  
So loudly mourned the twittering swallow :  
Nor Ceyx by the azure sea  
So wept his lost Alcyone.

Nor diver's cry so mournfully  
E'er rung the wave beside,  
Nor dirge was heard from Memnon's bird  
So sad, when Memnon died ;

To the wild waves forlorn,  
 Well sympathetic hearts may guess  
 What mean those notes of tenderness,  
 Thine absent mate they mourn.<sup>2</sup>

When round his body, where he fell,  
 She fluttered in the eastern dell,  
 As mourned they all on that sad day  
 When Bion sighed his soul away.

(<sup>2</sup>) See the Story of Ceyx and Alcyone in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*,  
 Lib. II. 725.

“*Jamque propinquæ*

*Admotum terra, jam quod cognoscere posset,  
 Cernit: erat conjux. Ille est, exclamat; et una  
 Ora, comas, vestem lacerat: tendensque trementes  
 Ad Ceyca manus. Sic, ô carissime conjux,  
 Sic ad me, miserande, redis? ait. Adjacet undis  
 Facta manu moles: quæ primas æquoris iras  
 Frangit; et incursus quæ prædelassat aquarum.  
 Insilit huc: mirumque fuit potuisse, volabat;  
 Percutiensque levem modo natis aëra pennis,  
 Stringebat summas ales miserabilis undas.  
 Dumque volat, mæsto similem, plenumque querelæ  
 Ora dedere sonum tenui crepitantia rostro,  
 Ut verò tetigit mutum et sine sanguine corpus;  
 Dilectos artus amplexa recentibus alis,  
 Frigida nequicquam duro dedit oscula rostro.  
 Senserit hoc Ceyx, an vultum motibus undæ  
 Tollere sit visus, populus dubitabat; at ille  
 Senserat. Et tandem, Superis miserantibus, ambo  
 Alite mutantur. Fatis obnoxius isdem  
 Tunc quoque mansit amor. Nec conjugiale solutum,  
 Fædus in alitibus: coëunt, fiuntque parentes:  
 Perque dies placidos hiberno tempore septem  
 Incubat Halcyone pendentibus æquore nidis.”*

Tossed by the waves, the corpse drew nigh;  
 The well-known form that met her eye  
 Confirmed her wild alarms;

“ ’Tis



Not mine, alas! thy wafting wing,  
 Yet mine thy plaintive strain to sing,  
 With memory's fond regrets to cling

" 'Tis he," she cried;—she smote her breast,  
 She tore her tresses and her vest,  
 She spread her trembling arms.

" Thus has my love his promise kept!"  
 She cried; upon a dam she leapt,  
 That there the waters checked;  
 'Twas built the stormy waves to tire,  
 And by sustaining all their ire,  
 The harbour to protect.

As frantic on this dam she springs,  
 Wondrous to tell, a pair of wings  
 From out her shoulders rise;  
 On novel pinions borne along,  
 With darting movement, plaintive song,  
 Above the wave she flies.

And when the Lady tried to speak,  
 There issued from her slender beak  
 A melancholy strain;  
 And, loth a last embrace to miss,  
 On Ceyx' lips to print a kiss  
 That beak essayed in vain.

Some thought that Ceyx raised his head,  
 To meet that kiss;—while others said,  
 'Twas but the waves in motion;  
 But Time the infidels refuted,  
 For Ceyx, by the Gods recruited,  
 Became a bird of ocean,

Matched with his consort to a feather;  
 And these, so linked in love together,  
 Are still a wedded pair;  
 The billows, where they hang their nest,  
 For seven long days of winter rest,  
 The Halcyon's home to spare.

To haunts of Græcia still,  
 Where Dian, huntress-queen, possesses  
     The heights of Cynthus' hill,  
 Where towers the palm with feathery tresses,  
     And aye the bay  
     Each living spray  
 With fadeless verdure dresses.  
 The olive springs within the brake,  
     Apollo's sacred tree,  
 The swan is warbling on the lake  
     His placid melody;  
 Courting the Muses, as he floats,  
 To listen to his tuneful notes.

My tears have streamed, a heavy shower,  
 Since hostile spear, in evil hour,  
 Laid desolate my native tower.  
 They shook the lance, the oar they plied,  
 We darted o'er the foaming tide,  
 A gold-bought slave, I bowed my pride  
 To stand Diana's shrine beside ;  
 Nor I alone : — of princely blood,  
 There too Iphigenia stood,  
 Priestess to her whose fatal dart  
 Oft quivers in the forest-hart.

