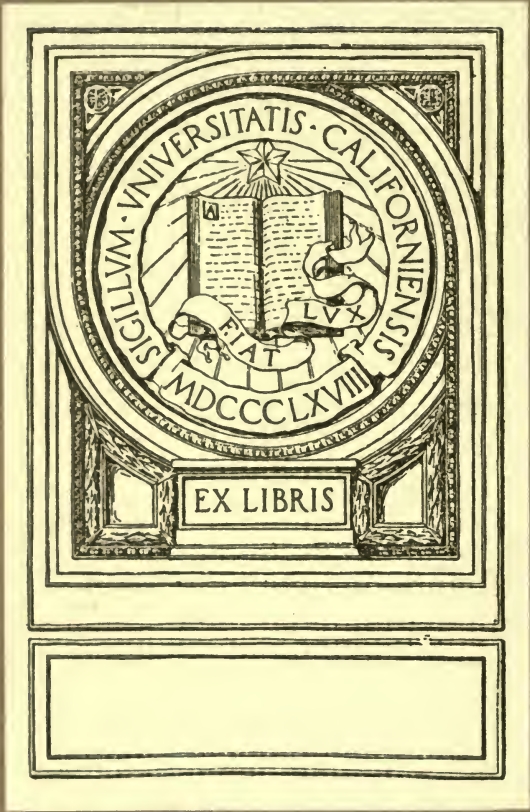


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THE PROMETHEUS BOUND
OF AESCHYLUS

THE
PROMETHEUS BOUND
OF
AESCHYLUS

Rendered into English Verse

by

EDWYN ROBERT BEVAN



LONDON: PUBLISHED BY DAVID NUTT

AT THE SIGN OF THE PHOENIX LONG ACRE

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MAIN

*To you this word is, you whose lives are lit
By nothing fair, to whom each daybreak brings
One loveless labour of the hands, where clings
To soul and body smoke and grime and grit.
Also to them this word, if any sit
Easeful, secure, fulfill'd with all good things,
And say of far-off alien travailings,
'Where are they?' and of hunger, 'What is it?'
Behold how in an ancient heart rose up
This vision of the wise, kind god, who view'd
Naked and poor, in bondage of blind pain,
Man's tremulous brood, nor longer would retain
His blissful seat, but drank a bitter cup,
Having compassion on the multitude.*

E. R. B.

PREFACE

To put forth a translation of something which has already undergone translation at many hands is to provoke censure. For the undertaking (if not an ineptitude) is itself a censure of previous performances. It implies an opinion that they fall short, and an ambition to better them. Many perhaps will concur with the present translator in his opinion that English literature does not hitherto include any worthy rendering of the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus—the “most sublime poem in the world,” Mr. Watts-Dunton has called it*—will concur in this opinion, and at the same time add his translation to the list of failures. There are, however, considerations which encourage a new attempt. If the former translations were unsatisfactory, it is (in appearance) largely due to the translators having no clear view of the effect to be produced. They would seem to have thought it enough, if

* Encyclopædia Britannica, *art.* “Poetry.”

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they translated the Greek, as it came, into any form which gave the logical sense with a certain euphony of syllables. It is as if one should attempt to scale a mountain by making a rush at it, without looking for the path. By observing the path, a less powerful climber may perhaps arrive higher.

The effect of a foreign original can only be given by a style which suggests that which most nearly corresponds to it in our own literature. Now we have in English literature, as well as in Greek, a great age of poetic drama, the time of Elizabeth and the early Stuarts, and the best of this drama is by theory part of the furniture of every educated Englishman's mind. Its vocabulary, characteristic phrases, turns of expression, come to him charged with the associations of poetic drama. Here, then, we have a model to guide us, a language to draw upon, in translating the plays of the Greeks. But we must also take account of the fact that, with all their analogies, Greek and Elizabethan tragedy do not absolutely correspond in spirit. The Greek tragedians, and especially Aeschylus, stood to their people in some

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ways as the Hebrew prophets stood to theirs. Again and again, in reading Aeschylus, do we seem to hear the voice of Job or Isaiah; again and again does the gnomic wisdom of the Bible suggest the gnomic wisdom of the Greek poets. But there is a style and language which, to an Englishman, is for ever bound up with these associations—the style and language of the English Bible, in its origin indeed largely Hebraic, not English, but entering the language, when it was still fluid, till it has become as much a part of English as its most original elements. Here, then, we have a second model to guide us. But thirdly, the blank verse and the style of diction, which had been developed by the Elizabethan drama, was taken up by Milton and subjected to modifications and refinements under the very influence of classical types, and the Bible: it became something less adapted for dramatic uses, but it gained in richness, in elaborate pomp, and in organic structure. Here, then, is our third model, the more obvious in the case of this particular play in that the influence of the Aeschylean Prometheus is very pronounced in the Satan of Milton.

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It is to be observed that, taken by themselves, none of these models can be altogether followed. In the Elizabethan drama there is much that is deficient in universality, that calls up ruffled collars and pointed beards—verbal conceits, ephemeral mannerisms. The Hebraic language of the Bible is too primitive, to say nothing of its dearth of adjectives, to render the more complex and various language of Greek poetry. The classical constructions of Milton have never become part of English, and would be intolerable at second-hand: they would give exactly that cast of cold and conventional unreality, which vitiates what one may call the Eighteenth Century view of Greek antiquity, and which it is one of the main pre-occupations of a translator to avoid.

It follows that the style which best reproduces the effect of the Greek drama in English, would be one whose basis was that of the Elizabethan dramatists, but which was purged of Elizabethan eccentricities, with more of elemental breadth and simplicity by approximation to the language of the Bible, and in the specially sonorous and elaborate passages sounding of Milton. Sometimes one of

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these elements would predominate, sometimes another ; the Hebraic and Miltonic would be more pronounced in Aeschylus than in Euripides, and in the same poet they would assert themselves in varying degrees. It is only by fusing these different elements that the effect of the Greek drama can be given. The fusion is made possible by the fact that the dramatists, the English Bible, and Milton have a great deal to start with in common. A single lifetime would cover the period, which saw at one extreme the activity of Shakespeare and at the other the production of *Paradise Lost*. The English of that period is the common source from which all three draw.

These principles will, I think, command the assent of any one who takes the trouble to think about them. And, if they are assented to, no exception can be taken to words and phrases in any translation simply on the score of archaism. A style which might justly be blamed as a pose in a modern poet, speaking in his own person, may be the very style required to represent the voice of another age. For us the spirit of Aeschylus can be expressed only in language of an archaic

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complexion. And, that being so, surely a translator should be allowed to use the speech of the Bible and Shakespeare in all its richness. If modernisms be forbidden him, how is he to enrich and invigorate his language except by opening freely its original springs, and letting into it even words and forms of speech, which have been dropped by the current poetical tradition ?

But perhaps the objection will rather be that, with all this talk of archaism, the language of the present translation differs little from the ordinary language of poetry. Certainly the language most used in modern poetry is itself archaic. Tennyson especially restored to currency a great deal of Elizabethan English, and Swinburne has shown what power lies in the forms of speech and manner of the Bible. Naturally, such examples have made an archaistic language of a kind an ordinary dialect of serious verse. And it must be admitted that it is often of watery enough quality. We all know the sort of thing—it would be invidious to single out examples among the crowd of ephemerals. Whether any one who aims at writing the English of the Elizabethan and Miltonic age succeeds in

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getting beyond this feeble reproduction and in really catching the manner of his models, only those acquainted with the models themselves can judge. A word, a phrase, a cadence will bring to one man an echo of the older literature: to another man, whose acquaintance with that literature is more distant, it will have no association, or perhaps strike him as a solecism.

Whatever verdict may be pronounced upon this attempt, it is to be hoped that we shall before long see the final and satisfying translation of the Greek poets into English. The hope seems warranted by the characteristics of our present literary activity. Whether it be great in creation or not, it certainly displays a variety of imitative manner greater than any other age can show. Arising mainly perhaps from that widening and suppling of the historic imagination, which makes it more possible for us to live in thought under all sorts of different conditions than it has been to the people of other times, an unprecedented power of eclectic reproduction belongs to modern literature. Skill in the composition of verse, discrimination in taste, were perhaps never so diffused.

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“They make me fancy,” Symonds says of some lines of Tennyson, “that we moderns, with tamer fancy and feebler thought, have a better trick of versifying than Milton or Shelley.”

Such an age may not be a great age for new discoveries in poetry : it ought to be a great age for translation. It might hand down a body of translation which should never be superseded. For if former translations, as Mr. Andrew Lang says in the case of Homer, became out-of-date, it was exactly because each age required and gave the peculiar colouring of its own thought. But we, whose thoughts have been so multiplied and who speak with so many tongues, are in a position, as our fathers were not, to realise to what elements in our own speech, to what stage of our own past, the language and thoughts of each epoch of antiquity correspond, and, realising this, to give the great works of antiquity a rendering which, if sometimes suffering from the defects of a compromise, is absolutely the best possible. It is inconceivable, for instance, that there will ever be an age of English literature to correspond more nearly with that of the Attic drama than the Elizabethan.

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To hand down translations may seem too poor a mark for the ambition of the age. And yet the Book, which has been the most powerful force in English literature, is a translation. In the case of the Greek poets, how much of our intellectual heritage comes from them, even though all the while a strange tongue has had to be mastered in order to know them, no one needs to be reminded. Such mastery was possible to the few, and literature was mainly the concern of the few. But this is so less and less, and if democracy is destined to lay hold of literature, as of everything else, that generation will have made no mean contribution, which delivers to the people a standard rendering of the great works upon which our own literature has been nourished. If a new creative age supervenes, it would in such a rendering possess inestimable material.

The Bible has just been referred to, as the great example of the literary influence of a translation. But that translation was the work of no individual, it came stamped with no personal peculiarity. And if our age is to bring forth a translation of the Greek poets of permanent and universal authority,

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it would probably have to be by the co-operation of many minds, in which the idiosyncrasies of each would find correction. With so much ability at large, directed to the production of excellent verse and genuine poetry, which yet represents no new force in literature, would it be impossible to concentrate some of it on such a work as I have named? Should this suggestion find lodgment in any quarter, where it may bear fruit, the present translation, whether it succeeds or fails, will have accomplished all that I could desire.

It remains to acknowledge my obligations to Mr. W. Headlam, who was good enough to read the translation in MS. and allow me to profit by his exceptional knowledge both of Aeschylus and of English verse; also to Mr. Campbell Dodgson and Mr. Gerard Bevan, who read through the proofs and pointed out various improvements.

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THE audience who assembled in the Theatre of Dionysos under a spring sky—behind them the Akropolis, and before them the amethyst hill of Hymettos and the sea—to listen to the plays of the Athenian tragedians, when they were first given to the world, expected, unlike a modern audience, to watch the unfolding of a story already familiar to them. Effects were calculated on this supposition. The allusions, the “tragic irony,” of which the plays were full, would otherwise have missed aim. And it is, I suppose, the business of a translator to reproduce in the mind of a reader, so far as that is possible, the impressions, which came to those for whose eyes and ears the plays were originally designed. But if so, it would seem an essential part of his business to give some preliminary account of the story and the persons of the drama,

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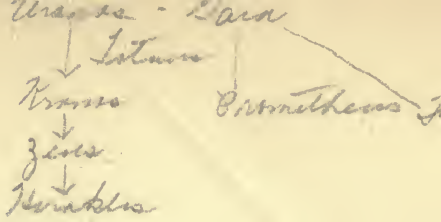
as they already existed in the mind of an Athenian citizen, when he took his seat in the theatre twenty-three centuries ago.

