ELS 313: Greek and Roman Literatures Course Materials
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Contents

Introduction

Man everywhere makes things, of which Martin Heidegger distinguishes two kinds: 'equipment' and 'works' (*Poetry, Language, Thought* 28*)*. The first are *use* objects – made to serve one purpose or another, and are, as he would say, *most themselves* when they are serving that purpose.

An art work, on the other hand, shares with things like boulderstone, 'things by way of nature', that is, 'the character of having taken shape by itself…. and is self-contained' (28). Creativity is expressed in the making of things, but in a special way, in art, the making of things capable of self-presenting as *having taken shape by themselves*. And these kinds of things are found, in simple and complex forms, wherever man *settles his existence*. According to Heidegger, knowing about these kinds of made things is essential, if it is to be 'decided [] who man is and where [and perhaps also how] he is settling his existence' (*Existence and Being* 312). We are concerned with one of these kinds of made things produced by the Greeks and Romans, namely literature.

A major presupposition in this course is that the concept *literature* is the same, whether it is spoken of Greek or Roman productions or those of the Africans or the English. A historical exploration of the concept going back as far as possible is therefore needed to ensure that there is no equivocation in meaning. The Greeks are a natural starting point since as far as documentation goes, they were the first to treat literature as a serious object of study to which the rigour of philosophical thought could be brought to bear. Their greatest philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, devoted much intellectual labour to it.

Mimesis is the central conception of the Greeks about art, but it did not quite mean the same thing to all the intellectuals who discussed it. For some it denoted a *model* depicting an aspect of reality; for some it was a mirror which reflected an aspect of reality. Plato himself used it in several different ways. Stephen Halliwell lists such uses as image-making, likeness-making, and semblance-making.

Aristotle devoted a whole book to the problem; and so his account is more detailed and reflects a very high regard for literature, which endures in the philosophical tradition to the present. His focus is mainly on tragic drama, but in doing so, he had to situate tragedy within drama, and poetry, and art, showing that what unites all the arts is *mimesis*, tragic poetry being a *mimesis* of action of a serious kind, with language for its medium. There is an arrangement of incidents with a beginning, middle, and end, one thing leading to another so that a total action or a *muthos* emerges. This is what the poet does which gives him the name of a maker – a myth-maker. He characterizes poetry further as dealing with the universal (*tou katholou*), and unlike history (*historia*) which deals with *kathekaston* (the particular), poetry is concerned with *to eikos*

(the probable); accordingly, poetry is 'of greater ethical import (by philosophical standards)' than history (*Poetics,* Halliwell's translation 59n).

By Aristotle's rule in the *Poetics* whereby artistic *mimesis* takes place by means of one specific medium or a combination of two or more of these (colour, shape, rhythm melody, language), dancing is included among the arts, but not architecture, although it is listed in this philosopher's *Nicomachean Ethics.* On the other hand, by Heidegger's rule of self-presentation as 'having taken shape by itself', it seems rather hard to justify dancing. At all events, it does not appear in G.W.F. Hegel's list, where there are only architecture, sculpting, painting, music and poetry. 'These five arts', he writes, 'make up the inherently determinate and articulated system of what art actually is in both essence and reality. It is true that outside them there are other imperfect arts, such as gardening, dancing, etc., which however we can only mention in passing' (627). Poetry has both a specific medium, language, and 'the character of having taken shape by itself', and accordingly self-contained. Hence discussing Romantic literature, Paul Coates writes that works of '"inspiration" tend to be "difficult"; once the trance of composition has passed, the poet finds himself in the position of a literary critic attempting to comprehend a work that appears to have been conceived by another person' (1).

Sophistication in art may have another possible cause apart from 'inspiration', namely long practice. Aristotle suggests that such long practice had a role in the evolution of tragedy, with the process ceasing when the pattern of change reached its state of perfection. We read, for instance:

> Now to examine the question whether or not even tragedy fulfils our basic principles well enough - something to be judged both in itself and with relation to the state of the theatre - that is matter for another discussion. In any case, tragedy did come out of improvisational beginnings (and comedy [too]: the first [i.e. tragedy] growing out of those who used to lead off the dithyramb, the second [i.e. comedy] out of those who led the phallic songs that still persist in many of our cities even now); and it grew little by little by developing each of its aspects as they came to light; and when it had gone through many changes tragedy stopped when it had realised (attained) its integral nature. (*Poetics*, Whalley's translation 61)

It would appear that Greek drama and epic had attained their integral natures by the time Aristotle was writing about them. And so Aristotle was to infer about the nature of art and these various forms from existing productions that were already in a fully developed state. Other cultures may have achieved such full artistic development in their own different contexts. For instance, notwithstanding that it is seen purely as religious Scripture, the Old Testament reflects high perfection in narrative and lyrical poetry, without necessarily learning from the Greeks nor apparently from anyone else. Some of the Old Testament may even be older than Homer.

The Greek and Roman literatures we are focusing on in this course are treated as exclusively secular literature. But as Aristotle relates above, it is from the dithyramb, the ecstatic religious hymn that tragedy evolved. Hegel elucidates as follows:

> In their religious ceremonies the Greeks did not long acquiesce in such mere exclamations and invocations but proceeded to interrupt such outpourings by the relation of specific mythical situations and actions. These descriptions, intercalated between the lyrical outbursts, then gradually became the chief thing, and, by presenting a living and complete action explicitly in the form of an action, developed into drama which for its part incorporated the lyrics of the chorus again as an integral part of itself. (*Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art* 1139)

While recognizing this process of internal change out of which tragic drama evolved, he gives much greater prominence to another kind of history which traces a movement from the material and heavy art forms towards the spiritual and transcendent forms. In the process of progressive spiritualization, architecture comes first, and is followed by sculpting, each presumably with

ample room to evolve to its highest level of perfection. He next groups 'together into a final ensemble the arts whose mission it is to give shape to the inner side of personal life' (625), commenting about 'the *third* art after painting and music', namely 'the art of speech, poetry in general, [that it is] the absolute and true art of the spirit and its expression as spirit, since everything that consciousness conceives and shapes spiritually within its own inner being speech alone can adopt, express, and bring before our imagination' (626). Heidegger was to put a certain accent on this history of succession articulated by Hegel. It is not just that poetry is the last to emerge, but that it was what all the arts were aiming at: to become *poetry.* If they succeed, and since 'all art is in essence poetry, then the arts of architecture, painting, sculpture, and music must be traced back to poesy' (*Poetry, Language, Thought* 70*)*. Poetry is the defining function in art: *poiesis* – a making.

Although there are references to Biblical and other traditions in Hegel's *Aesthetics,* Greek and Roman productions, particularly the former, comprise a main pillar in his account of art history. In his account, the Greeks and the Romans appear to have pursued all these arts to the highest level; and a good few of their works have survived to the present, the survival rate much higher among the Romans. In the specific area of our concern, Greek poetry probably suffered more loss than most – the word poetry here used in the sense in which the philosophers from Aristotle to Heidegger use it, namely the art in which mimesis is made by means of language alone (*monon tois logois*). There are several of these which are known only because of their being mentioned in Aristotle's *Poetics*. But the works that did survive provide us great examples of great poetry; and these have been read and discussed for two and a half thousand years or more, still having the capacity 'always to spring back to life' (Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor* 223).

Homer's epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are undiminished in fame, just like the dramatic works of which we shall select only from Euripides and Aristophanes. The ancient Romans also had artistic productions of the highest quality, in poetry as in other forms, works that are celebrated to the present. An age of English literature had such great admiration for the art and sensibilities of the time of Emperor Augustus and claimed to be committed to recreating these that the age came to be known as the Augustan Age. Vergil's epic, the *Aeneid*, had renown, not only as a great epic, but an exemplar and model of what some saw as the 'national epic'. A major reason for the explosion of epic writing between roughly 1790 and 1830 was as part of the new ideology of nationalism, to have a poem that celebrated the nation or that memorialized some event, historical or fictional, to look upon as a founding event. However, whether a piece is poetry or not is not determined by its prompting or motivation; and not even by a 'matter-form structure', which according to Heidegger pertains to 'the way in which the piece of equipment comes into being' (*Poetry, Language, Thought* 28-29), rather than the work of art. It depends on whether or not it satisfies what Aristotle calls 'the requirements of poetry' (Whalley 157). Vergil's *Aeneid* apparently does, but not the numerous 'national epics' supposedly imitating it.

There will also be selections from Vergil's *Eclogues* and from Horace, who is probably best known for his *On the Art of Poetry.* In his satires, epistles, and similar pieces, the accent is often on the clever turn of phrase, rhetorical figures, and prosody. There is also frequently a sense of the strong presence of the writer himself within the poetry, so that Heidegger's idea of 'something having taken shape by itself…. and self-contained' is normally missing. He is also associated with what are sometimes called 'poems of occasion'.

Even though Hegel distinguishes in art *content* and *form*, he maintains that the work of art is a certain totality, and neither content nor form by itself is any help in explaining the work:

> For in art we have to do, not with any agreeable or useful child's play, but with the liberation of the spirit from the content and forms of finitude, with the presence and reconciliation of

> the Absolute in what is apparent and visible, with an unfolding of the truth which is not exhausted in natural history but revealed in world-history. (*Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art* 1236)

The 'contingent matter' (Aristotle's *Ethics),* and the form of its organization may be apparent and visible in the work, but this is the dimension of *finitude.* The other dimension is the *infinite*, 'which is its proper meaning and determining purpose' (661), and 'the significance which [the work] is driven to express' (685). Art is not fully realized, until 'the liberation of the spirit from the content and forms of finitude, with the presence and reconciliation of the Absolute in what is apparent and visible'. The Absolute is something *other* – otherness itself, and therefore free of the apparent and visible; yet in the work, the apparent and visible exist either to express the Absolute or to enable the Absolute to express itself.