    More blest their doom,  
     I deem, o'er whom  
 Unvarying woes have shed their gloom,

Who, from the first,  
In sorrow nurst,  
Are practised to endure the worst ;  
But woe to him, who, left to moan,  
Reviews the hours of brightness gone.

The Argive shallop o'er the main  
Wafts Agamemnon's child again ;  
The wax-bound reeds Pan loves to fill  
With music on his favourite hill,  
To cheer the rowers on their way,  
Shall trill an airy roundelay.  
Apollo's seven-stringed lyre shall ring ;  
Apollo's self the descant sing ;  
And far old Ocean's spray shall fling  
The sailor's dashing oar ;  
The tackle stretched, the tightened sail  
Shall woo the impulse of the gale ;  
And soon the home-bound crew shall hail  
Athena's radiant shore.

Oh ! might I mount the sunny sky,  
Where Phœbus' fiery coursers fly !  
Oh ! might the rapid pinions bear  
My form athwart the glistening air,  
Till, where my childhood's hours were past,  
I closed my weary wing at last,  
There joined as once the festal train,  
There wove the merry dance again !

How happy, by my mother's side,  
When some dear friend became a bride,  
To shine beyond the rest I tried,  
    In gay embroidery drest ;  
Vain of my drapery's rich brocade,  
I loved my flowing locks to braid,  
Taught them my blushing cheek to shade,  
    And lived, how calmly blest !

EURIP. ION. 82.

ARGUMENT.

ION, the son of Apollo, but yet ignorant of his origin, had been brought up from infancy in the temple of Delphi, which it was his daily task to keep free from pollution. The following Ode is his Morning Song.

EURIP. ION. 82.

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DRAWN by flaming steeds, the Sun  
Now again the heavens hath won,  
Now again the starry choir,  
Shrinking from his car of fire, }  
To the holy night retire ;  
Now upon Parnassus' head,  
Where no foot profane may tread,  
Glow his chariot's burning wheels :  
Earth his genial influence feels :  
Phœbus' shrine in vapour dense  
Wraps the kindled frankincense.  
From the tripod's holy seat,  
Hear the Delphian maid repeat,  
Prompted by the unerring seer,  
Strains that thousands press to hear.

Delphians ! that with Phœbus dwell,  
To Castalia's silvery well  
Speed your limbs at dawn to lave  
In the pure and dewy wave :  
Hushed be each profaner word,  
Let no random voice be heard ;  
Only keep an answer meet  
Pious worshippers to greet.  
I the while my task will ply,  
Task I loved from infancy :  
With the bay unfading crowned,  
Hung with sacred chaplets round,  
Thus I deck the porch and door,  
Sprinkle thus the holy floor ;  
Thus with bow and arrows chase  
From the shrine the feathered race.  
Who my mother, who my sire,  
Vainly might I now enquire ;  
All to filial duty owed  
Give I to this blest abode,  
That its kindly shelter spread  
O'er the houseless orphan's head.  
Come, assist me, fairest spray  
Of the freshly-budding bay,  
Thou, that every speck and stain  
Sweepst from Apollo's fane ;  
In immortal gardens first  
Was thine infant verdure nurst,



Where the glistening bubbles mount  
From the never-failing fount,  
Whence the sacred myrtle fed,  
Hangs with leafy locks its head ;  
From the pavement day by day  
When I brush the dust away,  
Long as Helios waves his wing,  
Thence a fragrant branch I bring.  
Pæan ! Pæan ! blest, oh ! blest,  
May Latona's offspring rest !  
Fairer toil I may not ask  
Than my daily, honoured task ;  
Not to mortal man I bend,  
But on deathless Gods attend.  
Prophet, father, still to thee,  
I a willing slave will be ;  
Earthly parent have I none,  
But I am thy foster-son :  
Pæan ! Pæan ! blest, oh ! blest,  
May Latona's offspring rest !  
While this bright bay branch I hold,  
While I pour from cups of gold  
Spangled drops that brightly gleam  
In Castalia's crystal stream ;  
While I keep me free from soil,  
Can I weary of my toil ?  
No : — but if I ever range,  
May I find a blest exchange.