The ideas of the Greeks as to what happened in the marvellous childhood of the world were derived from two sources. | One was the mythology which had taken form, had become canonical as it were, in the poets from Homer and Hesiod onwards.

2 The other source was the local myths attached to the various shrines. It was from this chaos of local legend that the poets had in the first instance drawn, combining elements of diverse origin into more or less harmonious systems. These systems, it is true, influenced in their turn the local myths, so that an action and re-action between the two sorts of mythological tradition was continually going on. But there remained many local myths which had not been taken up into literature, many which were inconsistent with the systems of Homer or Hesiod or any other of the recognised literary authorities. Aeschylus in the *Prometheus* has regard to both lines of tradition.

Local
or traditional
legends

For the first beginnings of things, the time in



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which the action of the play is laid, Hesiod was of course the standard authority. And the story of the strife between the old and the new gods, as it is told by Aeschylus, corresponds in the main with the story, as it is given by Hesiod. And this is how it runs : The gods who now rule the world, Zeus, his brothers and sisters and children, have not always been. Before them an older generation, Kronos, the father of Zeus, and the brothers and sisters of Kronos, bore rule. These elder gods were the children of Uranos (Heaven) and Gaia (Earth), and were called Titans. But even the Titans were not from the beginning. Before them Uranos himself had been lord of the world. But Kronos rose up against Uranos his father and cast him down from the citadel of heaven. And in process of time, Zeus, the son of Kronos, rose up against him in his turn and overpowered him by the pre-eminence of his wisdom and his peculiar arm, the thunder. Then Kronos and the other gods of the Titan generation were imprisoned in Tartaros, far under the earth, in thick darkness—all but a few ; for Prometheus escaped the fate of

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his brethren, and Okeanos ; Atlas, moreover, was not put into Tartaros, but compelled to stand in the utmost West, holding up the sky "with his head and tireless hands." (Hesiod, *Theog.* 519.) So the new generation of gods were established, and Zeus divided to them their several honours. (Hesiod, *Theog.* 885 : Aesch. *Prom.* 230.) But thereafter Prometheus was brought into a quarrel with Zeus by his favouring of the race of men, and when at last he stole fire from heaven in a hollow fennel-stalk and gave it to men, Zeus for punishment chained him up, and set an eagle upon him to devour his liver. In this evil case Prometheus continued, till Herakles, the son of Zeus by a mortal woman, killed the eagle and set him free. (Hesiod, *Theog.* 520-569.)

In these outlines of the story Hesiod and Aeschylus agree. But in other respects they show divergence. For Aeschylus, in taking over the old myth, modified it freely to suit his central thought, omitting here and adding there, till the vague legendary figures acquire a new actuality of being, are raised to transcendent characters, wherein

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Man may see projected on an ideal scale the forces and motives at work in the ground of his heart. Some constituents of the Hesiodic story are absolutely discarded. While, for instance, in Aeschylus Zeus is simply said to have "taken no account" of mankind on his accession to power, and to have regarded them rather as rubbish than with any active hostility, in Hesiod a set quarrel between Zeus and Man is traced to the fraud which men, as instructed by Prometheus, had perpetrated upon the gods in the matter of sacrifice. The somewhat low cunning, which Prometheus displays in that episode, could only have misrepresented that subtlety of wit which Aeschylus meant his Prometheus to embody. So too the episode of Pandora and Epimetheus, the slow-witted brother of Prometheus, is taken no notice of in our play, where it would only have clogged the ruling motive, although it is true that the fragment of another play (which *may* have belonged to the Promethean trilogy) refers to Pandora, the "mortal woman begotten of moulded clay." (τοῦ πηλοπλάστου σπέρματος θνητῆ γυνή. Frag. 369.)

wisdom
of intelligence
and wit

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The three leading characteristics of Prometheus, as he appears in Aeschylus, were already indicated in a slight way by Hesiod: Aeschylus threw them into stronger relief and developed them more largely. The most fundamental idea, of course, connected with him was that of practical wisdom: he was the embodiment of intelligence, which grasps the means to all ends, which can plan and arrange and advise, fertile in what the Greeks called βουλαί, "counsels," or μῆτις, contriving wit. So in Hesiod his epithets are ποικίλος, αἰολόμητις, ποικιλόβουλος, ἀγκυλομήτης, πολύιδρις, πάντων πέρι μῆδεα εἰδώς. And this was the ultimate cause of his coming into collision with Zeus. For this fertility of counsel, this capacity for far-reaching design was exactly one of the attributes, by which Zeus was distinguished. His epithets also are μητιώεις (Hesiod, *Erg.* 51; *Theog.* 457), μητίετα (*Erg.* 104; *Theog.* 56, &c.), ἄφθιτα μῆδεα εἰδώς (*Theog.* 545). Metis personified is his first wife (*Theog.* 886). "It is impossible to cheat or overreach the mind of Zeus." (*Theog.* 613.) This corresponds closely

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with the language of our play, when it speaks of the "harmony of Zeus" (l. 551), that is the ordered world-plan, which no man can evade. "I see not any way," the Chorus sings later on, "by which I can escape the *metis* of Zeus (l. 906). Here already is matter of rivalry. Accordingly we find Hesiod actually saying that Prometheus "contended in counsels with the mighty son of Kronos." (*Theog.* 534.) And Aeschylus makes Kratos desire that Prometheus may learn σοφιστῆς ὧν Διὸς νωθέστερος, "that he is a nimble wit, but that Zeus is a nimbler" (l. 62). In Hesiod, however, it is not further explained in what way Prometheus disclosed his shrewdness beyond his attempt to cheat Zeus in the sacrifice, his warning to Epimetheus not to receive the gifts of the gods, and his successful theft of the fire. In Aeschylus on the other hand all human invention, all ways of fitting means to ends, go back to Prometheus. "All arts men have from the Provider come" (l. 506). He has become almost a personification of human intelligence, of human craft, in vain war with the greater powers.

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In Aeschylus also a wisdom of an altogether different kind is added, the power of prophecy. But this Prometheus has less of himself, than as informed by his mother, the oracular goddess, Earth. And it is to be noticed that here is a point where Aeschylus and the Hesiodic tradition diverge. In Hesiod, Prometheus is the son of Iapetos, one of the twelve Titans, and of Klymene, a daughter of Okeanos. Aeschylus drops all mention of any father and makes Prometheus simply a son of Earth, of Gaia, who is also Themis. In identifying Gaia and Themis (who in Hesiod are distinct) Aeschylus was drawing from the other mythological source, local tradition: Athens worshipped Ge-Themis as one deity. (Pausanias, i. 22 : *Corp. Inscr. Attic.* iii. Nos. 318, 350.) Perhaps he was also following the Athenian tradition in making Prometheus her son. At any rate, his poetical purpose was advanced by removing the colourless Iapetos and Klymene, and allowing no parent to appear for the person who embodies the idea of Wisdom, but the ancient, wise, universal Mother herself.



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We may digress for a moment from Prometheus to speak of his mother. The ideas of the Earth and of Justice (Themis) seem at first so far apart that one might wonder how they could coalesce. But Themis is not primarily goddess of justice : she is primarily an oracular power. At Delphi the local myth knew of a time, when the oracle was that of Themis, not of Apollo, and of a still earlier time, when it belonged to Gaia. (Aeschylus, *Eum.* 2 f.) Themis and Gaia are not, it will be observed, identified at Delphi, as they are at Athens, but they are closely associated as oracular powers : Themis is the daughter and successor of Gaia. According to a common Greek idea it was out of the earth that prophetic inspiration and dreams mainly came ; and not only Gaia herself, but the other *earth* deities, the *chthonic* powers, gave men good counsel in oracle and vision, delivered them divine *boulai*. Even the Pythoness at Delphi was inspired by a vapour arising out of the ground. *Euboulos* is found as an epithet of Hades (*Orph. Hym.* 17, 12 ; 29, 6 ; 55, 3) and one of the chthonic gods worshipped in Attica was

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called Eubouleus. Gaia, as the giver of good advice, plays a great part in Hesiod. She it was who prompted Kronos in the deed whereby he overthrew his father Uranos. She and Uranos foretold to Kronos his own doom, and showed Rhea how the infant Zeus was to be preserved. It was Gaia by whose "sage instructions" Kronos was compelled to disgorge his children. It was by her admonishings that Zeus won his ultimate victory: "for she told the gods everything from beginning to end." (*Theog.* 627, *cf.* 884). It was, finally, she and Uranos who saved Zeus from doing that which would bring about his own overthrow (l. 891). In Pindar, by whom also Aeschylus was largely influenced, Themis plays the part assigned in Hesiod to Gaia. According to this version, Zeus is restrained from doing the fatal thing by Themis, who is given the epithet "*euboulos*" (*Isthm.* viii. (vii.) 67) as the expounder of oracles (*θέσφατα*). This passage was, no doubt, in Aeschylus' mind, when he calls Themis in this play "*orthoboulos*" (l. 18) "right-reading." But the part played by Gaia-Themis

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in the *Prometheus* is somewhat altered. It is still she alone who knows directly the decrees of fate and things to come, but she speaks only by the mouth of her son Prometheus (ll. 211, 873). From him Zeus got the *boulai*, to which his victory was due (l. 219): no one but Prometheus can tell him what the peril is which hangs over his head, and how it may be removed (l. 913).

His wisdom, then, is one of the three characteristics of Prometheus, which Aeschylus has taken from the old myth and expanded. And this he has also done with the other two, *love of men* and *defiance of the new gods*.¹ Already in Hesiod, Prometheus is a "kindly" god. (*ἀκάκητα Προμηθεύς*. *Theog.* 614.) He schemes to secure the good part of the sacrifice for men. He steals fire for men.² But he is not yet the universal benefactor, the one moved always with a divine compassion, who because of his great love for men drew wittingly upon himself the wrath of God. Again, in Hesiod Prometheus already acts in opposition to Zeus, he belongs to the Titan brood, whom only the utmost strength of Zeus could overthrow, but he is not

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yet, as in Aeschylus, the type of splendid scorn maintained in the face of overmastering power, of

“ The unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield,
And what is else not to be overcome.”

Aeschylus takes over the old myth and makes it the vesture of a higher spirit. He has also woven into the story of Prometheus another mythological idea with which his hearers were familiar, but which Aeschylus was perhaps the first to connect with Prometheus—the idea that not only had the reign of the present Supreme Being a definite beginning, but that its termination was not inconceivable. The idea is already in Hesiod. Here it is Metis, the first wife of Zeus, who is destined to bear the future king: fortunately for himself, Zeus, being warned in time by Gaia and Uranos, swallows her while she is pregnant (*Theog.* 886 f.). In Pindar (*Isthm.* viii. (vii.) 51 f.) it is Thetis the Nereïd who is destined to bear “a royal son better than his father.” When Zeus and Poseidon contend for her, not knowing

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how the matter stands, Themis declares the peril, and Thetis is married to Peleus. It was this passage of Pindar which Aeschylus had in his mind, as the echo of its phrases proves. But the situation is complicated by making Themis herself dumb: Prometheus alone is privy to her secret, and thus holds the fate of Zeus in his hands.

It remains to say as much of the minor characters of the play as may give some idea of the associations presupposed in the mind of an Athenian spectator.

Hephaistos was closely associated with Prometheus in the Attic cult.* Both, indeed, were originally perhaps only different forms of the same Fire-god. They were, at any rate, worshipped together, and had many things in common. This is one reason for the strong sympathy with Prometheus shown by Hephaistos in this play. An allusion is made to their old friendship (l. 39).

* Preller. *Griechische Mythologie* (1887), p. 91 f.