Neither form nor content can alone by itself lead to the Absolute, but in their interaction comprise how 'art struggles on its way to truth' (968): the artist's labour is the harmonizing of the two into an art work in such a way that the Absolute is liberated and at the same time reconciled with the markers of finitude. As Heidegger puts it:

> Truth, as the clearing and concealing of what is, happens in being composed, as a poet composes a poem. *All art,* as the letting happen of the advent of the truth of what is, is, as such, *essentially poetry.* The nature of art, on which both the art work and the artist depend, is the setting-itself-into-work of truth. (*Poetry, Language, Thought* 70)

Liberating, harmonizing, composing are several ways to characterize the labour of the artist, but art takes place only by 'the setting-itself-into-work of truth'. There is meaning in a work of art, without which it would not be a work. But the teaching of these philosophers is that it is not set into the work by the artist. The meaning in question is not something the artist can control: no more can the observer or reader. Rather it *unconceals* itself (Heidegger), not for 'the destructive consuming of meaning, but the significative reappropriation of a surplus value within the space of restricted economy' (*Writing and Difference* 439n). By virtue of configuration of matter and form, if those are still in question, the work does achieve completeness. But there is always something more, a surplus value which cannot be taken out of the text.

We have made reference to Old Testament poetry as religious scripture. In the philosophical tradition, art, the secular not excluded, has continued to be associated with the sense of the sacred. Hence 'All art', according to Hegel, ' aims at the identity, produced by the spirit, in which eternal things, God, and absolute truth are revealed in real appearance and shape to our contemplation, to our hearts and minds'(1236). For Hegel, therefore, the significance the work *is driven to express* is not specific to the work. It is something which underlies all artistic creation, which works of all forms and genres share in common. Concerning the period of art history we are concerned with, the preoccupation is basically the same, as he writes: 'The classical Ideal, on the other hand, corresponds to the portrayal of the Absolute as such, in its independently self-reposing external reality' (624).

It is to be noted that the Absolute is not apparently speaking: the focus is on its appearing, in itself 'an unfolding of the truth which is not exhausted in natural history but revealed in world-history'; and 'Art itself is the most beautiful side of that history' (1236-37).

It is not possible in a brief paper such as this to trace the evolution and extensions of Hegel's account of art. But there are developments in literary studies from the second half of the nineteenth century blossoming in the twentieth century which seem to be underpinned by Hegel's notions of the spirit, the truth, the Absolute, and so forth. Symbolic and mythic formations, archetypes, and a variety of divine forms, Nietzschean Dionysus and Apollo , for instance, and mythological images like the knowledge seeker and the titanically striving

individual, and psychological forces like Oedipus and Thanatos which are analyzed in literary works as the truth 'setting-itself-into-work' all owe something to Hegel. The mythological images, divine and symbolic forms, and so forth are found, sometimes in their purest forms, in classical and ancient literatures such as in the present course. They may have names reflecting the culture in which they have been textualized. But this is not to say that they belong to those cultures. The Abrahamic traveller and founder is not unique to the Bible. We find it also in Vergil's Aeneas. Similarly the Wandering Aramean who ultimately finds the way home has striking resemblances to Homer's Odysseus. The Aramean will regain and settle in his homeland through his offspring, while Odysseus himself will regain it in his own lifetime. Again, we have the suppliant succeeding against all odds in the Biblical Book of Esther and in Euripides' *The Suppliants*, and the divine being, a well-known Biblical figure, is also encountered in Vergil's Eclogue IV.

As the 'proper meaning and determining purpose' and 'the significance which [the work] is driven to express', the Absolute, the spirit, or truth, as it is variously called by Hegel, may be seen in terms of Aristotle's *final cause* and *efficient cause* respectively of the specific substantial change. The *material cause* is either 'the inherently non-spiritual, i.e. heavy matter, shapeable only according to the laws of gravity' used in architecture and sculpting (*Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art* 624) or colour, sound, and speech, which are not shapeable by gravity, but by the agency of spirit. Speech, for instance, is 'the absolute and true art of the spirit and its expression as spirit, since everything that consciousness conceives and shapes spiritually within its own inner being speech alone can adopt, express, and bring before our imagination' (626). The *formal cause* is the pattern of configuration of the matter specific to the art, which needs the artist, cooperating with spirit-seeking-expression. In addition to these *causes*, however, Aristotle, mindful of the linguistic medium of poetry, also works out the internal structure of the poem as a movement from one component to another in a chain in which one thing leads to another, bringing into being a *muthos:* that is, 'a *mimesis* of an action - purposeful and whole - and of magnitude' (Whalley 77). Complementing this pattern of continuity – along the story line – is a pattern of coexistence, with a set of named components: *muthos* (story), character, thought, and diction are the main ones which always occur, but there are also melody and spectacle, which may occur or not, without affecting the construction.

A whole range of concepts have been mentioned in this paper, all of which are functional in literary criticism and literary theory. But reading should never forget that the literary work is *one* act; it is one work. As Jonathan Culler observes: 'Interpreters are allowed to argue that a work lacks unity, but to ignore the question of unity is to flout the obligations of their task' (220-221). Just in the same way, the fact of the poem's constituent structure should be allowed full play. Hegel's and Heidegger's conceptions of truth and their various cognates are obviously figurations of unity, but a unity emerging from the interaction of a large number of individual components. According to Ricoeur, a balanced reading of a literary text, 'on the one hand, takes account of the greatest number of facts furnished by the text, including its potential connotations, and on the other hand, offers a qualitatively better convergence between the features which it takes into account' (*Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* 137).

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THE ILIAD OF HOMER

BOOK I

How Agamemnon and Achilles fell out at the siege of Troy; and Achilles withdrew himself from battle, and won from Zeus a pledge that his wrong should be avenged on Agamemnon and the Achaians.

SING, GODDESS, the wrath of Achilles Peleus' son, the ruinous wrath that brought on the Achaians woes innumerable, and hurled down into Hades many strong souls of heroes, and gave their bodies to be a prey to dogs and all winged fowls; and so the counsel of Zeus wrought out its accomplishment from the day when first strife parted Atreides king of men and noble Achilles.

Who among the gods set the twain at strife and variance? Apollo, the son of Leto and of Zeus; for he in anger at the king sent a sore plague upon the host, so that the folk began to perish, because Atreides had done dishonour to Chryses the priest. For the priest had come to the Achaians' fleet ships to win his daughter's freedom, and brought a ransom beyond telling; and bare in his hands the fillet of Apollo the Far-darter upon a golden staff; and made his prayer unto all the Achaians, and most of all to the two sons of Atreus, orderers of the host; "Ye sons of Atreus and all ye well-greaved Achaians, now may the gods that dwell in the mansions of Olympus grant you to lay waste the city of Priam, and to fare happily homeward; only set ye my dear child free, and accept the ransom in reverence to the son of Zeus, far-darting Apollo."

Then all the other Achaians cried assent, to reverence the priest and accept his goodly ransom; yet the thing pleased not the heart of Agamemnon son of Atreus, but he roughly sent him away, and laid stern charge upon him, saying: "Let me not find thee, old man, amid the hollow ships, whether tarrying now or returning again hereafter, lest the staff and fillet of the god avail thee naught. And her will I not set free;

nay, ere that shall old age come on her in our house, in Argos, far from her native land, where she shall ply the loom and serve my couch. But depart, provoke me not, that thou mayest the rather go in peace."

So said he, and the old man was afraid and obeyed his word, and fared silently along the shore of the loud-sounding sea. Then went that aged man apart and prayed aloud to king Apollo, whom Leto of the fair locks bare: "Hear me, god of the silver bow, that standest over Chryse and holy Killa, and rulest Tenedos with might, O Smintheus! If ever I built a temple gracious in thine eyes, or if ever I burnt to thee fat flesh of thighs of bulls or goats, fulfil thou this my desire; let the Danaans pay by thine arrows for my tears."

So spake he in prayer, and Phoebus Apollo heard him, and came down from the peaks of Olympus wroth at heart, bearing on his shoulders his bow and covered quiver. And the arrows clanged upon his shoulders in wrath, as the god moved; and he descended like to night. Then he sate him aloof from the ships, and let an arrow fly; and there was heard a dread clanging of the silver bow. First did the assail the mules and fleet dogs, but afterward, aiming at the men his piercing dart, he smote; and the pyres of the dead burnt continually in multitude.

Now for nine days ranged the god's shafts through the host; but on the tenth Achilles summoned the folk to assembly, for in his mind did goddess Hera of white arms put the thought, because she had pity on the Danaans when she beheld them perishing. Now when they had gathered and were met in assembly, then Achilles fleet of foot stood up and spake among them: "Son of Atreus, now deem I that we shall return wandering home again—if verily we might escape death—if war at once and pestilence must indeed ravage the Achaians. But come, let us now inquire of some soothsayer or priest, yea, or an interpreter of dreams—seeing that a dream too is of Zeus—who shall say wherefore Phoebus Apollo is so wroth, whether he blame us by reason of vow or hecatomb; if perchance he would accept the savour of lambs or unblemished goats, and so would take away the pestilence from us."

So spake he and sate him down; and there stood up before them Kalchas son of Thestor, most excellent far of augurs, who knew both things that were and that should be and that

had been before, and guided the ships of the Achaians to Ilios by his soothsaying that Phoebus Apollo bestowed on him. He of good intent made harangue and spake amid them: “Achilles, dear to Zeus, thou biddest me tell the wrath of Apollo, the king that smiteth afar. Therefore will I speak; but do thou make covenant with me, and swear that verily with all thy heart thou wilt aid me both by word and deed. For of a truth I deem that I shall provoke one that ruleth all the Argives with might, and whom the Achaians obey. For a king is more of might when he is wroth with a meaner man; even though for the one day he swallow his anger, yet doth he still keep his displeasure thereafter in his breast till he accomplish it. Consider thou, then, if thou wilt hold me safe.”