See from airy slumbers waking,  
Birds Parnassus' heights forsaking,  
Hear my warning, draw not nigh,  
From the precious temple fly,  
Nor your steps presume to set  
On the holy parapet.  
Thou shalt know that I can kill,  
Herald of the Thunderer's will,  
Though thy crooked talons tear  
Every bird that cleaves the air.  
See another sailing on  
Towards the altars ;— 'tis a swan ;  
Ha ! and wilt thou not retreat,  
With thy scarlet-gleaming feet ?  
Though with Phoebus' lyre thy strain  
Concert keep, 'tis all in vain ;  
Hence thy journey, minstrel, take ;  
Launch thee on the Delian lake,  
Lest a shaft transfix thy throat,  
Rife with many a liquid note.  
Ah ! what stranger bird is yonder ?  
Hence ! to distant regions wander :  
Underneath the eaves, I ween,  
Thou thy grass-built nest wouldst screen—  
Dost thou scorn me ? thou shalt know  
How unerring twangs my bow :  
Hie thee to the Isthmian grove,  
Or, within some sheltering cove,

Rear by Alpheus' stream thy brood,  
Nor on Delphi's shrine intrude.  
I will spare you if I may,  
Ye, who oft to men convey  
Tidings of the Gods above :  
But Apollo claims my love ;  
He from infancy hath fed me,  
He to youth hath safely led me,  
And to him I vow to give  
Cheerful service while I live.



EURIP. CYC. 41.

#### ARGUMENT.

SILENUS and his Satyrs, having been shipwrecked on the coast of Sicily, became the slaves of the Cyclops Polypheme, and were employed by him in keeping his sheep. The following is one of their Pastoral Songs. The Cyclops of Euripides, from which this Chorus is taken, is the only extant specimen of the Satyric Drama, or Farce of the Greeks.

VAIN, my sheep, your vaunted breed,  
 If you know not where to feed ;  
 Not mid those rocks are soft airs blowing,  
 Nor there the richest herbage growing ;  
 Not there your bleating lambkins call,  
 Nor there the gurgling waters fall.

In your trench, by yonder cave,  
 Slake your thirst, your fleeces lave ;  
 Or, if ye must wander still,  
 Seek at least the dewy hill.  
 Must a pebble bring you back,  
 Flung across your wilful track ?  
 Hie thee, horned one, back again  
 To the shepherd Cyclops' den ;  
 See, the porter stands before  
 His rustic master's rocky door.  
 Mothers, hear your sucklings bleating,  
 For their evening meal entreating ;  
 Pinned the live-long day they lie,  
 Now give them food and lullaby.

Will ye never, never learn  
From the grassy mead to turn ;  
Never rest, when day grows dim,  
In Ætna's grot each weary limb ?

But where for me  
The dance, the glee  
Of Bacchus and his maids divine,  
The timbrel's clash,  
The fountain's flash,  
The enlivening cups of wine ?

Nyssa's hill is far away,  
Here no nymphs at twilight play,  
Yet still the Bacchanalian lay  
I chaunt to beauty's Queen.  
How oft, her witching smiles to gain,  
I've sought each hallowed scene,  
Where lovely played the Bacchant train,  
Or swept with snowy feet the plain !

Say, Bacchus, say where thou,  
Sequestered, wanderest now,  
Thy golden tresses floating on the gale ?  
Reft of defence, if thy protection fail,  
Clad in this shaggy coat,  
Snatched from the grim he-goat,  
Drudge of the one-eyed Cyclops, see  
Forlorn thy favourite votary !



ARIST. AV. 1058.

ARGUMENT.

THE following Ode is supposed to be sung by a Chorus  
of birds.

ARIST. AV. 1058.

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If the race of men are wise,  
Soon to us they'll sacrifice,  
Soon before us suppliant fall,  
For we glance and rule o'er all.  
When I sail the sky, my gaze  
Every nook beneath surveys ;  
When to earth from heaven I shoot,  
I am guardian of the fruit ;  
Foe of every glutton worm  
Feasting on the tender germ,  
Or on trees, with budlets swelling,  
Finding both his food and dwelling.  
All that mar the garden's sweets,  
I pursue to their retreats ;  
All that creep, and all that sting,  
Shudder when they hear my wing ;  
They, by tiny talons slain,  
Ne'er shall slime the flowers again.  
Storm may beat, or sun may shine,  
Happy, happy life is mine.

From the biting winter's cold  
Swathed not in the mantle's fold,  
Scorched not by the piercing ray  
Of the sultry, summer day,  
Mid the flowery meads I wrap me,  
Where the cradling leaflets lap me ;  
Thus the glowing heat I shun,  
When, enthusiast of the sun,  
Taught by heaven his shrilly tune,  
Wakes the insect bard of noon.  
When the frost I cannot bide,  
In the sheltering grot I hide,  
There, through gloomy winter, gay,  
Mid the mountain nymphs I play ;  
With the balmy breath of spring,  
With the myrtle's blossoming,  
Straight to feast I speed my flight  
On its buds of virgin white,  
Or on sweets of perfumed flowers,  
Culled amid the Graces' bowers.

THE END.



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