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The companions of Hephaistos, Kratos and Bia, are taken from Hesiod, where they are children of the river Styx, come to the aid of Zeus against the Titans, and remain beside him for ever after. (*Theog.* 385 f.) They are to be conceived as brother and sister, not two brothers, as Flaxman's familiar illustrations would make us think.

Okeanos is brought into the play for two main reasons apparently. In the first place, he marks the scene of the action—at the extreme verge of the earth, round which revolves the circular all-encompassing river, whose name he bears. And the same purpose is served by making the *Chorus* consist of his daughters. Their visible presence in itself brings home to the spectator⁴ how very far away this place is. But secondly, Okeanos is morally the foil to Prometheus. Both belong to the old race of gods. And just because they belong to the same order, the personal contrast of the two is exhibited in sharper relief. There were two main elements in the traditional idea of Okeanos. One was his ¹immense age. According to Homer, he was the beginning of all things.

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(*Iliad* xiv. 246.) In Hesiod he does not hold quite so primal a position, being himself the son of Uranos and Gaia (*Theog.* 133); but the idea of great age, no doubt, clung to him in popular thought. The other element was his *remoteness*, not only local, but involving the moral quality of holding aloof. The great war, in which Zeus vanquished the Titans, did not reach to his dwelling-place. (*Iliad* xiv. 202.) It left him unscathed, when his brethren fell. This conception of Okeanos gives to much in the play of Aeschylus a point which the contemporary Athenians would readily seize. His first words are to complain of the *length* of his journey, although we know that the scene is laid close to his River. The journey was long in regard to the effort it cost him to move. He was full of senile apprehension even at his daughters' going to visit Prometheus, and was only with difficulty persuaded to consent (l. 129). Had commentators appreciated these things, they would not have been mystified by the obvious sarcasm of Prometheus, when he congratulates Okeanos upon being clear of the doom,

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although he *had had a part in all the enterprise* (l. 331). The whole point of the character of Okeanos was that he never had a part in anything. "Be still," Prometheus counsels him, "and keep thy safe remove" (l. 344).

Hermes, the herald of Zeus, appears at the end of the play as a sort of foil to Hephaistos at the beginning. In his tone of insolent triumph the spirit of the new rule finds voice. Where Hephaistos is sympathetic and sorrowful, Hermes preaches and exults. In one way this scene would appeal to an ancient spectator as it does no longer to a modern reader. Hermes was the patron and typical representative of a class with which he was familiar—the class of heralds. And the qualities shown by Hermes on this occasion are just those for which heralds were unpopular: they had the insolence of flunkeys; their office was considered one unworthy of a free man, while the haughtiness and brutality, with which they exercised it, made them detested. (Compare the Egyptian herald in the *Supplices*, and Euripides, *Troades*, 423 f.; *Herakleidae*, 293 f.)

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We come lastly to a character, which Aeschylus has introduced into this play, although little connected with Prometheus—that of Io. The myth of Io had already become complicated with all sorts of alien elements before the time of Aeschylus: its nucleus, of course, was the local legend of the people of Argos. According to the belief of the Argives, the personality embodied in the Inachos, the river of the Argive plain, was that of the first king of the land. Like all rivers, Inachos was the son of Okeanos (l. 636, *cf.* Hesiod, *Theog.* 336): from the great world-river all lesser ones sprang. Io, according to the form of the story here followed, was King Inachos' daughter. The first phase in her story is that Zeus falls in love with her. The next is that she is changed into a cow. The connection of the second phase with the first is somewhat obscure. According to one version, Zeus turned her into a cow to elude the jealousy of Hera; according to another, it was Hera, who did it, in order to conceal her from Zeus. In the *Supplices* (l. 291 f.) Aeschylus chooses the latter view: in our play it is left vague: Io merely says

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that the transformation was *θεόσσυτος*, wrought by no earthly power. It is at any rate Hera who sends the gadfly, which now drives Io over the world (ll. 592, 601, 900). What part Zeus plays in this is not clear, or why, if he recognises Io in her new shape, he does not interfere, since his passion has not yet been gratified. He is spoken of as the author of Io's miseries (l. 759), and reproached with causing them (l. 736): but it must rather be by being selfishly indifferent to them, so long as his own object is attained, that he is responsible for them. It was also, of course, Hera (though the play does not say so) who set Argos to watch Io in her cow shape. Argos was one of the monstrous creatures which, like Typhoeus, sprang from the womb of Gaia. Aeschylus at any rate follows the view that makes him a son of Earth (ll. 567, 677, *cf. Supplices*, 305). His monstrosity consisted in his having eyes all over his body. The charge laid upon him was to watch Io straitly, so that Zeus might have no communication with her. Zeus accordingly sent Hermes to kill him. Since the abnormal

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number of eyes of Argos allowed him to have always some open and vigilant, it was necessary for Hermes first to lull him to sleep by means of the *syrinx*, the shepherds' mouth-organ of reeds joined with wax (l. 574, *cf.* Ovid. *Met.* i. 687; Valerius Flaccus, *Arg.* iv. 384), and then fall upon him suddenly and unawares (l. 680).

Traces of the wanderings of Io were detected by the Greeks all over the earth. The identification of her with Isis brought her to Egypt; there, as Prometheus is made to describe it, Zeus at last comes near to her, and she conceives miraculously by the touch of his hand. Her son Epaphos is a Greek transformation of the Apis bull, taking shape originally, no doubt, among the Greek traders and mercenaries who frequented Egypt: he appears here simply as a king of Egypt. His descendant Danaos returns with his fifty daughters to Argos, and thus renews the link between Io and her native land.

All this was legend which the tragedians found already current. But if Io was to be brought on to the stage one modification was necessary. A

INTRODUCTION

cow could not be a *dramatis persona*. Her change of shape was therefore reduced to her merely having horns. It is thus that she appears in the *Prometheus*, and thus also in the numerous works of art, which were influenced by the dramatic tradition.*

Why Io comes at all into the *Prometheus* is not easy to say. Her connections with the main story are of the slightest. They are simply that she, like Prometheus, is a monument of the tyranny of Zeus, and that she is the ancestress of Herakles, the destined deliverer. It is obvious, however, that in order to bring these points of contact into prominence, it was not necessary for Prometheus to narrate her wanderings, past and future, at elaborate length. No one can fail to see that these geographical descriptions are an object in themselves and the main purpose for which the poet introduced Io. The geographical parts of the play were perhaps *considerably* longer even than they now appear, in the original text. The motives, which led Aeschylus to amplify his drama in this

* See Engelmann. "De Ione dissertatio archæologica." Halle (1868).

INTRODUCTION

manner are perhaps beyond our ascertaining to-day. There may have been at that moment, with the expansion of Athenian commerce, a great interest in remote half-fabulous countries, the same sort of appetite, which we fed in our younger days with Mr. Rider Haggard's stories. It is to be noted that similar geographical descriptions came again in the next play of the trilogy, the *Prometheus Unbound*, so that an Athenian audience was not expected to grow quickly tired of them. Whether they add anything to the drama from the poetic point of view may be a matter of disagreement. I think we may say that they give the figure of Prometheus a certain universal importance by extending our field of vision over the whole world: all the lands inhabited by men are seen at a sweep stretching from the feet of him who is the great Friend of man.

The *Prometheus Bound* was one play of a trilogy of which the other two lost ones were the *Prometheus Unbound* and *Prometheus the Fire-bearer*. It is now the general opinion that our play was the first, and the *Fire-bearer* the last of the series. In

INTRODUCTION

the other two the deliverance of Prometheus by Herakles, his reconciliation with Zeus, and restoration to dignity and worship, with especial reference probably to the Attic fire-ceremonies in his honour, were duly set forth.

THE PERSONS

PROMETHEUS.

KRATOS (*Strength*) and BIA (*Violence*).

HEPHAISTOS.

OKEANOS.

IO, *the daughter of* INACHOS, KING of ARGOS.

HERMES.

The CHORUS *is of the daughters of* OKEANOS.

The SCENE *is among the mountains at the extreme end of the earth, near the River Okeanos.*

[“It is to be understood that he does not make PROMETHEUS to be bound in the *Caucasus*, as the common story has it, but on the verge of *Okeanos*, in Europe, as may be gathered from the things said to Io.” *Ancient Scholiast.*]





PROMETHEUS BOUND

HEPHAISTOS, KRATOS *and* BIA *bring in*
PROMETHEUS *captive.*

KRATOS

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On the uttermost of earth at last we stand,
The Scythians' range, inhuman solitude;
And thou, Hephaistos, needs must go about ✓
The Father's high commission, to make fast
This knave to the stupendous precipices
In adamantine everlasting bands.
Thy glorious flower, all-operating fire, ✓
He stole, he utter'd unto men: for such
Misdeed the gods require just recompense,
That he be school'd to brook the mastery
Of Zeus, and leave his bent of loving men. |||

10

PROMETHEUS BOUND

HEPHAISTOS

O Strength and Force, for you the hest of Zeus
Is done, is clench'd, beyond impediment;
But I lack heart to bind perforce a god,
My kin, against some winter-beaten gorge.
Even so necessity must find me heart:
Ill comes of dallying with the Father's word.
O son of right-reading Themis, deep
In counsel, no less unto me than thee
Comes anguish, when with brass not lightly loosed
20 I pin thee to this hill, remote from men,
Where thou no voice, no human lineament
Shalt see, but broiling in the sun's fierce bright-
ness
Shalt change thy favour, hailing still the hour,
When spangle-vestured Night shall veil the light,
And that, when Day dispels the early rime.
Yea, every hour, being present, shall be pain
To wear thee:—the deliverer is not yet.
Such harvest dost thou reap from love of men.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Thou thoughtest not a thing redoubtable
The wrath of thine own kind, but unto man
Increasedst honour inordinate: whereof 30
Behold the guerdon! to stand sentinel
Of this grim scar, where is not any stooping
Or sleep or slacking of the knees, but long
Lament redoubled on lament, and groans
Wind-wasted. Who shall turn the heart of Zeus?
That one is ever harsh, whose rule is new.

KRATOS

Good now! what use to linger and make ruth?
The god, whom gods abhor, dost thou not hate,
Seeing he betray'd thy precious thing to men?

HEPHAISTOS

A thrill in kinship lives and ancient converse.

KRATOS

Aye, aye, but to ignore the Father's word, 40
May that be? doth not that fear thrill thee more?

PROMETHEUS BOUND

HEPHAISTOS

Steel-hard thou ever wast and stout of heart.

KRATOS

Why, him our plainings physic not! and thou,
Lose not thy labour on what helps nowise.

HEPHAISTOS

Woe worth the cursèd cunning of these hands!

KRATOS

Why curse thy craft? that, surely, to plain thinking
Is innocent altogether of this coil.

HEPHAISTOS

Well, would some other had gotten it, not I!

KRATOS

Save the supreme arbitrament of heaven,
50 All things bear trouble : none but Zeus is free.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

HEPHAISTOS

I grant it : there is no gainsaying here.

KRATOS

To it then, and yarely! set the chains about him,
For fear the Father look, and find thee slack.

HEPHAISTOS

Nay, here are armlets ready, see you not?

KRATOS

Take him by main force round about the hands, ✓
Smite with the hammer, clamp him to the rocks.

HEPHAISTOS

The work goes forward,—done in earnest now.

KRATOS

Strike! strike! make fierce the grapple: no relaxing!
He is shrewd at slipping from impossible straits.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

HEPHAISTOS

60 This arm at least it were a task to free.

KRATOS

Now pin thou this as surely. Let him learn,
Wise as he is, there is One of nimbler wit.

HEPHAISTOS

Such binding none could censure,—save the bound.