And Achilles fleet of foot made answer and spake to him: “Yea, be of good courage, speak whatever soothsaying thou knowest; for by Apollo dear to Zeus, him by whose worship thou, O Kalchas, declarest thy soothsaying to the Danaans, not even if thou mean Agamemnon, that now avoweth him to be greatest far of the Achaians.”

Then was the noble seer of good courage, and spake: “Neither by reason of a vow is he displeased, nor for any hecatomb, but for his priest’s sake to whom Agamemnon did despite, and set not his daughter free and accepted not the ransom; therefore hath the Far-darter brought woes upon us, yea, and will bring. Nor will he ever remove the loathly pestilence from the Danaans till we have given the bright-eyed damsel to her father, unbought, unransomed, and carried a holy hecatomb to Chryse; then might we propitiate him to our prayer.”

So said he and sate him down, and there stood up before them the hero son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, sore displeased; and his dark heart within him was greatly filled with anger, and his eyes were like flashing fire. To Kalchas first spake he with look of ill: “Thou seer of evil, never yet hast thou told me the thing that is pleasant. Evil is ever the joy of thy heart to prophesy, but never yet didst thou tell any good matter nor bring to pass. And now with soothsaying thou makest harangue among the Danaans, how that the Far-darter bringeth woes upon them because, forsooth, I would not take the goodly ransom of the damsel Chryseis, seeing I am the rather fain to keep her own self within mine house. Yea, I prefer her before Klytaimnestra my wedded wife; in no wise is she lacking beside her, neither in favour

nor stature, nor wit nor skill. Yet for all this will I give her back, if that is better; rather would I see my folk whole than perishing. Only make ye me ready a prize of honour forthwith, lest I alone of all the Argives be disprized, which thing beseemeth not; for ye all behold how my prize is departing from me."

To him then made answer fleet-footed goodly Achilles: "Most noble son of Atreus, of all men most covetous, how shall the great-hearted Achaians give thee a meed of honour? We know naught of any wealth of common store, but what spoil soe'er we took from captured cities hath been apportioned, and it beseemeth not to beg all this back from the folk. Nay, yield thou the damsel to the god, and we Achaians will pay thee back threefold and fourfold, if ever Zeus grant us to sack some well-walled town of Troy-land."

To him lord Agamemnon made answer and said: "Not in this wise, strong as thou art, O godlike Achilles, beguile thou me by craft; thou shalt not outwit me nor persuade me. Dost thou wish, that thou mayest keep thy meed of honour, for me to sit idle in bereavement, and biddest me give her back? Nay, if the great-hearted Achaians will give me a meed suited to my mind, that the recompense be equal—but if they give it not, then I myself will go and take a meed of honour, thine be it or Aias', or Odysseus' that I will take unto me; wroth shall he be to whomsoever I come. But for this we will take counsel hereafter; now let us launch a black ship on the great sea, and gather picked oarsmen, and set therein a hecatomb, and embark Chryseis of the fair cheeks herself, and let one of our counsellors be captain, Aias or Idomeneus or goodly Odysseus, or thou, Peleides, most redoubtable of men, to do sacrifice for us and propitiate the Far-darter."

Then Achilles fleet of foot looked at him scowling and said: "Ah me, thou clothed in shamelessness, thou of crafty mind, how shall any Achaian hearken to thy bidding with all his heart, be it to go a journey or to fight the foe amain? Not by reason of the Trojan spearmen came I hither to fight, for they have not wronged me; never did they harry mine oxen nor my horses, nor ever waste my harvest in deep-soiled Phthia, the nurse of men; seeing there lieth between us long space of shadowy mountains and sounding sea; but thee, thou shameless one, followed we hither to make thee glad, by earning recompense at the Trojans' hands for Menelaos

and for thee, thou dog-face! All this thou threatenest thyself to take my meed of honour, wherefor I travailed much, and the sons of the Achaians gave it me. Never win I meed like unto thine, when the Achaians sack any populous citadel of Trojan men; my hands bear the brunt of furious war, but when the apportioning cometh then is thy meed far ampler, and I betake me to the ships with some small thing, yet my own, when I have fought to weariness. Now will I depart to Phthia, seeing it is far better to return home on my beaked ships; nor am I minded here in dishonour to draw thee thy fill of riches and wealth."

Then Agamemnon king of men made answer to him "yea, flee, if thy soul be set thereon. It is not I that beseech thee to tarry for my sake; I have others by my side that shall do me honour, and above all Zeus, lord of counsel. Most hateful art thou to me of all kings, fosterlings of Zeus; thou ever lovest strife and wars and fightings. Though thou be very strong, yet that I ween is a gift to thee of God. Go home with thy ships and company and lord it among thy Myrmidons; I reck not aught of thee nor care I for thine indignation; and all this shall be my threat to thee: seeing Phoebus Apollo bereaveth me of Chryseis, her with my ship and my company will I send back; and mine own self will I go to thy hut and take Briseis of the fair cheeks, even that thy meed of honour, that thou mayest well know how far greater I am than thou, and so shall another hereafter abhor to match his words with mine and rival me to my face."

So said he, and grief came upon Peleus' son, and his heart within his shaggy breast was divided in counsel, whether to draw his keen blade from his thigh and set the company aside and so slay Atreides, or to assuage his anger and curb his soul. While yet he doubted thereof in heart and soul, and was drawing his great sword from his sheath, Athene came to him from heaven, sent forth of the white-armed goddess Hera, whose heart loved both alike and had care for them. She stood behind Peleus' son and caught him by his golden hair, to him only visible, and of the rest no man beheld her. Then Achilles marvelled, and turned him about, and straightway knew Pallas Athene; and terribly shone her eyes. He spake to her winged words, and said: "Why now art thou come hither, thou daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus? Is it to behold the insolence of Agamemnon, son of Atreus. Yea, I

will tell thee that I deem shall even be brought to pass: by his own haughtinesses shall he soon lose his life."

Then the bright-eyed goddess Athene spake to him again: "I came from heaven to stay thine anger, if perchance thou wilt hearken to me, being sent forth if the white-armed goddess Hera, that loveth you twain alike and careth for you. Go to now, cease from strife, and let not thine hand draw the sword; yet with words indeed revile him, even as it shall come to pass. For thus will I say to thee, and so it shall be fulfilled; hereafter shall goodly gifts come to thee, yea in threefold measure, by reason of this despite; hold thou thine hand, and hearken to us."

And Achilles fleet of foot made answer and said to her: "Goddess, needs must a man observe the saying of you twain, even though he be very wroth at heart; for so is the better way. Whosoever obeyeth the gods, to him they gladly hearken."

He said, and stayed his heavy hand on the silver hilt, and thrust the great Sword back into the sheath, and was not disobedient to the saying of Athene; and she forthwith was departed to Olympus, to the other gods in the palace of aegis-bearing Zeus.

Then Peleus' son spake again with bitter words to Atreus' son, and in no wise ceased from anger: "Thou heavy with wine, thou with face of dog and heart of deer, never didst thou take courage to arm for battle among thy folk or to lay ambush with the princes of the Achaians; that to thee were even as death. Far better booteth it, for sooth, to seize for thyself the meed of honour of every man through the wide host of the Achaians that speaketh contrary to thee. Folk-devouring king! seeing thou rulest men of naught; else were this despite, thou son of Atreus, thy last. But I will speak my word to thee, and swear a mighty oath therewith: verily by this staff that shall no more put forth leaf or twig, seeing it hath for ever left its trunk among the hills, neither shall it grow green again, because the axe hath stripped it of leaves and bark; and now the sons of the Achaians that exercise judgment bear it in their hands, even they that by Zeus' command watch over the traditions—so shall this be a mighty oath in thine eyes—verily shall longing for Achilles come hereafter upon the sons of the Achaians one and all; and then wilt thou in no wise avail to save them, for all thy grief, when multitudes fall dying before manslaying Hector. Then

shalt thou tear thy heart within thee for anger that thou didst in no wise honour the best of the Achaians."

So said Peleides and dashed to earth the staff studded with golden nails, and himself sat down; and over against him Atreides waxed furious. Then in their midst rose up Nestor, pleasant of speech, the clear-voiced orator of the Pylians, he from whose tongue flowed discourse sweeter than honey. Two generations of mortal men already had he seen perish, that had been of old time born and nurtured with him in goodly Pylos, and he was king among the third. He of good intent made harangue to them and said: "Alas, of a truth sore lamentation cometh upon the land of Achaia. Verily Priam would be glad and Priam's sons, and all the Trojans would have great joy of heart, were they to hear all this tale of strife between you twain that are chiefest of the Danaans in counsel and chiefest in battle. Nay, hearken to me; ye are younger both than I. Of old days held I converse with better men even than you, and never did they make light of me. Yea, I never beheld such warriors, nor shall behold, as were Peirithoos and Dryas shepherd of the host and Kaineus and Exadios and godlike Polyphemos [and Theseus son of Aigeus, like to the Immortals]. Mightiest of growth were they of all men upon the earth; mightiest they were and with the mightiest fought they, even the wild tribes of the Mountain caves, and destroyed them utterly. And with these held I converse, being come from Pylos, from a distant land afar; for of themselves they summoned me. So I played my part in fight; and with them could none of men that are now on earth do battle. And they laid to heart my counsels and hearkened to my voice. Even so hearken ye also, for better is it to hearken. Neither do thou, though thou art very great, seize from him his damsel, but leave her as she was given at the first by the sons of the Achaians to be a meed of honour; nor do thou, son of Peleus, think to strive with a king, might against might; seeing that no common honour pertaineth to a sceptred king to whom Zeus apportioneth glory. Though thou be strong, and a goddess mother bare thee, yet his is the greater place, for he is king over more. And thou, Atreides, abate thy fury; nay, it is even I that beseech thee to let go thine anger with Achilles, who is made unto all the Achaians a mighty bulwark of evil war."

Then lord Agamemnon answered and said: "Yea verily, old

man, all this thou sayest is according unto right. But this fellow would be above all others, he would be lord of all and king among all and captain to all; wherein I deem none will hearken to him. Though the immortal gods made him a spearman, do they therefore put revilings in his mouth for him to utter?"

Then goodly Achilles brake in on him and answered: "Yea, for I should be called coward and man of naught, if I yield to thee in every matter, howsoe'er thou bid. To others give now thine orders, not to me [play master; for thee I deem that I shall no more obey]. This, moreover, will I say to thee, and do thou lay it to thy heart. Know that not by violence will I strive for the damsel's sake, neither with thee nor any other; ye gave and ye have taken away. But of all else that is mine beside my fleet black ship, thereof shalt thou not take anything or bear it away against my will. Yea, go to now, make trial, that all these may see; forthwith thy dark blood shall gush about my spear."

Now when the twain had thus finished the battle of violent words, they stood up and dissolved the assembly beside the Achaian ships. Peleides went his way to his huts and trim ships with Menoitios' son [Patroklos] and his company; and Atreides launched a fleet ship on the sea, and picked twenty oarsmen therefor, and embarked the hecatomb for the god, and brought Chryseis of the fair cheeks and set her therein; and Odysseus of many devices went to be their captain.

So these embarked and sailed over the wet ways; and Atreides bade the folk purify themselves. So they purified themselves, and cast the defilements into the sea and did sacrifice to Apollo, even unblemished hecatombs of bulls and goats, along the shore of the unvintaged sea; and the sweet savour arose to heaven eddying amid the smoke.

Thus were they busied throughout the host; but Agamemnon ceased not from the strife wherewith he threatened Achilles at the first; he spake to Talthybios and Eurybates that were his heralds and nimble squires: "Go ye to the tent of Achilles Peleus' son, and take Briseis of the fair cheeks by the hand and lead her hither; and if he give her not, then will I myself go, and more with me, and seize her; and that will be yet more grievous for him."

So saying he sent them forth, and laid stern charge upon them. Unwillingly went they along the beach of the

unvintaged sea, and came to the huts and ships of the Myrmidons. Him found they sitting beside his hut and black ship; nor when he saw them was Achilles glad. So they in dread and reverence of the king stood, and spake to him no word, nor questioned him. But he knew in his heart, and spake to them: “All hail, ye heralds, messengers of Zeus and men, come near; ye are not guilty in my sight, but Agamemnon that sent you for the sake of the damsel Briseis. Go now, heaven-sprung Patroklos, bring forth the damsel, and give them her to lead away. Moreover, let the twain themselves be my witnesses before the face of the blessed gods and mortal men, yea and of him, that king untoward, against the day when there cometh need of me hereafter to save them all from shameful wreck. Of a truth he raveth with baleful mind, and hath not knowledge to look before and after, that so his Achaians might battle in safety beside their ships.”

So said he, and Patroklos hearkened to his dear comrade, and led forth from the hut Briseis of the fair cheeks, and gave them her to lead away. So these twain took their way back along the Achaians’ ships, and with them went the woman all unwilling. Then Achilles wept anon, and sat him down apart, aloof from his comrades on the beach of the grey sea, gazing across the boundless main; he stretched forth his hands and prayed instantly to his dear mother: “Mother, seeing thou didst of a truth bear me to so brief span of life, honour at the least ought the Olympian to have granted me, even Zeus that thundereth on high; but now doth he not honour me, no, not one whit. Verily Atreus’ son, wide-ruling Agamemnon, hath done me dishonour; for he hath taken away my meed of honour and keepeth her of his own violent deed.”

So spake he weeping, and his lady mother heard him as she sate in the sea-depths beside her aged sire. With speed arose she from the grey sea, like a mist, and sate her before the face of her weeping son, and stroked him with her hand, and spake and called on his name: “My child, why weepest thou? What sorrow hath entered into they heart? Speak it forth, hide it not in thy mind, that both may know it.”

Then with heavy moan Achilles fleet of foot spake to her: “Thou knowest it; why should I tell this to thee that knowest all! We had fared to Thebe, the holy city of Eetion, and laid it waste and carried hither all the spoils. So the sons of the Achaians divided among them all aright; and for Atreides

they set apart Chryseis of the fair cheeks. But Chryses, priest of Apollo the Far-darter, came unto the fleet ships of the mail-clad Achaians to win his daughter's freedom, and brought a ransom beyond telling, and bare in his hands the fillet of Apollo the Far-darter upon a golden staff, and made his prayer unto all the Achaians, and most of all to the two sons of Atreus, orderers of the host. Then all the other Achaians cried assent, to reverence the priest and accept his goodly ransom; yet the thing pleased not the heart of Agamemnon son of Atreus, but he roughly sent him away and laid stern charge upon him. So the old man went back in anger; and Apollo heard his prayers, seeing he loved him greatly, and he aimed against the Argives his deadly darts. So the people began to perish in multitudes, and the god's shafts ranged everywhither throughout the wide host of the Achaians. Then of full knowledge the seer declared to us the oracle of the Far-darter. Forthwith I first bade propitiate the god; but wrath gat hold upon Atreus' son thereat, and anon he stood up and spake a threatening word, that hath now been accomplished. Her the glancing-eyed Achaians are bringing on their fleet ship to Chryse, and bear with them offerings to the king; and the other but now the heralds went and took from my hut, even the daughter of Briseus, whom the sons of the Achaians gave me. Thou therefore, if indeed thou canst, guard thine own son; betake thee to Olympus and beseech Zeus by any word whereby thou ever didst make glad his heart. For oft have I heard thee proclaiming in my father's halls and telling that thou alone amid the immortals didst save the son of Kronos, lord of the storm-cloud, from shameful wreck, when all the other Olympians would have bound him, even Hera and Poseidon and Pallas Athene. Then didst thou, O goddess, enter in and loose him from his bonds, having with speed summoned to high Olympus him of the hundred arms whom gods call Briareus, but all men call Aigaion; for he is mightier even than his father—so he sate him by Kronion's side rejoicing in his triumph, and the blessed gods feared him withal and bound not Zeus. This bring thou to his remembrance and sit by him and clasp his knees, if perchance he will give succour to the Trojans; and for the Achaians, hem them among their ships' sterns about the bay, given over to slaughter; that they may make trial of their king, and that even Atreides, wide-ruling Agamemnon, may

perceive his blindness, in that he honoured not at all the best of the Achaians."

Then Thetis weeping made answer to him: "Ah me, my child, why reared I thee, cursed in my motherhood? Would thou hadst been left tearless and griefless amid the ships, seeing thy lot is very brief and endureth no long while; but now art thou made short-lived alike and lamentable beyond all men; in an evil hour I bare thee in our halls. But I will go myself to snow-clad Olympus to tell this thy saying to Zeus, whose joy is in the thunder, [perhaps rather, "hurler of the thunderbolt."] if perchance he may hearken to me. But tarry thou now amid thy fleet-faring ships, and continue wroth with the Achaians, and refrain utterly from battle: for Zeus went yesterday to Okeanos, unto the noble Ethiopians for a feast, and all the gods followed with him; but on the twelfth day will he return to Olympus, and then will I fare to Zeus' palace of the bronze threshold, and will kneel to him and think to win him."

So saying she went her way and left him there, vexed in spirit for the fair-girdled woman's sake, whom they had taken perforce despite his will: and meanwhile Odysseus came to Chryse with the holy hecatomb. When they were now entered within the deep haven, they furled their sails and laid them in the black ship, and lowered the mast by the forestays and brought it to the crutch with speed, and rowed her with oars to the anchorage. Then they cast out the mooring stones and made fast the hawsers, and so themselves went forth on to the sea-beach, and forth they brought the hecatomb for the Far-darter Apollo, and forth came Chryseis withal from the seafaring ship. Then Odysseus of many counsels brought her to the altar and gave her into her father's arms, and spake unto him: "Chryses, Agamemnon king of men sent me hither to bring thee thy daughter, and to offer to Phoebus a holy hecatomb on the Danaans' behalf, wherewith to propitiate the king that hath now brought sorrow and lamentation on the Argives."

So saying he gave her to his arms, and he gladly took his dear child; and anon they set in order for the god the holy hecatomb about his well-builded altar; next washed they their hands and took up the barley meal. Then Chryses lifted up his hands and prayed aloud for them: "Hearken to me, god of the silver bow that standest over Chryse and

holy Killa, and rulest Tenedos with might; even as erst thou heardest my prayer, and didst me honour, and mightily afflictest the people of the Achaians, even so now fulfil me this my desire: remove thou from the Danaans forthwith the loathly pestilence."

So spake he in prayer, and Phoebus Apollo heard him. Now when they had prayed and sprinkled the barley meal, first they drew back the victims' heads and slaughtered them and flayed them, and cut slices from the thighs and wrapped them in fat, making a double fold, and laid raw collops thereon, and the old man burnt them on cleft wood and made libation over them of gleaming wine; and at his side the young men in their hands held five-pronged forks. Now when the thighs were burnt and they had tasted the vitals, then sliced they all the rest and pierced it through with spits, and roasted it carefully, and drew all off again. So when they had rest from the task and had made ready the banquet, they feasted, nor was their heart aught stinted of the fair banquet. But when they had put away from them the desire of meat and drink, the young men crowned the bowls with wine, and gave each man his portion after the drink-offering had been poured into the cups. So all day long worshipped they the god with music, singing the beautiful paean, the sons of the Achaians making music to the Far-darter [or, "the Averter" (of pestilence)]; and his heart was glad to hear. And when the sun went down and darkness came on them, they laid them to sleep beside the ship's hawsers; and when rosy-fingered Dawn appeared, the child of morning, then set they sail for the wide camp of the Achaians; and Apollo the Far-darter sent them a favouring gale. They set up their mast and spread the white sails forth, and the wind filled the sail's belly and the dark wave sang loud about the stem as the ship made way, and she sped across the wave, accomplishing her journey. So when they were now come to the wide camp of the Achaians, they drew up their black ship to land high upon the sands, and set in line the long props beneath her; and themselves were scattered amid their huts and ships.