KRATOS

Right through his bosom now drive lustily
The fierce tooth of an adamantine wedge.

HEPHAISTOS

Alas, Prometheus! for thy pains I groan.

KRATOS

{ Yes, thou art soft, and for the foes of Zeus
Groanest : thou yet may'st need thy pity at home.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

HEPHAISTOS

Thou see'st a sight not good to look upon.

KRATOS

I see a caitiff reaping his deserts.

70

But hasten, get the girths about his sides.

HEPHAISTOS

What I must do, I must : urge me not so. ✓

KRATOS

Nay but I will both urge and tarr thee on.

Come down and strongly ring-about his legs.

HEPHAISTOS

That is soon finish'd. As I speak, 'tis done.

KRATOS

Now through his ankles drive the pins amain : ✓

The One that judgeth of the work is stern.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

HEPHAISTOS

Such as thy shape is, such I find thy tongue.

KRATOS

Thou, be thou tender : only blame not me,
80 Because I am hard of heart and harsh of mood.

HEPHAISTOS

Let us go. The web is woven. He is fast.

KRATOS

There, do thy pleasure there ! Ravish and give
To children of a day the things of gods.
Look now, what lightest parcel of thy pain
Can men abate for thee ? A name ill-sorting
Thou bear'st in Heaven, Prometheus : for thyself
Thou hast much need, Provider, to provide,—
Some way to get thee from this cunning toil.

[HEPHAISTOS, KRATOS *and* BIA *depart,*
leaving PROMETHEUS *chained to the rocks, alone.*]

PROMETHEUS BOUND

PROMETHEUS

O holy sky! and ye, swift-wingèd winds!
All fountains of all rivers! Thou, that rollest
Laughter innumerable of ripple and wave,
O Sea, behold me! Mother of all things, Earth, ✓ 90
Behold me! Thou, great Sun, that seest all,
Bear record what I suffer from my peers. ✓

Look with what rife torment riven,
Saw'd with agony, I am given

A race to run of measureless years.
For the Lord of the Blessed new-arisen
Binds me fast in a bitter prison,

A bond that shames and sears.
Throes that I have, that I apprehend,
Both I groan for, and ask what end,

What end to my pain appears! | 100
Nay, my words wander: nothing can befall
But I have known it long ago. No pang
{ Comes unfamiliar. Wisest is to bear
The allotted burden with what ease may be,

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Knowing that Fate is strong and none shall stay.

Ah! but I cannot:—neither to contain

Nor to give tongue I find the way. O wretched,

Entrammell'd in this web of agony,

For that I gave good things to men! I track

Home to its hidden spring the flowing of fire,

By stealth infringe it, drawing what doth charge

110 A reed: the thing, reveal'd to man, is mighty,

Teacher of every art, the main of life,

And lo, I have sinn'd!—and pay the forfeit so,

A gazing-stock beneath untemper'd heaven.

Ah!—

What sound did smite my sense?

Invisible redolence!

Whence came the wafture? whence?

Was it gods, or men, or mingled fellowship,

Come to the hill, that is limit of the world?

Wherefore? to see the pageant of my pain?

Ah! see a god then, manacled, ill-starr'd,

120 To the Highest hateful, reaping hate

From every deity, denizen

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Of the heavenly hall, because that men
He loved with a love exceeding great.
Ha, there ! there again ! What is it I hear
As the whirring of birds ? The shrill air sings
To the beat of nimble-driven wings.
All sound of approach is fear.

[The CHORUS appear in the air, borne in a winged vessel.]

CHORUS

Fear nought from us, but know
This band is friend, not foe,
We that on swiftest pinions hither sail,—
Nay, but with pain we bent
Our sire to give assent,—
Borne to this hill along the streaming gale.
To deepest caverns rang
Of stricken iron clang,
And straight amazement cast out maiden fear :
I flew with speed amain,
Upon a wingèd wain,
I flew, my sandals left, burning to see and hear.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

PROMETHEUS

Ah! is it you?

Maidens, daughters of Tethys, whose brood

Is that great and goodly multitude,

And of him that, unholden of sleep, with a girth

Of waters engirdles the body of earth,

140 Okeanos? ah, behold, regard

How here to the rugged gorge's head

In such imprisonment riveted

I keep unenvied ward.

CHORUS

I see, Prometheus, thrill'd

With awe, and sudden-fill'd

Mine eyes are troubled with a mist of tears,

When thus, even thus, rock-hung,

Perishing, parching, wrung

In adamantine chains thy form appears.

For in the heavenly place

New hands of a new race

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Are on the helm, and, master uncontroll'd,
Laws lawless maketh Zeus,
Trampling the ancient use, 150
And clean blots out the great and mighty things
of old.

PROMETHEUS

Ah, would that under the earth, down deeper
Than the Dungeon of Souls, the dead man's Keeper,
He had flung me to infinite Tartaros!—yes,
And had made me acquaint in his wrath's excess
With insoluble chains, that joy at the sight of me
No god might get nor any beside!—
I am lift to the sky, and the winds make light of
And they that hate me deride! [me,

CHORUS

Bears any god so brute a breast,
As here to find him matter of jest?
Who is, but in thy pain hath part, 160
Save only Zeus? and he hath set his heart
Stubborn in uttermost

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Despite, and quells the host
Of Heaven to his will,
Nor shall forbear, until
He glut his mood, or till he feel a hand
That even his fenced seat shall not withstand.

PROMETHEUS

Yea, of me shall he yet have need,—of one
On whom strong chains at his will are done,—
The President of the gods most high,
170 To show him his late intent, whereby
 He is spoil'd of his honour, is spoil'd of his
 throne:
And neither with honey of tongue prevailing,
Shall he find him a spell to charm me, nor,
 quailing
For his rigorous threats, shall I ever vent
The thing that he would, till the punishment
Of my bonds be undone, and he give consent
 For the wrong he hath wrought to atone.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

CHORUS

Stout-hearted thou, not giving way
For any sharpness of assay ;
But too much is thy tongue uncurb'd. 180
My soul is pierced within me, is disturb'd,
Scanning what yet in store
For such Fate hath, what shore
Beyond this wreckful pain
Thy keel at last shall gain.
Heart of the Son of Kronos orison
Finds not, nor hath persuasion power thereon.

PROMETHEUS

I know it, that Zeus is harsh, restrains
To his own self justice; yet this remains
Most sure,—at the last,
In the battering day, he shall be right meek :
His wrath shall sink, as a storm that is past; 190
I open mine arms, and he cometh fast,
To proffer me hand and cheek.

Line 186. "Dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?"—JOB xv. 8.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

CHORUS

Discover all to us, declare at large
What manner of quarrel Zeus hath fix'd upon thee,
That in such infamous and bitter sort
He handles thee. Resolve us, if no harm.

PROMETHEUS

Of a truth, the speaking of these things is pain,
Silence is pain, all ways are miserable.
When at the first anger arose in Heaven,
200 And between gods and gods contentions heat,
Some seeking to drive Kronos from his throne
With cry that Zeus should reign, some contrary
Resolv'd that Zeus should never rule the gods,
I then, the best way showing, counsell'd well
My brethren, Titans, sons of Heaven and Earth,
But counsell'd bootless. Cozening stratagem
They scorn'd, and thought in overweening mood
To hold by force their easeful mastery.
Now me my Mother, Themis call'd and Earth,—

PROMETHEUS BOUND

The names are manifold, the Named is one,— 210
Had in her prescience warn'd, no single time,
But often, how the future should be cast,
Saying that not by might, nor strength of arm
The victors should have prevalence, but by guile. }
But they, when I expounded them the matter,
Did not so much as deign to look at me.
So in such pass no better way appear'd,—
What other offer'd?—than with her, my Mother,
To hold by Zeus in free confederacy.
If then the bottomless black of Tartaros
Entombs with all his warriors Kronos old, 220
My counsels wrought it. See what benefit
The usurper of Heaven's empire had of me!
With what bad recompense he pays the debt!
But so it is : this is the very plague }
Of tyranny, to poison faith in friends. }
But for your question, with what cause alleged
He so mishandles me, learn now the truth.
So soon as ever he was sat where erst
His father, straight to all the powers of Heaven

PROMETHEUS BOUND

230 He dealt their several honours, parcelling
The shares of empire; but of wretched man
He made no count; nay, purposed to efface
His breed, and so create another new.
Then none stood up men's advocate but I.
I dared it; yea, I saved them, that they should not,
Blasted, go out into the place of dreams.
Wherefore I am broken with these agonies,
Bitter to feel and pitiful to see.
I, that with so great pity tender'd man,
Pity myself found none; but mercilessly
240 Am straiten'd this way, that way, limb by limb,—
A spectacle not glorious to Zeus.

CHORUS

O he were iron-hearted, made of rock,
Who should not bear his part of grief, Prometheus,
In thy distress! for me, would I had never
Beheld it! for, beholding, my heart aches.

PROMETHEUS

Truly my posture well might move my friends.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

CHORUS

Didst thou do more beyond what thou hast said?

PROMETHEUS

Of those death-destined I askanced the eyes
From looking on their latter end.

CHORUS

What cure
For such distemper did thy wisdom find?

PROMETHEUS

I caused to inhabit in the hearts of them
Blind hopes.

250

CHORUS

That truly was a mighty boon
Men had of thee!

PROMETHEUS

Also I gave them fire.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

CHORUS

Hath mortal flesh even now the flaming thing?

PROMETHEUS

Yea and therefrom in time to come shall learn
A thousand arts.

CHORUS

Zeus then for this, thou sayest——

PROMETHEUS

Torments me ever, grinds and ceases not.

CHORUS

And to thy conflict is no term proposed?

PROMETHEUS

None save his pleasure, as he wills to end it.

CHORUS

His pleasure! O what hope that way? Take
knowledge

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Thou hast err'd : I am not fain to argue how, 260
To thee 'twere daggers hearing. Of all that
No more : seek now some issue from thy trial.

PROMETHEUS

'Tis a light thing for whoso hath his foot }
Clear of the meshes to be large in counsel }
To one unfortunate. I am wise as you. }
I err'd : I seek not to deny it. But
Even so to err I will'd. I will'd it. Succour
To men, to me travail : the terms were so.
Though sooth I had not thought that he would
engine

Such torments on me, shrivelling me to shards
Here on the dizzy crags, or find a hill
So desolate and foot-forsook as this. 270
Now therefore wail not for my present ills,
But come to earth, and hearken the strange matter
That draweth on. How all shall end be
perfect.

Consent to me, consent, I pray you : suffer

PROMETHEUS BOUND

With him that now hath anguish. Quick of wing
Pain now alights on this one, now on that.

CHORUS

Thou hast utter'd a word

That our ears have heard

No wise unwilling.

And this my wind-precipitate chair

280 With light foot leaving, I quit the air,

The birds' pure path, and draw anear

To Earth's rough places, intent to hear

Thy pains to the last fulfilling.

*[While the CHORUS descend, OKEANOS comes up,
riding upon a winged beast.]*

OKEANOS

My long way, lo it is overpast,

And I win to thee thus, Prometheus, at last,

This flying creature, whereon I sit,

Guiding by thought, without bridle or bit,

And in these thy troubles, I do thee to know,

PROMETHEUS BOUND

I also am grievèd : blood-fellowship so
Constrains me, I think ; and, kinship forgot, 290
None is I had liefer serve, well wot,
Or in larger measure.

Thou shalt know this is verity : not my way
Is it worship to lavish of lips, for say,
How best should I stead thee ? truer lover
Than Okeanos hope not at all to discover,
More prompt to attend thy pleasure.

PROMETHEUS.

Ah now ! what thing is this ? art thou too come
To spy my pains ? how foundest heart, for-
saking

Thy namesake flood, thy caves of archèd rock, 300
Unhewn of hand, to visit earth, the world
Whose womb is great with iron ? Is it to view
My passion ? to bear part in my distresses ?
Behold a sight indeed !—the friend of Zeus,
Auxiliar in the framing of his power,
Broken with so great agonies at his hand !

PROMETHEUS BOUND

OKEANOS

I see, Prometheus, and am fain to teach thee,
Though manifold in wit, the better way.

310 { First, know thyself ; get thee another fashion
Of thoughts ; another King bears rule in Heaven.

But if thou fling such grievous-girding speech,
Edged iron, Zeus, for all he sit so high,
May haply hear and make the measure of wrath,
Wherewith thou art exercised as now, a jest.

Nay, poor my friend, let not these heats possess thee ;
Rail not against thy lot but seek to mend it.

A threadbare wisdom mine may chance be rated :
So be it : only see, Prometheus, what are
The wages of a tongue that speaks great things.

320 But thou not yet art chasten'd, stiff as ever,
And goest about to add new woes to old.

Nay, nay, if I may be thy teacher, never
Shalt thou lift heel against the pricks ; for, look,
One rules, who spares not, lord without compeer,
And none can say to him, " What doest thou ? "

PROMETHEUS BOUND

And now I go and use my best endeavour,
If I may compass thy reprieve, and thou
Meantime be still, nor give thy utterance course
To run in flood unpent; for knowest thou not,
So wise above thy fellows, this true rede,—
The loose tongue unto loss is near indeed?

PROMETHEUS

I count thee happy that thou standest clear 330
This day of my offence, though thou hadst part,—
Was it not so?—in all my enterprise.
Nay, good, let be: give not thyself these pains.
Be sure thou wilt not move him: ah, that heart
Not easy is to move! Rather look shrewdly
Lest thou thyself get hurt from such a quest.

OKEANOS

Of a truth more skill thou hast for others' use
Than for thine own: I need no witnesses
Of this, save mine eyes only. Now I bid thee
By no means let me in my going forth.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

I dare to vouch, I dare, I say, to vouch
That Zeus will not deny Okeanos
Such grace as this, to loose thee from thy pains.

PROMETHEUS

340 Of this I ne'er will scant acknowledgement,
That in good-will thou art perfect. Hast thou indeed
A care to labour in my behalf? Forego it:
It were lost labour, nor would help at all.
Rather sit still and keep thy safe remove.
For think not that because I suffer, therefore
I would behold all others suffer too.
Far be it! nay it pricks me home, I tell thee,
The doom that he for one, my brother, hath found,
Atlas, who toward the regions of the West
349 Stands for a pillar between earth and heaven,
His shoulders' might full-summ'd,—no load to
dandle!
Also it moved my pity, when I saw
That creature, spawn'd of Earth, that housed
erewhile

PROMETHEUS BOUND

In the Cilician caves, a grisly fiend
With heads five-score, how he was quell'd amain,
Tempestuous Typhon. All the banded gods
He dared to battle, from prodigious jowls
Hissing terrific, while his eyes display'd
Glare of great lightnings, so as he would storm
By force Heaven's high supremacy, but soon
The bolt of Zeus that sleeps not found him out,
The downward-ruining thunder, quick with flame,
And reft him at a clap from all his vaunts 360
And swelling bravery. Full amidst it took him,
And charr'd, and blasted all his strength to nothing.
And now, a useless body unstrung, he lies
Hard by a narrow passage of the seas,
Under the roots of Etna crush'd and cramm'd,
While over him, high on the peak, Hephaistos
Sits at his forge-work. Thence one day shall burst
Rivers of fire, with fierce jaws ravening up
The golden-fruited sweet Sicilian sward.
Such overflow of fury Typhon still
Shall cast up boiling, in discharges hot 370

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Of fiery ferment unapproachable,
Albeit by the thunder of Zeus calcined.
Thou art not all unschool'd, nor needest me
To learn thee. Save thyself: thou knowest how.
For me,
My fate is come, and I will bear it out,
Until the soul of Zeus be eased of wrath.

OKEANOS

But know'st thou not, Prometheus, this for sure—
Choler distemper'd finds in words a cure?

PROMETHEUS

380 { Yea, if they work upon the soul in season,
On passion in full pulse not forcing reason.

OKEANOS

But for the will, for making the adventure
Were one the worse? If thou see'st loss, declare it.

PROMETHEUS

Superfluous pains and fond simplicity.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

OKEANOS

Suffer that ill to cleave to me: 'tis gain
To be simple-seeming, being simply good.

PROMETHEUS

The folly will be written down to me.

OKEANOS

Roundly, thy word enjoins me brief return.

PROMETHEUS

I fear thy voice uplift in my complaint
May bring thee into variance.

OKEANOS

Thou would'st speak
Of him late-set on the all-sovereign throne?

PROMETHEUS

Of him. Beware him, lest his wrath be kindled. 390

PROMETHEUS BOUND

OKEANOS

Thy fortunes, O Prometheus, lesson me.

PROMETHEUS

Good then, depart: God speed thee, hold thou fast
Thy present mind.

OKEANOS

Or ever that thy word
Was utter'd, I had set my face to go:
For this my four-foot bird begins to winnow
The air, his buxom path: full fain, I wot,
In his own steading will he double knee.

[OKEANOS *departs.*

CHORUS

400 I wail, Prometheus, *Woe* for thy plague appalling;
And mine eyes are fountains of tears, that incessant
falling
Make wet my cheek with their springs.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

For by laws of his own pleasure
Zeus rules, and bitter measure
In his pride of heart he dealeth
 To them that of old were kings.

And heaven with a cry from the utmost land is
 rended

For the worship that erst was thine and thy
 brethren's, splendid

 In the glory of ancient time.

Yea, for these thy tribulations

All mankind mourns, the nations

That have got their homes in Asia,

410

 That are set in a holy clime ;—

They that dwell in Kolchis, daughters

Dreadless, when the red spear slaughters,

And the folk, that by the waters

Meotic won extreme of men, the Scythian stock,

Line 419. 'Won,' to dwell.

 ' The wild beast, where he wons
In forest wild.'—MILTON, *Par. L.* vii. 457.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

420 Araby's flower in arms unyielded,
Whose that eery is rock-builted,
Hard by Caucasus, a shielded
Vociferous host with spears sharp-fronted for the
shock.

Him only had I yet beheld
In adamantine durance quell'd,
Him of the Titan progeny alone,—
Atlas, on whom doth ever weigh
The wheeling sphere of night and day,
430 Wherewith his shoulders groan.

The seas lift up their voice and keep
Plangent accord, deep groans to deep,
The black profound of Hades booms below,
The urns of all pure rivers pour
Their floods with lamentation sore,
With ruth and rumour of woe.

PROMETHEUS

Not in disdain and not in obduracy

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Have I kept silence: nay, my thoughts devour me,
To see myself thus made a mockery of.

O these new gods! Who was it, who but I,
That dealt to each his own appurtenance? 440

But peace to that: I speak not unto those
From whom these things are hidden. Now con-
sider

The sore estate of men, how witless once
And weak they were, until I lodged in them
Reason, and gave them hearts to understand.

I speak not to discover man's defect,
But how my gifts consorted with their need.
For first they saw and gat no good of seeing,
They heard and heard not: all their life they
seem'd

To move as in a dream, shape mix'd with shape
Confusedly, at hazard; and they knew not 450

Houses that took the sun, brick-woven or wood,
But burrowing huddled, like to wind-borne ants,
Far down in holes beyond all reach of day.
And no sure sign of winter had they found,

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Neither of spring, the flowery time, nor summer,
The time of gathering. Foot and hand they plied
Without discernment, till the day I show'd them
The rising of the stars, and how to spell
The vanishing thereof, hard lore. 'Moreover
Number, the chiefest artifice of all
460 And subtlest, I devised for them, and joinings
Of letters, whereby the remembrance lives
Of all things, and the craft of lovely words.
And my hand first yoked with a yoke great beasts,
That, thong-bound or bestridden, they might do
Vile service, and the seed of men to these
Transfer their travail's worst. To wheelèd frames
I fasten'd horses, patient of the rein,
The glory of affluence that flowers in pride.
And none save I it was contrived those hulls
With wings of linen, wherein sea-farers
Go to and fro in the great field of the waves.
All these devices I devised for men,
470 But for myself am beggar'd of conceit,
To escape the pain that now is come upon me.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

CHORUS

A strange thing is befallen thee! where are they,
Thy wits? thou'rt lost, and like a sorry leech
Fall'n sick, thou staggerest, impotent to hit
The medicine that shall meet thine own disease.

PROMETHEUS

Hearken the rest, and thou wilt wonder more,
Such arts and ways my wisdom reach'd unto.
And this in chief: did any man fall sick,
Was no deliverance, either in things eaten,
Plaster or potion, but their sap and substance 480
Dwindled for lack of medicine, till I taught them
The sage commixtures of beneficent balms,
For all disorders sovereign. I defined
Ways many of divination: also dreams. ✓
I first did spell, discerning which foreshadow'd
Matter of truth. I made men understand
Inapprehensible voices: ominous
Conjunctions by the way, the curious flight

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Of those crook-footed tribes of the air, all this
I bodied forth exactly, which be birds
490 Of nature favourable, which malign,
How each is wont to fare, and mutually
What hates they have, what leagues and fellowship.
Further of slain beasts' inward parts I taught
The perfect feature, and what hue presenting
They gain propitious gods, and how the gall
Must show a lobe diverse for fair aspect.
The shanks, uproll'd in fat, by fire I question'd,
With the long chine, and led the mind of man
To thrid the labyrinthine mysteries
Of a dim art ; the oracular face of fire
Look'd with clear eyes, that heretofore were
scaled.

500 Such my lore was : but what the earth con-
tained

Of secret things, helpful to man, brass, iron,
Silver and gold,—can any stand and say
He did prevent me, finding them ? Nay, none,
I am sure, unless he loose his tongue in folly.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Let one brief word conclude the whole in sum,—
All arts men have by the Provider come.

CHORUS

Yet be not prodigal of care to men,
Cold to thine own distresses. O, my hope
Bears well that thou shalt presently behold
These chains unbolted and thyself in power
No whit inferior to Zeus. 510

PROMETHEUS

Not yet
Lies in the scope of all-dispensing doom
That consummation : first with thousand throes
And aches must I be plied, ere loosing come.
Strong truly is craft, but stronger far is Fate.

CHORUS:

And of strong Fate who has the helm, and steers?

PROMETHEUS

The Three Weird Queens, the Avengers who for-
get not.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

CHORUS

And Zeus, thou say'st, is less in might than these ?

PROMETHEUS

Whatso stands written Zeus cannot escape.

CHORUS

Stands aught for him, but to reign on and on.

PROMETHEUS

520 Lo, there thy quest must end. Urge me no
farther.

CHORUS

Some wonderful burden sure thy heart enfolds !

PROMETHEUS

Find thee another argument : this thing
The time is nowise come to utter : nay,
It must be hid full deep ; for, so I hold it,
My bonds and shame and anguish are no more.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

CHORUS

O never may my weakness prove
The might of Zeus against it bent,
The will that masters all that move!—

Nor may I weary to frequent

The gods with holiness,

53●

High feast and blood of bulls, beside

My father's ford and wells undried,

Nor may my lips transgress!

May this within me sure

Be rooted and endure!

Sweet were 't in hopes that know not fear

To live my length of days, and fill

My heart with mirth and feastful cheer!

54●

But thee I look upon and thrill,

By thousand torments marr'd!