But he sat by his swift-faring ships, still wroth, even the heaven-sprung son of Peleus, Achilles fleet of foot; he betook him neither to the assembly that is the hero's glory, neither to war, but consumed his heart in tarrying in his place, and yearned for the war-cry and for battle.

Now when the twelfth morn thereafter was come, then the gods that are for ever fared to Olympus all in company, led of Zeus. And Thetis forgat not her son's charge, but rose up from the sea-wave, and at early morn mounted up to great heaven and Olympus. There found she Kronos' son of the far-sounding voice sitting apart from all on the topmost peak of many-ridged Olympus. So she sat before his face and with her left hand clasped his knees, and with her right touched him beneath his chin, and spake in prayer to king Zeus son of Kronos: "Father Zeus, if ever I gave thee aid amid the immortal gods, whether by word or deed, fulfil thou this my desire: do honour to my son, that is doomed to earliest death of all men: now hath Agamemnon king of men done him dishonour, for he hath taken away his meed of honour and keepeth her of his own violent deed. But honour thou him, Zeus of Olympus, lord of counsel; grant thou victory to the Trojans the while until the Achaians do my son honour and exalt him with recompense."

So spake she; but Zeus the cloud-gatherer said no word to her, and sat long time in silence. But even as Thetis had clasped his knees, so held she by him clinging, and questioned him yet a second time: "Promise me now this thing verily, and bow thy head thereto; or else deny me, seeing there is naught for thee to fear; that I may know full well how I among all gods am least in honour."

Then Zeus the cloud-gatherer, sore troubled, spake to her: "Verily it is a sorry matter, if thou wilt set me at variance with Hera, whene'er she provoketh me with taunting words. Even now she upbraideth me ever amid the immortal gods, and saith that I aid the Trojans in battle. But do thou now depart again, lest Hera mark aught; and I will take thought for these things to fulfil them. Come now, I will bow my head to thee, that thou mayest be of good courage; for that, of my part, is the surest token amid the immortals; no word of mine is revocable nor false nor unfulfilled when the bowing of my head hath pledged it."

Kronion spake, and bowed his dark brow, and the ambrosial locks waved from the king's immortal head; and he made great Olympus quake.

Thus the twain took counsel and parted; she leapt therewith into the deep sea from glittering Olympus, and Zeus fared to his own palace. All the gods in company arose from

their seats before their father's face; neither ventured any to await his coming, but stood up all before him. So he sate him there upon his throne; but Hera saw, and was not ignorant how that the daughter of the Ancient of the sea, Thetis the silver-footed, had devised counsel with him. Anon with taunting words spake she to Zeus the son of Kronos: "Now who among the gods, thou crafty of mind, hath devised counsel with thee? It is ever thy good pleasure to hold aloof from me and in secret meditation to give thy judgments, nor of thine own good will hast thou ever brought thyself to declare unto me the thing thou purposest."

Then the father of gods and men made answer her: "Hera, think not thou to know all my sayings; hard they are for thee, even though thou art my wife. But whichsoever it is seemly for thee to hear, none sooner than thou shall know, be he god or man. Only when I will to take thought aloof from the gods, then do not thou ask of every matter nor make question."

Then Hera the ox-eyed queen made answer to him. "Most dread son of Kronos, what word is this thou hast spoken? Yea, surely of old I have not asked thee nor made question, but in my heart sore afraid lest thou have been won over by silver-footed Thetis, daughter of the Ancient of the sea, for she at early morn sat by thee and clasped thy knees. To her I deem thou gavest a sure pledge that thou wilt do honour to Achilles, and lay many low beside the Achaians' ships."

To her made answer Zeus the cloud-gatherer: "Lady, Good lack! ever art thou imagining, nor can I escape thee; yet shalt thou in no wise have power to fulfil, but wilt be the further from my heart; that shall be even the worse for thee. And if it be so, then such must my good pleasure be. Abide thou in silence and hearken to my bidding, lest all the gods that are in Olympus keep not off from thee my visitation, when I put forth my hands unapproachable against thee."

He said, and Hera the ox-eyed queen was afraid, and sat in silence, curbing her heart; but throughout Zeus' palace the gods of heaven were troubled. Then Hephaistos the famed craftsman began to make harangue among them, to do kindness to his mother, white-armed Hera: "Verily this will be a sorry matter, neither any more endurable, if ye twain thus fight for mortals' sakes, and bring wrangling among the gods; neither will there any more be joy of the goodly feast, seeing

that evil triumpheth. So I give counsel to my mother, though herself is wise, to do kindness to our dear father Zeus, that our father upbraid us not again and cast the banquet in confusion. What if the Olympian, the lord of the lightning, will to dash us from our seats! for he is strongest far. Nay, approach thou him with gentle words, then will the Olympian forthwith be gracious unto us."

So speaking he rose up and sat in his dear mother's hand the twy-handled cup, and spake to her: "Be of good courage, mother mine, and endure, though thou art vexed, lest I behold thee, thou art so dear, chastised before mine eyes, and then shall I not be able for all my sorrow to save thee; for the Olympian is a hard foe to face. Yea, once ere this, when I was fain to save thee, he caught me by my foot and hurled me from the heavenly threshold; all day I flew, and at the set of sun I fell in Lemnos, and little life was in me. There did the Sintian folk forthwith tend me for my fall."

He spake, and the white-armed goddess Hera smiled, and smiling took the cup at her son's hand. Then he poured wine to all the other gods from right to left, ladling the sweet nectar from the bowl. And laughter unquenchable arose amid the blessed gods to see Hephaistos bustling through the palace.

So feasted they al day till the setting of the sun; nor was their soul aught stinted of the fair banquet, nor of the beauteous lyre that Apollo held, and the Muses singing alternately with sweet voice.

Now when the bright light of the sun was set, these went each to his own house to sleep, where each one had his palace made with cunning device by famed Hephaistos the lame god; and Zeus the Olympian, the lord of lightning, departed to his couch where he was wont of old to take his rest, whenever sweet sleep visited him. There went he up and slept, and beside him was Hera of the golden throne.

The Odyssey

By

Homer

Translated by Samuel Butler

BOOK I

TELL ME, O MUSE, of that ingenious hero who travelled far and wide after he had sacked the famous town of Troy. Many cities did he visit, and many were the nations with whose manners and customs he was acquainted; moreover he suffered much by sea while trying to save his own life and bring his men safely home; but do what he might he could not save his men, for they perished through their own sheer folly in eating the cattle of the Sun-god Hyperion; so the god prevented them from ever reaching home. Tell me, too, about all these things, O daughter of Jove, from whatsoever source you may know them.

So now all who escaped death in battle or by shipwreck had got safely home except Ulysses, and he, though he was longing to return to his wife and country, was detained by the goddess Calypso, who had got him into a large cave and wanted to marry him. But as years went by, there came a time when the gods settled that he should go back to Ithaca; even then, however, when he was among his own people, his troubles were not yet over; nevertheless all the gods had now begun to pity him except Neptune, who still persecuted him without ceasing and would not let him get home.

Now Neptune had gone off to the Ethiopians, who are at the world's end, and lie in two halves, the one looking West and the other East. He had gone there to accept a hecatomb of sheep and oxen, and was enjoying himself at his festival; but the other gods met in the house of Olympian Jove, and

the sire of gods and men spoke first. At that moment he was thinking of Aegisthus, who had been killed by Agamemnon's son Orestes; so he said to the other gods:

"See now, how men lay blame upon us gods for what is after all nothing but their own folly. Look at Aegisthus; he must needs make love to Agamemnon's wife unrighteously and then kill Agamemnon, though he knew it would be the death of him; for I sent Mercury to warn him not to do either of these things, inasmuch as Orestes would be sure to take his revenge when he grew up and wanted to return home. Mercury told him this in all good will but he would not listen, and now he has paid for everything in full."

Then Minerva said, "Father, son of Saturn, King of kings, it served Aegisthus right, and so it would any one else who does as he did; but Aegisthus is neither here nor there; it is for Ulysses that my heart bleeds, when I think of his sufferings in that lonely sea-girt island, far away, poor man, from all his friends. It is an island covered with forest, in the very middle of the sea, and a goddess lives there, daughter of the magician Atlas, who looks after the bottom of the ocean, and carries the great columns that keep heaven and earth asunder. This daughter of Atlas has got hold of poor unhappy Ulysses, and keeps trying by every kind of blandishment to make him forget his home, so that he is tired of life, and thinks of nothing but how he may once more see the smoke of his own chimneys. You, sir, take no heed of this, and yet when Ulysses was before Troy did he not propitiate you with many a burnt sacrifice? Why then should you keep on being so angry with him?"

And Jove said, "My child, what are you talking about? How can I forget Ulysses than whom there is no more capable man on earth, nor more liberal in his offerings to the immortal gods that live in heaven? Bear in mind, however, that Neptune is still furious with Ulysses for having blinded an eye of Polyphemus king of the Cyclopes. Polyphemus

is son to Neptune by the nymph Thoosa, daughter to the sea-king Phorcys; therefore though he will not kill Ulysses outright, he torments him by preventing him from getting home. Still, let us lay our heads together and see how we can help him to return; Neptune will then be pacified, for if we are all of a mind he can hardly stand out against us."

And Minerva said, "Father, son of Saturn, King of kings, if, then, the gods now mean that Ulysses should get home, we should first send Mercury to the Ogygian island to tell Calypso that we have made up our minds and that he is to return. In the meantime I will go to Ithaca, to put heart into Ulysses' son Telemachus; I will embolden him to call the Achaeans in assembly, and speak out to the suitors of his mother Penelope, who persist in eating up any number of his sheep and oxen; I will also conduct him to Sparta and to Pylos, to see if he can hear anything about the return of his dear father- for this will make people speak well of him."

So saying she bound on her glittering golden sandals, imperishable, with which she can fly like the wind over land or sea; she grasped the redoubtable bronze-shod spear, so stout and sturdy and strong, wherewith she quells the ranks of heroes who have displeased her, and down she darted from the topmost summits of Olympus, whereon forthwith she was in Ithaca, at the gateway of Ulysses' house, disguised as a visitor, Mentes, chief of the Taphians, and she held a bronze spear in her hand. There she found the lordly suitors seated on hides of the oxen which they had killed and eaten, and playing draughts in front of the house. Men-servants and pages were bustling about to wait upon them, some mixing wine with water in the mixing-bowls, some cleaning down the tables with wet sponges and laying them out again, and some cutting up great quantities of meat.

Telemachus saw her long before any one else did. He was sitting moodily among the suitors thinking about his brave father, and how he would send them flying out of the house, if he were to come to his

own again and be honoured as in days gone by. Thus brooding as he sat among them, he caught sight of Minerva and went straight to the gate, for he was vexed that a stranger should be kept waiting for admittance. He took her right hand in his own, and bade her give him her spear. "Welcome," said he, "to our house, and when you have partaken of food you shall tell us what you have come for."

He led the way as he spoke, and Minerva followed him. When they were within he took her spear and set it in the spear- stand against a strong bearing-post along with the many other spears of his unhappy father, and he conducted her to a richly decorated seat under which he threw a cloth of damask. There was a footstool also for her feet, and he set another seat near her for himself, away from the suitors, that she might not be annoyed while eating by their noise and insolence, and that he might ask her more freely about his father.

A maid servant then brought them water in a beautiful golden ewer and poured it into a silver basin for them to wash their hands, and she drew a clean table beside them. An upper servant brought them bread, and offered them many good things of what there was in the house, the carver fetched them plates of all manner of meats and set cups of gold by their side, and a man-servant brought them wine and poured it out for them.

Then the suitors came in and took their places on the benches and seats. Forthwith men servants poured water over their hands, maids went round with the bread-baskets, pages filled the mixing-bowls with wine and water, and they laid their hands upon the good things that were before them. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink they wanted music and dancing, which are the crowning embellishments of a banquet, so a servant brought a lyre to Phemius, whom they compelled perforce to sing to them. As soon as he touched his lyre and began to sing Telemachus spoke low to Minerva, with his head close to hers that no man might hear.

"I hope, sir," said he, "that you will not be of-

fended with what I am going to say. Singing comes cheap to those who do not pay for it, and all this is done at the cost of one whose bones lie rotting in some wilderness or grinding to powder in the surf. If these men were to see my father come back to Ithaca they would pray for longer legs rather than a longer purse, for money would not serve them; but he, alas, has fallen on an ill fate, and even when people do sometimes say that he is coming, we no longer heed them; we shall never see him again. And now, sir, tell me and tell me true, who you are and where you come from. Tell me of your town and parents, what manner of ship you came in, how your crew brought you to Ithaca, and of what nation they declared themselves to be- for you cannot have come by land. Tell me also truly, for I want to know, are you a stranger to this house, or have you been here in my father's time? In the old days we had many visitors for my father went about much himself."

And Minerva answered, "I will tell you truly and particularly all about it. I am Mentes, son of Anchialus, and I am King of the Taphians. I have come here with my ship and crew, on a voyage to men of a foreign tongue being bound for Temesa with a cargo of iron, and I shall bring back copper. As for my ship, it lies over yonder off the open country away from the town, in the harbour Rheithron under the wooded mountain Neritum. Our fathers were friends before us, as old Laertes will tell you, if you will go and ask him. They say, however, that he never comes to town now, and lives by himself in the country, faring hardly, with an old woman to look after him and get his dinner for him, when he comes in tired from pottering about his vineyard. They told me your father was at home again, and that was why I came, but it seems the gods are still keeping him back, for he is not dead yet not on the mainland. It is more likely he is on some sea-girt island in mid ocean, or a prisoner among savages who are detaining him against his will I am no prophet, and know very little about omens, but I

speak as it is borne in upon me from heaven, and assure you that he will not be away much longer; for he is a man of such resource that even though he were in chains of iron he would find some means of getting home again. But tell me, and tell me true, can Ulysses really have such a fine looking fellow for a son? You are indeed wonderfully like him about the head and eyes, for we were close friends before he set sail for Troy where the flower of all the Argives went also. Since that time we have never either of us seen the other."

"My mother," answered Telemachus, tells me I am son to Ulysses, but it is a wise child that knows his own father. Would that I were son to one who had grown old upon his own estates, for, since you ask me, there is no more ill-starred man under heaven than he who they tell me is my father."

And Minerva said, "There is no fear of your race dying out yet, while Penelope has such a fine son as you are. But tell me, and tell me true, what is the meaning of all this feasting, and who are these people? What is it all about? Have you some banquet, or is there a wedding in the family- for no one seems to be bringing any provisions of his own? And the guests- how atrociously they are behaving; what riot they make over the whole house; it is enough to disgust any respectable person who comes near them."

"Sir," said Telemachus, "as regards your question, so long as my father was here it was well with us and with the house, but the gods in their displeasure have willed it otherwise, and have hidden him away more closely than mortal man was ever yet hidden. I could have borne it better even though he were dead, if he had fallen with his men before Troy, or had died with friends around him when the days of his fighting were done; for then the Achaeans would have built a mound over his ashes, and I should myself have been heir to his renown; but now the storm-winds have spirited him away we know not wither; he is gone without leaving so much as a trace behind him, and I inherit nothing

but dismay. Nor does the matter end simply with grief for the loss of my father; heaven has laid sorrows upon me of yet another kind; for the chiefs from all our islands, Dulichium, Same, and the woodland island of Zacynthus, as also all the principal men of Ithaca itself, are eating up my house under the pretext of paying their court to my mother, who will neither point blank say that she will not marry, nor yet bring matters to an end; so they are making havoc of my estate, and before long will do so also with myself."

"Is that so?" exclaimed Minerva, "then you do indeed want Ulysses home again. Give him his helmet, shield, and a couple lances, and if he is the man he was when I first knew him in our house, drinking and making merry, he would soon lay his hands about these rascally suitors, were he to stand once more upon his own threshold. He was then coming from Ephyra, where he had been to beg poison for his arrows from Ilus, son of Mermerus. Ilus feared the ever-living gods and would not give him any, but my father let him have some, for he was very fond of him. If Ulysses is the man he then was these suitors will have a short shrift and a sorry wedding.

"But there! It rests with heaven to determine whether he is to return, and take his revenge in his own house or no; I would, however, urge you to set about trying to get rid of these suitors at once. Take my advice, call the Achaean heroes in assembly tomorrow -lay your case before them, and call heaven to bear you witness. Bid the suitors take themselves off, each to his own place, and if your mother's mind is set on marrying again, let her go back to her father, who will find her a husband and provide her with all the marriage gifts that so dear a daughter may expect. As for yourself, let me prevail upon you to take the best ship you can get, with a crew of twenty men, and go in quest of your father who has so long been missing. Some one may tell you something, or (and people often hear things in this way) some heaven-sent message may direct you.

First go to Pylos and ask Nestor; thence go on to Sparta and visit Menelaus, for he got home last of all the Achaeans; if you hear that your father is alive and on his way home, you can put up with the waste these suitors will make for yet another twelve months. If on the other hand you hear of his death, come home at once, celebrate his funeral rites with all due pomp, build a barrow to his memory, and make your mother marry again. Then, having done all this, think it well over in your mind how, by fair means or foul, you may kill these suitors in your own house. You are too old to plead infancy any longer; have you not heard how people are singing Orestes' praises for having killed his father's murderer Aegisthus? You are a fine, smart looking fellow; show your mettle, then, and make yourself a name in story. Now, however, I must go back to my ship and to my crew, who will be impatient if I keep them waiting longer; think the matter over for yourself, and remember what I have said to you."

"Sir," answered Telemachus, "it has been very kind of you to talk to me in this way, as though I were your own son, and I will do all you tell me; I know you want to be getting on with your voyage, but stay a little longer till you have taken a bath and refreshed yourself. I will then give you a present, and you shall go on your way rejoicing; I will give you one of great beauty and value- a keepsake such as only dear friends give to one another."

Minerva answered, "Do not try to keep me, for I would be on my way at once. As for any present you may be disposed to make me, keep it till I come again, and I will take it home with me. You shall give me a very good one, and I will give you one of no less value in return."

With these words she flew away like a bird into the air, but she had given Telemachus courage, and had made him think more than ever about his father. He felt the change, wondered at it, and knew that the stranger had been a god, so he went straight to where the suitors were sitting.

Phemius was still singing, and his hearers sat rapt

in silence as he told the sad tale of the return from Troy, and the ills Minerva had laid upon the Achaeans. Penelope, daughter of Icarius, heard his song from her room upstairs, and came down by the great staircase, not alone, but attended by two of her handmaids. When she reached the suitors she stood by one of the bearing posts that supported the roof of the cloisters with a staid maiden on either side of her. She held a veil, moreover, before her face, and was weeping bitterly.

"Phemius," she cried, "you know many another feat of gods and heroes, such as poets love to celebrate. Sing the suitors some one of these, and let them drink their wine in silence, but cease this sad tale, for it breaks my sorrowful heart, and reminds me of my lost husband whom I mourn ever without ceasing, and whose name was great over all Hellas and middle Argos."

"Mother," answered Telemachus, "let the bard sing what he has a mind to; bards do not make the ills they sing of; it is Jove, not they, who makes them, and who sends weal or woe upon mankind according to his own good pleasure. This fellow means no harm by singing the ill-fated return of the Danaans, for people always applaud the latest songs most warmly. Make up your mind to it and bear it; Ulysses is not the only man who never came back from Troy, but many another went down as well as he. Go, then, within the house and busy yourself with your daily duties, your loom, your distaff, and the ordering of your servants; for speech is man's matter, and mine above all others—for it is I who am master here."