Because not holding Zeus in awe,

But taking thine own will for law,

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Thou renderest regard
To children of the dust,
Prometheus, more than just.

Nay look, O friend, and declare, is there grace
that thy grace hath found?

Is anywhere power to save? is there help in
perishing men?

Thou hast seen man's dark estate, wherein he is
tied and bound,

550 A little strength without sap, the stuff of a dream:
for when
Shall wit of man prevent
God's well-knit regiment?

Such thought in my heart, Prometheus, doth sight
of thy ruin move:

And it leaps to my mind how far is this from the
strain I sang

In the day of thy marriage feast, by the lavers and
bed of love,

PROMETHEUS BOUND

The song of the bringing home of Hesione, that
sprang
Of mine own father, bride
Gift-gotten to thy side. 560

[Io, in form half-woman, half-cow, comes in,
wandering.]

Io

What land have I found? what folk? and there, 1
One bound with rock as a bridle, bare 2
To the beating of storms! who is it? who? ✓ 3
What sin hath gotten such pains for due? 4
O speak, declare,
What end of the earth am I come unto? 5
Ah! ah! there! there!
Again the sting! the sting!— 6
Nay, but I know thee, ghost
Of Argos, clod-born thing. 7
Cover him, Earth! I am lost:
He haunts me still, appals,—

PROMETHEUS BOUND

A thousand peering balls!

He comes his way, and his guileful eyes peruse me:

570 He died, but is not held of darkling bands:

He wins his path from the pit; as a hound,
pursues me,

And drives me far distraught, where still expands
Before my famish'd face the sea, the infinite
sands.

There is sound the while of music, reed on reed
Set with wax, fulfill'd of slumber:—whither lead,
Whither lead me my long wanderings decreed?

Tell me, thou Son

Of Kronos, O Lord,

Why hast thou bound me

With pain as a cord?

What sin didst thou find,—

Ah me! undone!—

580 That thou settest on thy poison-fly to hound me,

That thou wearest me with madness of the mind?

Give me to burning fire,

Sink me quick in the sod,

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Make me meat to be
For the dragons of the sea;—
Yea, this my great desire,
Vouchsafe to grant, O God!
For far I have gone, and farther is to go,
 Though my flesh cries
For respite: but to rid me of my woe
 I find no wise.
The voice that fills thine ears
Hers is, whose forehead wears,
Set for a wonder and sign,
Horns as the horns of kine.

PROMETHEUS

Surely the voice I hear none other is
Than hers, the maiden driven of the fly,
The child of Inachos, that sets afire
The heart of Zeus with love, and now, ill-
 seen
Of Hera, fares perforce her infinite way.

590

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Io

Whence, whence hast thou my father's name ? Yea,
who,

O who *art* thou, that art sore-afflicted too,
And to me afflicted givest greeting true,

Naming aright
The sharp god-sent
Torment unsleeping,
That goads me, spent,
To the uttermost land
In wilder'd flight ?

✓ 600 Yea, I come made mad with famine and with
leaping,

As a tempest, unavailing to withstand
Wiles of a goddess wroth,
Even Hera.—There ! again !
The sting ! O who of all
That men ill-fated call
Do tread such troublous path
As I ? But tell me plain,



PROMETHEUS BOUND

What burden of coming days is yet to endure,—
 Show me some sign !——
Or if thou know'st binding or balm to cure
 Such wound as mine.
Unlock thy lips and use
Free speech to her that sues,
The maid of evil star,
The maid that wanders far.

PROMETHEUS

I will resolve thee all thy heart would know,
Not with dark circumstance, but words full 610
 plain,
As right would, friend should open mouth to friend.
Thou see'st Prometheus, him that gave men fire. ✓

Io

O thou on all men risen a light of help,
Prometheus, what thing hast thou done, unhappy, ✓
To suffer this ?

PROMETHEUS BOUND

PROMETHEUS

That tale of lamentation
My lips even now brought to an end.

Io

O yet

One grace afford me.

PROMETHEUS

Speak : thou shalt not miss.

Io

Declare, who was it fix'd thee in the gorge?

PROMETHEUS

Zeus, for the willing : for the hand, Hephaistos.

Io

620 And of what manner of crime is this the forfeit?

PROMETHEUS

Let that I have said suffice thee.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Io

Now discourse
Of mine own woes : show me the date shall round
This pilgrimage of pain.

PROMETHEUS

There not to know
Were happier than to know.

Io

O hide not from me
What I must suffer !

PROMETHEUS

Nay, but such a boon
Ill-will would not deny.

Io

Then what withholds thee
From giving all full utterance ?

PROMETHEUS BOUND

PROMETHEUS

No unkindness.

Woman, I would not urge thy soul to frenzy.

Io

Push not thy care for me beyond my liking.

PROMETHEUS

630 For thou art instant, I am bound to speak.

Hear then.

CHORUS

O stay a little ! I too claim

My part of satisfaction. Let us first

Be certified the manner of her affliction.

From her own mouth we fain would have the tale

Of all the adventures, which have marr'd her days.

PROMETHEUS

It falls to thee, Io, to minister

The grace these ask for ; and it well behoves thee,

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Seeing they are even sisters of thy sire.
Behold, to take thy fill of sighing and tears
In such society as will yield thee, hearing,
Like human drops, is time not given in vain.

Io

To you I see not how I should be stubborn : 640
Nay, ye shall hear it all, as ye desire,
In large relation,—though I am verily shamed
To tell that storm, not earthly, the confounding
Of my corporeal feature, whence it rushed
And brake on me in ruinous wise. Thus then :
The chambers, where I housed, a virgin hidden,
Strange faces aye in the night would visit, wooing
With sooth suggestion : “O most huge in fortune,
Most happiest of all maidens,—wherefore maiden,
O wherefore so long maiden, when there waits thee

Line 648. “Sooth,” sweet, winning.

“The soothest shepherd that e’er piped on plains.”

MILTON, *Comus*, 823.

Cf. “Words of sooth.”

SHAKESPEARE, *Richard II.*, iii. 3, 136.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Wedlock the highest? He, the Lord of Heaven,
Is waxen hot, pierced with desire of thee,
650 Yea and with thee would tread the passages
Of love's delight. Now therefore foot not from
thee,

O child, the bed of the Highest; but do this,
Go forth to where the meadow is deep, the field
Of Lerna,—stations of the household flock,
Home of thy father's herds,—go even thither,
That so the eye of Zeus may ease desire."

With such-like dreams the kindly dark for me
Was ever fraught, me miserable; till, ridden,
I gat me heart to open to my father
The visions and the dreams of night. And he
To Pytho, yea and even to Dodona,
Sent embassy on embassy, inquiring
What thing he had need to do, or what word speak,
660 To pleasure them that rule us. And they came,
Bringing still back burden of wavering lips,
Sentences blind, dark syllables. At last
A word clear-visaged came to Inachos,

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Enjoining plainly and saying he should thrust me
Forth of the house, forth of the land, to wander
At large, a separate thing, even to the last
Confines of earth: and if he would not hearken,
Then should a thunder-stroke from Zeus, with
flicker

Of flame, consume his house from under heaven.
Such were the prophecies of Loxias,
And such prevailed. He drave me forth, he shut
The doors behind me, groaning in his heart, 670
As I in mine that day: but force was on him,
The bridle of Zeus, to make him do this thing.
Then, in that instant, lo my bodily form
Was changed, and all my mind was gone awry,
And hornèd, as ye see, thrill'd by the sharp
Mouth of the pest, I rush'd, with furious leaping,
To drinking-pools of the Kerchneian stream,
The fount of Lerna. And there clave to me
A bitter herdsman, gall untemper'd, Argos,
Prodigious growth of the ground, fill'd full of eyes,
And dogg'd my goings. But him a sudden hand, 680

PROMETHEUS BOUND

He look'd not for, cut off; and me, sting-fretted,
Drives yet from land to land the scourge of God.
Thou hast the tale of things thus far: the travail
Remaining, if thou canst, declare; nor shed,
Being pitiful, about my heart the warmth
Of insubstantial comfort: no affliction
I count so foul as fabricated words.

CHORUS

Out upon 't! forbear!
Tale of wonder and fear,
Full of strangest woe,
I had never thought,
Never said, would so
To mine ears be brought,
Or my living heart
So be stricken chill,
Stricken as with a dart
Sharp to thrust and thrill:—
690 Grievous things to see!
Grievous things to dree!

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Pain of pain, and fear of fear, and ill of ill !
O Fate ! O Fate ! I shudder. Spare !
What means it, Io so should fare ?

PROMETHEUS

Lo now, how soon thou breakest out, and showest
As one fulfill'd of fear ! hold, till the rest
Be also shown thee.

CHORUS

Speak : be all delivered !
To them afflicted this is joy, to know
Beforehand all the process of their pain.

PROMETHEUS

Thy former suit it cost thee little labour 700
To win from me. First thy will was to hearken,
While she that stands here set forth all the conflict
Wherein she is taken. Now attend the rest,
What things at Hera's hand this damsel yet
Must bear : and thou, O seed of Inachos,
Hide in thy heart my words, that thou may'st learn

PROMETHEUS BOUND

The issues of thy way.

From this rock first

Set thou thy face toward the East, and tread
Fields no man ever plough'd, until thou reach
The roving Scythians, them that have their homes

710 Woven, uplift from earth, on running wheels,
Men that bear bows and find far quarry : these
Approach not near, but ever keep thy steps
Hard by the reefs that break the thundering sea,
And so pass that land through. On the left hand
Habit the iron-workers, Chalybes,
Of whom beware, for they are barbarous,
And give their guests ill greeting. And thou shalt
come

To a river Violent, named not amiss,
Which pass not over,—hard it is to pass,—
Till to the Mount itself of Caucasus
Thou 'rt come, the hill highest on earth, whereon
720 The river spuming vents to the air his might
Even from the mountain's forehead. There ascend
Those brows that jut against the stars, and follow

PROMETHEUS BOUND

A way that goeth South, and thou shalt reach
The woman-people arm'd, the Amazons,
That loathe the face of men,—those that one day
Shall overspread Themiskyra, about
Thermodon, where is Salmydessos, thrust
Seaward, a rugged jaw, to mariners
A wicked host, to ships a stepmother:—
These of good will shall bear thee on thy way.
And journeying thou shalt find the neck men call
Kimmerian, at the entry of the Pool,
The narrow gates: there then make stout thy 730
reins

Even to take leave of land and pass clean over
The strait Meotic. Know of that thy passage
Shall be great speech among all peoples of men
For ever; and the place shall get a name
Memorial, *Bosporos*. So shalt thou tread
Europe no more, but thence the continent
Asia.

Look now, and tell me whether to you
He seems, this tyrant of the gods, a nature

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Violent or no? or in a sole respect,
And not in all? Consider: a god is he,
And purposing to enjoy in way of love
This daughter of men, hath laid on her such tale
Of wayfarings. Bitter indeed, O maiden,
740 Thy suitor is, that woos thee; for be sure
The things thou hast heard are scarce the prelude
yet.

[Io breaks into lamentable cries.]

Lo there thou criest again; thy breath comes hard
With travail of thy soul. What wilt thou do,
Being taught the further ills?

CHORUS

Nay, hast thou for her
Aught left of anguish, that thou hast not told?

PROMETHEUS

Sore weathering of a sea of wreckful woe.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Io

What gain to live then? Wherefore have I not ✓
Long since leapt headlong from this iron crag,
That hurtling so to earth, I might have done
With all my labours? Better once to die 750
Than always every morrow taste fresh pain!

PROMETHEUS

Good sooth, not easily would'st thou support
Such load as mine, whom fate debars from death;—
That were indeed to find deliverance.
Now, as things are, my travail sees proposed
No end, till Zeus be throned in heaven no more.