She went wondering back into the house, and laid her son's saying in her heart. Then, going upstairs with her handmaids into her room, she mourned her dear husband till Minerva shed sweet sleep over her eyes. But the suitors were clamorous throughout the covered cloisters, and prayed each one that he might be her bed fellow.

Then Telemachus spoke, "Shameless," he cried, "and insolent suitors, let us feast at our pleasure

now, and let there be no brawling, for it is a rare thing to hear a man with such a divine voice as Phemius has; but in the morning meet me in full assembly that I may give you formal notice to depart, and feast at one another's houses, turn and turn about, at your own cost. If on the other hand you choose to persist in spunging upon one man, heaven help me, but Jove shall reckon with you in full, and when you fall in my father's house there shall be no man to avenge you."

The suitors bit their lips as they heard him, and marvelled at the boldness of his speech. Then, Antinous, son of Eupeithes, said, "The gods seem to have given you lessons in bluster and tall talking; may Jove never grant you to be chief in Ithaca as your father was before you."

Telemachus answered, "Antinous, do not chide with me, but, god willing, I will be chief too if I can. Is this the worst fate you can think of for me? It is no bad thing to be a chief, for it brings both riches and honour. Still, now that Ulysses is dead there are many great men in Ithaca both old and young, and some other may take the lead among them; nevertheless I will be chief in my own house, and will rule those whom Ulysses has won for me."

Then Eurymachus, son of Polybus, answered, "It rests with heaven to decide who shall be chief among us, but you shall be master in your own house and over your own possessions; no one while there is a man in Ithaca shall do you violence nor rob you. And now, my good fellow, I want to know about this stranger. What country does he come from? Of what family is he, and where is his estate? Has he brought you news about the return of your father, or was he on business of his own? He seemed a well-to-do man, but he hurried off so suddenly that he was gone in a moment before we could get to know him."

"My father is dead and gone," answered Telemachus, "and even if some rumour reaches me I put no more faith in it now. My mother does indeed sometimes send for a soothsayer and question

him, but I give his prophecyings no heed. As for the stranger, he was Mentes, son of Anchialus, chief of the Taphians, an old friend of my father's." But in his heart he knew that it had been the goddess.

The suitors then returned to their singing and dancing until the evening; but when night fell upon their pleasuring they went home to bed each in his own abode. Telemachus's room was high up in a tower that looked on to the outer court; hither, then, he hied, brooding and full of thought. A good old woman, Euryclea, daughter of Ops, the son of Pisenor, went before him with a couple of blazing torches. Laertes had bought her with his own money when she was quite young; he gave the worth of twenty oxen for her, and shewed as much respect to her in his household as he did to his own wedded wife, but he did not take her to his bed for he feared his wife's resentment. She it was who now lighted Telemachus to his room, and she loved him better than any of the other women in the house did, for she had nursed him when he was a baby. He opened the door of his bed room and sat down upon the bed; as he took off his shirt he gave it to the good old woman, who folded it tidily up, and hung it for him over a peg by his bed side, after which she went out, pulled the door to by a silver catch, and drew the bolt home by means of the strap. But Telemachus as he lay covered with a woollen fleece kept thinking all night through of his intended voyage of the counsel that Minerva had given him.

BOOK II

NOW WHEN THE CHILD OF MORNING, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared, Telemachus rose and dressed himself. He bound his sandals on to his comely feet, girded his sword about his shoulder, and left his room looking like an immortal god. He at once sent the criers round to call the people in assembly, so they called them and the people gathered thereon; then, when they were got together, he went to the place of assembly spear in hand- not alone, for his

19 BC

THE AENEID

by

Virgil

BOOK I

Arms, and the man I sing, who, forc'd by fate,
And haughty Juno's unrelenting hate,
Expell'd and exil'd, left the Trojan shore.
Long labors, both by sea and land, he bore,
And in the doubtful war, before he won
The Latian realm, and built the destin'd town;
His banish'd gods restor'd to rites divine,
And settled sure succession in his line,
From whence the race of Alban fathers come,
And the long glories of majestic Rome.

O Muse! the causes and the crimes relate;
What goddess was provok'd, and whence her hate;
For what offense the Queen of Heav'n began
To persecute so brave, so just a man;
Involv'd his anxious life in endless cares,
Expos'd to wants, and hurried into wars!
Can heav'nly minds such high resentment show,
Or exercise their spite in human woe?
Against the Tiber's mouth, but far away,
An ancient town was seated on the sea;
A Tyrian colony; the people made
Stout for the war, and studious of their trade:
Carthage the name; belov'd by Juno more
Than her own Argos, or the Samian shore.
Here stood her chariot; here, if Heav'n were kind,
The seat of awful empire she design'd.
Yet she had heard an ancient rumor fly,
(Long cited by the people of the sky,)
That times to come should see the Trojan race

Her Carthage ruin, and her tow'rs deface;
Nor thus confin'd, the yoke of sov'reign sway
Should on the necks of all the nations lay.
She ponder'd this, and fear'd it was in fate;
Nor could forget the war she wag'd of late
For conqu'ring Greece against the Trojan state.
Besides, long causes working in her mind,
And secret seeds of envy, lay behind;
Deep graven in her heart the doom remain'd
Of partial Paris, and her form disdain'd;
The grace bestow'd on ravish'd Ganymed,
Electra's glories, and her injur'd bed.
Each was a cause alone; and all combin'd
To kindle vengeance in her haughty mind.
For this, far distant from the Latian coast
She drove the remnants of the Trojan host;
And sev'n long years th' unhappy wand'ring train
Were toss'd by storms, and scatter'd thro' the main.
Such time, such toil, requir'd the Roman name,
Such length of labor for so vast a frame.

Now scarce the Trojan fleet, with sails and oars,
Had left behind the fair Sicilian shores,
Ent'ring with cheerful shouts the wat'ry reign,
And plowing frothy furrows in the main;
When, lab'ring still with endless discontent,
The Queen of Heav'n did thus her fury vent:

"Then am I vanquish'd? must I yield?" said she,
"And must the Trojans reign in Italy?
So Fate will have it, and Jove adds his force;
Nor can my pow'r divert their happy course.
Could angry Pallas, with revengeful spleen,
The Grecian navy burn, and drown the men?
She, for the fault of one offending foe,
The bolts of Jove himself presum'd to throw:
With whirlwinds from beneath she toss'd the ship,
And bare expos'd the bosom of the deep;
Then, as an eagle gripes the trembling game,
The wretch, yet hissing with her father's flame,
She strongly seiz'd, and with a burning wound
Transfix'd, and naked, on a rock she bound.

But I, who walk in awful state above,
The majesty of heav'n, the sister wife of Jove,
For length of years my fruitless force employ
Against the thin remains of ruin'd Troy!
What nations now to Juno's pow'r will pray,
Or off'rings on my slighted altars lay?"

Thus rag'd the goddess; and, with fury fraught.
The restless regions of the storms she sought,
Where, in a spacious cave of living stone,
The tyrant Aeolus, from his airy throne,
With pow'r imperial curbs the struggling winds,
And sounding tempests in dark prisons binds.
This way and that th' impatient captives tend,
And, pressing for release, the mountains rend.
High in his hall th' undaunted monarch stands,
And shakes his scepter, and their rage commands;
Which did he not, their unresisted sway
Would sweep the world before them in their way;
Earth, air, and seas thro' empty space would roll,
And heav'n would fly before the driving soul.
In fear of this, the Father of the Gods
Confin'd their fury to those dark abodes,
And lock'd 'em safe within, oppress'd with mountain loads;
Impos'd a king, with arbitrary sway,
To loose their fetters, or their force allay.
To whom the suppliant queen her pray'rs address'd,
And thus the tenor of her suit express'd:

"O Aeolus! for to thee the King of Heav'n
The pow'r of tempests and of winds has giv'n;
Thy force alone their fury can restrain,
And smooth the waves, or swell the troubled main-
A race of wand'ring slaves, abhorr'd by me,
With prosp'rous passage cut the Tuscan sea;
To fruitful Italy their course they steer,
And for their vanquish'd gods design new temples there.
Raise all thy winds; with night involve the skies;
Sink or disperse my fatal enemies.
Twice sev'n, the charming daughters of the main,
Around my person wait, and bear my train:
Succeed my wish, and second my design;

The fairest, Deiopeia, shall be thine,
And make thee father of a happy line."

To this the god: "'T is yours, O queen, to will
The work which duty binds me to fulfil.
These airy kingdoms, and this wide command,
Are all the presents of your bounteous hand:
Yours is my sov'reign's grace; and, as your guest,
I sit with gods at their celestial feast;
Raise tempests at your pleasure, or subdue;
Dispose of empire, which I hold from you."

He said, and hurl'd against the mountain side
His quiv'ring spear, and all the god applied.
The raging winds rush thro' the hollow wound,
And dance aloft in air, and skim along the ground;
Then, settling on the sea, the surges sweep,
Raise liquid mountains, and disclose the deep.
South, East, and West with mix'd confusion roar,
And roll the foaming billows to the shore.
The cables crack; the sailors' fearful cries
Ascend; and sable night involves the skies;
And heav'n itself is ravish'd from their eyes.
Loud peals of thunder from the poles ensue;
Then flashing fires the transient light renew;
The face of things a frightful image bears,
And present death in various forms appears.
Struck with unusual fright, the Trojan chief,
With lifted hands and eyes, invokes relief;
And, "Thrice and four times happy those," he cried,
"That under Ilian walls before their parents died!
Tydides, bravest of the Grecian train!
Why could not I by that strong arm be slain,
And lie by noble Hector on the plain,
Or great Sarpedon, in those bloody fields
Where Simois rolls the bodies and the shields
Of heroes, whose dismember'd hands yet bear
The dart aloft, and clench the pointed spear!"