Io

What! Zeus unthronèd? can that ever be?

PROMETHEUS

Thine eye, meseems, at such calamity
Would lighten.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Io

Nay, what else? is it not Zeus
That makes me suffer?

PROMETHEUS

Wherefore understand
760 The law is even so.

Io

What hand shall ravish
The sceptre of his kingdom?

PROMETHEUS

He himself.
By his own frivolous counsels shall he fall.

Io

How? with the circumstance, if nothing hinders,
Acquaint me.

PROMETHEUS

He shall wed a wedding, such
As one day he shall grieve for.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Io

Come of gods,
Or taken of men? Say, if it be a thing
Lawful to utter.

PROMETHEUS

Ask me not of that,
Seeing it is secret, and may not be told.

Io

Shall he indeed be pluck'd up from his throne
By his wife's hand?

PROMETHEUS

By her womb rather, bearing
A son surpassing his begetter.

Io

Tell me,
Is there for him no conjuring of such peril?

PROMETHEUS BOUND

PROMETHEUS

I only might, if one should loose my hands;
770 None else.

Io

Nay, who is he shall loose thee, maugre
The will of Zeus?

PROMETHEUS

One of thy body sprung
Must be the looser.

Io

Ah! what word is this?
My son, thou say'st, shall lift thy burden from thee?

PROMETHEUS

Let generations ten go by: thereto
Add other three.

Io

The rede oracular
Grows darker, hard to construe.

60

PROMETHEUS BOUND

PROMETHEUS

Also I bid thee
Into thine own woes make not inquisition.

Io

Give me not hope to obtain, and straight e'en so
Defraud me.

PROMETHEUS

Look, of two things I vouchsafe thee ✓
Or one or the other.

Io

What be they? Reveal them,
And give me choice.

PROMETHEUS

Behold! choose either this, 780
That I should tell thee all thy woes to come, ✓
Or tell thee who he is, shall set me free.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

CHORUS

Of these twain things make one a grace to her,
To me the other, and put not these my words
To shame, but unto her do thou unfold
The remnant of her pilgrimage, to me
Him that shall loose thee:—this is my desire.

PROMETHEUS

Since ye are instant, I will not contend,
But utter all that ye require. And first,
That labour of much going many ways,
Lo, it falls to unfold thee, which do thou
Grave in the mindful tables of thy heart.
So soon as thou shalt pass that stream, the bourne
790 Of continent and continent, toward
The East flame-flooded, trodden of the sun,

* * * *

[Press forthright. First to the winds that way
shall bring thee,

PROMETHEUS BOUND

The daughters of the North, where shun the black
Precipitous roarer, lest it snatch thee away,
Rapt suddenly in gusty wings of storm.]

* * * *

Crossing the noiseful flood, until thou touch
The plains Gorgonian of Kisthene, where
Do dwell the seed of Phorkys, virgins three
Ancient of days, in swan-similitude,
To whom one eye does common ministry,
One only tooth. Them the sun visits not
With his beams, nor ever finds the lamp of night.
And to these three are neighbour other three,
Their sisters, feather'd horribly, the Gorgons,
With mat of snakes for hair, abhorr'd of men,
Whom none of mortal flesh shall look upon
And still draw breath. Such guard I show thee 800
set.

Hear also another sight, they faint who see :—
Beware the warder-dogs of Zeus, whose mouths
Are sharp exceeding, even as eagles' beaks,

PROMETHEUS BOUND

The Gryphons, and the host of one-eyed men,
Riders of horses, Arimaspians,
Who dwell beside the stream, the wave
whereof

Is affluent of gold, the ford of Pluton.

These then avoid ; and thou shalt come to a
land

Very far off, a people of dark faces,
Whose seats are by the Well-springs of the Sun,
Where rolls the river Ethiop. Trail thy feet

810 Along the banks thereof, until thou reach
The Stair-way of the Cataract, the hills
Of Byblos : thence is Nile, whereof who drink
Do worship for the virtue of the draught.

And he shall be to thee a way to bring thee
Into the land, that is his own, the isle
Three-corner'd, where that far plantation, Io,
Fate is that thou shalt found, thou and thy sons.

Now if aught here be inarticulate,
Aught hard to hit, turn and retrace it : time
More than I wish, is given me at dispose.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

CHORUS

If aught of her disconsolate pilgrimage
Thou hast not yet utter'd or hast left aside, 820
Speak ! but if thou hast told her all, to us
Render our asking ;—thou art not unmindful.

PROMETHEUS

She hath heard her faring through to the very end.
Howbeit, that she may know her ears have drunk
No words of wind, I will rehearse the labours
Wrought out ere she came hither : this shall be
The warrant of my tale. Well, the most part
(For many words are tedious) I let go,
And touch the ending. After thou hadst come
To the Molossian crofts, the mountain ridges
About Dodona,—where be oracles 830
And siege of Zeus Thesprotian, and a wonder
Outrunning credit, even the oaks that hold
Familiar converse, which with clear proclaim
Hail'd thee, not darkly, spouse of Zeus Most High

PROMETHEUS BOUND

To be, if to thine ear such name come kindly,—
Thence thy tormentor prick'd thee on to fly
The way of the sea to that great Gulf of Rhea,
Wherefrom again thou art beaten back, storm-
driven

In course ungovern'd. Know in time to come
840 That salt sea firth shall be Ionian call'd,
Eternal record of thy transient feet.
These signs I give thee of my heart's discernment,
That further it pierces than the eye can see.
And for the rest, to you and her alike
Will I take up my rede, even where it left
The footprints of my old discourse.
There is a city, call'd Kanobos, last
On that land's border, by the very mouth
And bankèd silt of Nile : there Zeus disburdens
Thy mind of madness, laying his hand upon thee,
That quencheth fear: he shall no more but touch.
And thou shalt bear a son and call his name,
850 After the wondrous gendering of Zeus,
Epaphos, dusky-favour'd, who shall hold

PROMETHEUS BOUND

All land in fee, that with broad-spreading flood
Nile waters. Lo, from him the fifth descent,
A brood of fifty, shall return again,
Not of free will, to Argos, seed of daughters,
Fleeing close-blooded union, lest they wed
Their cousins : these, their hearts being passion-
winnow'd,

Kites on the track of doves nor far behind,
Shall come in chase of wedlock, which to chase
Is sin : but God's misliking eye shall reave
Those lusty bodies, and Pelasgic earth
Shall cover them,—bodies of men brought
down

860

In war of women's hands, by desperate mood
That in the night keeps watch : for every woman
Shall spoil the life of her particular lord,
In his soft throat drenching a two-edged brand.
Such bridal commerce,—may 't befall my foes!
One only maiden some soft pain shall hold
From slaying him beside her : her resolve
Shall turn back blunted : of two evil names

PROMETHEUS BOUND

“Coward” she less will loathe than “murderess.”

And she shall be the mother of that house
Which shall be kings in Argos,—one had need
870 Of much discourse to utter all that matter,
But this receive : from seed of her shall spring
One very bold, who of his bow shall get
Great fame; and he it is, that from this durance
Shall set me free.

Such oracle my mother did unfold me,
She that hath been of old time, of the race
Of the Titans, Themis; but the *how* and *where*
’Twould need words many to set forth, and thou
By learning all that tale, would’st find no good.

Io

Welaway! welaway!
The old fit mounts in me, rending, the passion
Of madness: a prick no fire did fashion
880 Stabs me and urges.
My heart is tormented of terror to bound
As a wild thing within me; mine eyes wheel round;

PROMETHEUS BOUND

I am driven athwart by the hurricane
Of frenzy ; my tongue refuseth rein :
Thick issue of words doth battle in vain
With the blinding, shattering surges.

[Io goes out, raving.]

CHORUS

Him wise I call, him wise attest,
Whose bosom first with this was great,
And whose tongue publish'd it : " They best
Do wed, that match their own estate. 890
Let not the toil-engrainèd hands
Lust to embrace in spousal bands
Them that above the general crowd
High breed exalts, or wealth makes delicate and
proud."

May never day for me appear,
Never for me, O Queens of Doom,
To come the bed of God anear,
Or get of them on high for groom!

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Lo, I have seen it and I dread,—
This maidenhood uncomforted
By love of husband, to and fro
900 Of Hera driven, and wasted in a maze of woe.

For me be equal the marriage plight,
I blench not. Never upon me light
Eye of some Mightier One
With passion hard to shun!—

Bad battle to brunt, with dearth of all
But utter dearth! What end should fall?
I see not any road
To elude the wiles of God.

PROMETHEUS

This holds unshaken : be the heart of Zeus
Never so hard, a day shall bring him low.
Such marriage hath he toward, that from his height
Most high shall hale him down, his throne shall
know him

PROMETHEUS BOUND

No more for ever, and the curse wherewith 910
His father cursed him in the day he fell,
Kronos, from off his secular seat, shall find
To the utterance then fulfilment. Of such pain
The averting that might be no god in heaven,
Not one, can show him certainly, but I :
I know it, and the manner of it. So now
Let him sit with heart uplift and put his trust
In rummage of the upper air, and shake
An engine in his hands, whose blast is fire :
All this shall help him nothing, nor defend
That fall he should not falls irreparable,
A laughter and hissing. Such antagonist 920
He now makes ready against himself, a fear
Embodied, ill to match, one that shall find
A flame more shrewd than lightning, and a noise
Mightier than mighty thunders; yea the spear
That palsy-shakes the earth with strength of the
seas,
The trident of Poseidon, he shall make
As though it were not. In that day shall Zeus,

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Whenas his foot hath struck such evil, learn

929 How different to rule is and to serve.

CHORUS

Arm'd of inveterate desire thy tongue

Makes battery on Zeus.

PROMETHEUS

I speak the thing

That *shall* be, and no less thereby the thing

That I desire.

CHORUS

And must we look indeed

930 For Zeus to find his better ?

PROMETHEUS

That and more,

A yoke more difficult for the neck to bear.

CHORUS

How art thou not afraid, slinging such words ?

PROMETHEUS BOUND

PROMETHEUS

What should I dread, whom fate forbids to die? ✓

CHORUS

Nay, hath he not the means to lay on thee
Some yet more grievous travail ?

PROMETHEUS

Let him do 't :

I am arm'd in soul for all things.

CHORUS

They are wise }

That do obeisance to Necessity.

PROMETHEUS

Go to! fall down, fleech, kiss the lord of the hour :
Of me is Zeus accounted less than naught.

Let him work his will this little space, and lord it
Uncheck'd : his rule shall not endure in heaven. 940 ✓

But soft:—I see the courier of heaven's King, ✓

PROMETHEUS BOUND

✓ The drudge of the young monarchy. He is come,
Of that no doubt, some new thing on his tongue.

[HERMES *enters.*]

HERMES

This word to thee, the master-wit, to thee
More bitter than all bitter things, the prime
Offender against the gods, purveying honours
To perishable flesh, the thief of fire!—

Thus saith the Father: Thou shalt surely speak
And say what manner of marriage this may be
Thou vauntest of, and who they are, whereby
The One that rules shall fall; and that nowise
With riddling lips, but each particular

950 After its proper truth: nor make me tread
The same path twice, Prometheus: such, thou
see'st,

Were not the way to appease the heart of Zeus.

PROMETHEUS

Superb in utterance, blown with lusty pride,
His speech is: hear the servant of the gods!



PROMETHEUS BOUND

Ye are young, ye are young, rulers of yesterday,
And verily deem ye dwell in citadels
Untouch'd of tears. Have I not known from these
Two monarchs tumbled? and the third, who now
Is sovereign, I shall see the soonest fall
And shamefullest. Behold me! do I tremble,
Do I quail, for these new gods? O far is that 960
Removed from me, the width of the world! Thou
then
Trudge, trace again the way thou camest: nothing
Of all thy inquisition shalt thou learn.

HERMES

Such headstrong motions were those same, that
erst
Did bear thy vessel on these shoals.

PROMETHEUS

Wot well
I had rather choose these my calamities
Than dance, where thou, attendance.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

HERMES

Excellent !

I'll swear 'tis better to attend this rock,
Than to be such an one as Hermes, trusted
Of Zeus to be his messenger.

PROMETHEUS

The froward

970 Must look to meet with frowardness.

HERMES

It seems

Thou 'rt grown magnificent in thy present case.

PROMETHEUS

Magnificent ? would I might see my foes
In such magnificence, and, among them, thee !

HERMES

Am I too held then taxable for aught
In thy misfortunes ?

PROMETHEUS BOUND

PROMETHEUS

Roundly, all the gods
I hold mine enemies, all that had of me
Good, and repay me evil wrongfully.

HERMES

Thy mind is very sick, mine ears acquaint me.

PROMETHEUS

Sick may I be, if to hate foes be sickness !

HERMES

Ha, in good health thou would'st no more be
borne.

PROMETHEUS

Oh! oh!

HERMES

The lips of Zeus have never learnt that sound.

980

PROMETHEUS BOUND

PROMETHEUS

Nought is, time shall not teach, that groweth full
of days.

HERMES

And yet to this hour thou art void of sense.

PROMETHEUS

I am, in communing with thee, a thrall.

HERMES

Well, I conclude that thou wilt answer nothing
Of what the Father wills.

PROMETHEUS

Nay, but I owe him
Much love, that I should pleasure him in this.

HERMES

Am I a child, that thou should'st flout me so?

PROMETHEUS BOUND

PROMETHEUS

Nay, art thou not? or something yet more
green,

If thou hast hope to gather aught from me? ✓

There is no torment, no device, whereby

Zeus shall enforce my lips to let this go,

990

Until these chains injurious be undone.

I have said: and now let fly the sooty flame!

Let all the world become one waste of snow,

Whirl of white feathers, and one roar of
thunders

Infernal! Nothing of all that shall bend me,

Nothing shall force from me, what hand of fate

Shall dispossess him from his sovereignty.

HERMES

Look if these things are like to bring thee succour.

PROMETHEUS

Nay, long ago I look'd, and well advised me.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

HERMES

Take heart, O foolish one, take heart at last
1000 To front thy evil case with soberness.

PROMETHEUS

Thou art tedious to me, as whoso should reason
With a sea-wave. Keep far from thee all thought
That I shall ever so much hold in dread
The will of Zeus, that, being unmann'd in soul,
I should intreat that object of huge hate
With womanish upliftings of my palms
To loose me from my bondage. Never! never!

HERMES

By many words, it seems, I but lose breath.
Thou art not melted nor thy heart made soft
By prayers; but gnashing on the snaffle-steel,
Like to a colt new-broke, thou are violent
1010 In fight against the rein. For all that, know
Thy vehement will stands in a weak conceit :

PROMETHEUS BOUND

A stiff neck unto one not well bethought
Adds of itself no strength, nay, less than none.
Behold, if thou refuse to hear my words,
What storm shall break on thee,—a three-fold
 billow

Of doom, without escape. First, this rough gorge ¹
The Father's thunderbolt and fiery flaw
Shall rend asunder, and thy living body
Earth shall entomb: a rock shall be the arm
To bear thee up. Then, when thou hast out- 1020
 worn

Great length of days, thou shalt be brought again ²
Into the light by doom reversed; and straight
The wingèd dog of Zeus, the tawny eagle,
Shall make thy flesh but a great rag to tear,
To ravin piecemeal, constant to his hour,
A guest unbidden, steadfast all day long,
Gorging thy liver, banquet black and rich.
Nor hope of that thy torment any end,
Till of the gods there rise up one to take
On him thy punishment, willing to go

PROMETHEUS BOUND

To the land where no light is, the house of death,
The dark unfathom'd, where is Tartaros.

1030 Wherefore advise thee, seeing this I utter
Is nothing feign'd, but spoken home and surely.
The high God's mouth knows not to speak the
thing
That false is, but shall stablish all. Thou then
Look narrowly, take thought, and never deem
Advisedness of lesser praise than pride.

CHORUS

To us the words of Hermes have some show
Of reason, bidding thee remit thy pride,
To explore the sage path of advisedness.
Be ruled: the wise get shame, who go astray.

PROMETHEUS

1040 Or ever his lips had let it go,
I knew his burden : that foe of foe
Should suffer evil is no new law.
Light on me now the writhen hair

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Of a flame two-edgèd ! let all the air
Be lash'd with levin, with passion grieved
Of winds exasperate, earth up-heaved

From her roots by the inly-prison'd flaw !
Let him mingle a welter of bitter brine,
The froth of the seas, with the paths divine

Of the heavenly stars ! down quick let him 1050
fling me

Where the face of the day is blotted and blacken'd,
By a might that masters, and twirls unslacken'd !

To Death can he nowise bring me. ✓

HERMES

Nay, here are heats of a mind amiss,
And speeches verily heard sick-brain'd !
Is there any madness more than this ?

Or a temper further in frenzy strain'd ?
Ye then, do you as many as grieve
In his sorrow's fellowship, rise and leave

This place, with the speed that ye may forth- 1060
faring,

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Lest ye hear, and your sense it suddenly reave,
The roar of the thunder unsparing.

CHORUS

Find other utterance, such exhorting
As I shall heed : this word ill-sorting,
That hath 'scaped thy lips, to hearken were shame
to me :

A thing so base how dost thou name to me ?
With my friend I am fixèd to bear the worst :
Traitors of old I abominate.

No evil accurst

1070 Do I spit from me with such hate!

HERMES

Yet warnèd ye are ; nowise forget,
Nor, when ye are taken in Mischief's net,
Cry out on fortune, or loose the thought
That into calamity undivined
Zeus cast you : nay, but yourselves have wrought
Your own undoing, for well aware,

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Not suddenly, not by a hidden snare,
Into doom without limit or loosing ye fare,
Mesh'd by perverseness of mind !

[HERMES *departs. Thunder and lightning.*]

PROMETHEUS

Ay sooth in deed, and in word no more,
Earth smitten springs !
Through the nether passages rolls the roar
Of thunder; the lightnings run in curls
Of scabbled fire, and the dust up-whirls
His eddying pillars: winds break free
And leap to battle together, disclosing
High contention of blasts opposing,
Wind with wind; and the sky and sea
In broils are mingled and blusterings.
For the arm is bared of the God most high
With onrush of tempest and terror to fold
me.
O holy name of my Mother, O sky,

PROMETHEUS BOUND

Revolving the light of the world, behold me,
How I suffer outrageous things!

*[The rocks are rent open: PROMETHEUS, falling into
the chasm, disappears.]*

NOTES

Line 51. Read ἔγνωκα τοῖσδέ γ' οὐδὲν ἀντειπεῖν ἔχω.—
W. HEADLAM.

Line 90. The celebrated ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα refers both to the *sound* and to the *sparkling* of the sea, as is shown by the use of γελᾶν for the glittering of armour in Homer, and of ἐκγελᾶν for the explosion of a wave (Plato). There lay in the words a suggestion of the whole effect of the moving water, both sound and light.

Line 113. Reading προσελούμενος.

Line 331. Commentators, who have taken this line with grave literalness, have tried to explain it by the fact that Okeanos gave his daughter in marriage to Prometheus, or has now come to condole with him; but see *Introduction* page xxix.

Line 349. That Atlas is *himself* the pillar of heaven and earth is shown (1) by common sense, which does not allow us

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to think of an upright pillar being supported by any one's shoulders ; (2) the representations of earlier and contemporary art ; (3) the words of Aeschylus himself in lines 424 f. Whether the existing text in lines 349 f. can be reconciled with this meaning, or requires emendation, this is not the place to discuss.

Lines 351 f. Typhon or Typhōeus, as he is called in Hesiod, is, of course, simply the volcano-fiend. The myth therefore connects him both with the volcanic country of Cilicia and Northern Syria, and with Etna. In the case of Etna an *alternative* explanation of the volcanic phenomena—that it is Hephaistos at his forge-work—is here superimposed. The description of Typhon follows closely that in Hesiod, *Theog.* 820 f.

Line 367. The eruption of Etna referred to is that of B.C. 479/8.

Line 420. It seems ingenuity misplaced to emend this passage to bring it into closer conformity with real geography. There was a great mountain called Caucasus in the East, there were people called Arabs in the East ; that was quite enough for Aeschylus. As a matter of fact, we must remember that the uncultivated land to the South of the Armenian mountain-system (whose foot-hills constitute Mesopotamia) was part of the Arab domain, and that the term Caucasus might easily have been extended over Armenia.

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Line 431. The description of the mourning of inanimate nature is usually connected with the reference to Atlas. It seems more naturally to follow on the description of the mourning of mankind for Prometheus. Hence Ribbeck was for *transposing* the last strophe and antistrophe. A more satisfactory method, suggested by the way in which Mr. W. Headlam deals with *Supplices*, 80 f., is to suppose that the part of the Chorus which sings the parenthesis referring to Atlas, is not the same as that which sang the passage before, and continues the theme of the mourning in *βοᾶ δὲ πόντιος κλύδων κτλ.*

Line 558. Tradition was rather hazy as to the wife of Prometheus. It was generally agreed that she was a daughter of Okeanos. Her name, here Hesione, is given by Herodotus in the form Asia, made familiar to the English by Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*.

Line 574. For the reference in this passage (generally missed by commentators) see *Introduction*, page xxxv.

Line 636. See *Introduction*, page xxxiii.

Lines 706 f. The geography of Aeschylus is, of course, not the geography of the real world. Themiskyra, for instance, is on the Southern, and Salmydessos on the Western, shore of the Black Sea: the Caucasus is to the South-east, not to the North, of the Straits of Kertch (the Kimmerian or Meotic Bosphoros). The general track of Io is from the Northern shores of Europe across Russia and the Caucasus into Central Asia (the Arimas-

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pians), and thence to the source of the Nile in the land of the *Asiatic* Ethiopians. The Red Sea and Indian Ocean are ignored: the Nile, according to a current belief in antiquity is thought to rise in Asia and thence curve round to the West and turn North from the place of the cataract (line 810), where, indeed, it begins to be called *Nile*. Aeschylus confuses the Stairway, *Katabathmos*, which was a place on the Western border of Egypt towards Cyrene, with the *Cataract* of the Nile.

Line 789. The stream is, of course, the Straits of Kertch, see line 736. In the *Prometheus Unbound* Aeschylus made the *Phasis* (Rion) the frontier of Europe and Asia. A deliberate inconsistency in the same trilogy is improbable. He is therefore probably confusing the Phasis and the Tanais (Don), whose mouth was approached through the Straits of Kertch. This would explain why he puts the Straits of Kertch *South* of the Caucasus.

Line 882. The meaning of ἀκραγείς is quite uncertain. It cannot mean "not *barking*," since κράζειν is not the distinctive noise of dogs. It might mean "not making any noise," but there would then be no point in it. I believe it contains some reference to the *eagle* element in the Gryphons as against the *quadruped* element denoted by κύνας.

Line 1027. The legend alluded to is that, at the freeing of Prometheus, Zeus made it a condition of his liberation that some other god should surrender his immortality. This Cheiron the Centaur was willing to do, because of his agony from the wound inflicted by the poisoned arrow of Herakles.



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