Thus while the pious prince his fate bewails,
Fierce Boreas drove against his flying sails,
And rent the sheets; the raging billows rise,

And mount the tossing vessels to the skies:
Nor can the shiv'ring oars sustain the blow;
The galley gives her side, and turns her prow;
While those astern, descending down the steep,
Thro' gaping waves behold the boiling deep.
Three ships were hurried by the southern blast,
And on the secret shelves with fury cast.
Those hidden rocks th' Ausonian sailors knew:
They call'd them Altars, when they rose in view,
And show'd their spacious backs above the flood.
Three more fierce Eurus, in his angry mood,
Dash'd on the shallows of the moving sand,
And in mid ocean left them moor'd aland.
Orontes' bark, that bore the Lycian crew,
(A horrid sight!) ev'n in the hero's view,
From stem to stern by waves was overborne:
The trembling pilot, from his rudder torn,
Was headlong hurl'd; thrice round the ship was toss'd,
Then bulg'd at once, and in the deep was lost;
And here and there above the waves were seen
Arms, pictures, precious goods, and floating men.
The stoutest vessel to the storm gave way,
And suck'd thro' loosen'd planks the rushing sea.
Ilioneus was her chief: Alethes old,
Achates faithful, Abas young and bold,
Endur'd not less; their ships, with gaping seams,
Admit the deluge of the briny streams.

Meantime imperial Neptune heard the sound
Of raging billows breaking on the ground.
Displeas'd, and fearing for his wat'ry reign,
He rear'd his awful head above the main,
Serene in majesty; then roll'd his eyes
Around the space of earth, and seas, and skies.
He saw the Trojan fleet dispers'd, distress'd,
By stormy winds and wintry heav'n oppress'd.
Full well the god his sister's envy knew,
And what her aims and what her arts pursue.
He summon'd Eurus and the western blast,
And first an angry glance on both he cast;
Then thus rebuk'd: "Audacious winds! from whence
This bold attempt, this rebel insolence?

Is it for you to ravage seas and land,
Unauthoriz'd by my supreme command?
To raise such mountains on the troubled main?
Whom I- but first 't is fit the billows to restrain;
And then you shall be taught obedience to my reign.
Hence! to your lord my royal mandate bear-
The realms of ocean and the fields of air
Are mine, not his. By fatal lot to me
The liquid empire fell, and trident of the sea.
His pow'r to hollow caverns is confin'd:
There let him reign, the jailer of the wind,
With hoarse commands his breathing subjects call,
And boast and bluster in his empty hall."
He spoke; and, while he spoke, he smooth'd the sea,
Dispell'd the darkness, and restor'd the day.
Cymothoe, Triton, and the sea-green train
Of beauteous nymphs, the daughters of the main,
Clear from the rocks the vessels with their hands:
The god himself with ready trident stands,
And opes the deep, and spreads the moving sands;
Then heaves them off the shoals. Where'er he guides
His finny coursers and in triumph rides,
The waves unruffle and the sea subsides.
As, when in tumults rise th' ignoble crowd,
Mad are their motions, and their tongues are loud;
And stones and brands in rattling volleys fly,
And all the rustic arms that fury can supply:
If then some grave and pious man appear,
They hush their noise, and lend a list'ning ear;
He soothes with sober words their angry mood,
And quenches their innate desire of blood:
So, when the Father of the Flood appears,
And o'er the seas his sov'reign trident rears,
Their fury falls: he skims the liquid plains,
High on his chariot, and, with loosen'd reins,
Majestic moves along, and awful peace maintains.
The weary Trojans ply their shatter'd oars
To nearest land, and make the Libyan shores.

Within a long recess there lies a bay:
An island shades it from the rolling sea,
And forms a port secure for ships to ride;

Broke by the jutting land, on either side,
In double streams the briny waters glide.
Betwixt two rows of rocks a sylvan scene
Appears above, and groves for ever green:
A grot is form'd beneath, with mossy seats,
To rest the Nereids, and exclude the heats.
Down thro' the crannies of the living walls
The crystal streams descend in murm'ring falls:
No haulsers need to bind the vessels here,
Nor bearded anchors; for no storms they fear.
Sev'n ships within this happy harbor meet,
The thin remainders of the scatter'd fleet.
The Trojans, worn with toils, and spent with woes,
Leap on the welcome land, and seek their wish'd repose.

First, good Achates, with repeated strokes
Of clashing flints, their hidden fire provokes:
Short flame succeeds; a bed of wither'd leaves
The dying sparkles in their fall receives:
Caught into life, in fiery fumes they rise,
And, fed with stronger food, invade the skies.
The Trojans, dropping wet, or stand around
The cheerful blaze, or lie along the ground:
Some dry their corn, infected with the brine,
Then grind with marbles, and prepare to dine.
Aeneas climbs the mountain's airy brow,
And takes a prospect of the seas below,
If Capys thence, or Antheus he could spy,
Or see the streamers of Caicus fly.
No vessels were in view; but, on the plain,
Three beamy stags command a lordly train
Of branching heads: the more ignoble throng
Attend their stately steps, and slowly graze along.
He stood; and, while secure they fed below,
He took the quiver and the trusty bow
Achates us'd to bear: the leaders first
He laid along, and then the vulgar pierc'd;
Nor ceas'd his arrows, till the shady plain
Sev'n mighty bodies with their blood distain.
For the sev'n ships he made an equal share,
And to the port return'd, triumphant from the war.
The jars of gen'rous wine (Acestes' gift,

When his Trinacrian shores the navy left)
He set abroach, and for the feast prepar'd,
In equal portions with the ven'son shar'd.
Thus while he dealt it round, the pious chief
With cheerful words allay'd the common grief:
"Endure, and conquer! Jove will soon dispose
To future good our past and present woes.
With me, the rocks of Scylla you have tried;
Th' inhuman Cyclops and his den defied.
What greater ills hereafter can you bear?
Resume your courage and dismiss your care,
An hour will come, with pleasure to relate
Your sorrows past, as benefits of Fate.
Thro' various hazards and events, we move
To Latium and the realms foredoom'd by Jove.
Call'd to the seat (the promise of the skies)
Where Trojan kingdoms once again may rise,
Endure the hardships of your present state;
Live, and reserve yourselves for better fate."

These words he spoke, but spoke not from his heart;
His outward smiles conceal'd his inward smart.
The jolly crew, unmindful of the past,
The quarry share, their plenteous dinner haste.
Some strip the skin; some portion out the spoil;
The limbs, yet trembling, in the caldrons boil;
Some on the fire the reeking entrails broil.
Stretch'd on the grassy turf, at ease they dine,
Restore their strength with meat, and cheer their
souls with wine.
Their hunger thus appeas'd, their care attends
The doubtful fortune of their absent friends:
Alternate hopes and fears their minds possess,
Whether to deem 'em dead, or in distress.
Above the rest, Aeneas mourns the fate
Of brave Orontes, and th' uncertain state
Of Gyas, Lycus, and of Amycus.
The day, but not their sorrows, ended thus.

When, from aloft, almighty Jove surveys
Earth, air, and shores, and navigable seas,
At length on Libyan realms he fix'd his eyes-

Whom, pond'ring thus on human miseries,
When Venus saw, she with a lowly look,
Not free from tears, her heav'nly sire bespoke:

"O King of Gods and Men! whose awful hand
Disperses thunder on the seas and land,
Disposing all with absolute command;
How could my pious son thy pow'r incense?
Or what, alas! is vanish'd Troy's offense?
Our hope of Italy not only lost,
On various seas by various tempests toss'd,
But shut from ev'ry shore, and barr'd from ev'ry coast.
You promis'd once, a progeny divine
Of Romans, rising from the Trojan line,
In after times should hold the world in awe,
And to the land and ocean give the law.
How is your doom revers'd, which eas'd my care
When Troy was ruin'd in that cruel war?
Then fates to fates I could oppose; but now,
When Fortune still pursues her former blow,
What can I hope? What worse can still succeed?
What end of labors has your will decreed?
Antenor, from the midst of Grecian hosts,
Could pass secure, and pierce th' Illyrian coasts,
Where, rolling down the steep, Timavus raves
And thro' nine channels disembogues his waves.
At length he founded Padua's happy seat,
And gave his Trojans a secure retreat;
There fix'd their arms, and there renew'd their name,
And there in quiet rules, and crown'd with fame.
But we, descended from your sacred line,
Entitled to your heav'n and rites divine,
Are banish'd earth; and, for the wrath of one,
Remov'd from Latium and the promis'd throne.
Are these our scepters? these our due rewards?
And is it thus that Jove his plighted faith regards?"

To whom the Father of th' immortal race,
Smiling with that serene indulgent face,
With which he drives the clouds and clears the skies,
First gave a holy kiss; then thus replies:

"Daughter, dismiss thy fears; to thy desire
The fates of thine are fix'd, and stand entire.
Thou shalt behold thy wish'd Lavinian walls;
And, ripe for heav'n, when fate Aeneas calls,
Then shalt thou bear him up, sublime, to me:
No councils have revers'd my firm decree.
And, lest new fears disturb thy happy state,
Know, I have search'd the mystic rolls of Fate:
Thy son (nor is th' appointed season far)
In Italy shall wage successful war,
Shall tame fierce nations in the bloody field,
And sov'reign laws impose, and cities build,
Till, after ev'ry foe subdued, the sun
Thrice thro' the signs his annual race shall run:
This is his time prefix'd. Ascanius then,
Now call'd Iulus, shall begin his reign.
He thirty rolling years the crown shall wear,
Then from Lavinium shall the seat transfer,
And, with hard labor, Alba Longa build.
The throne with his succession shall be fill'd
Three hundred circuits more: then shall be seen
Ilia the fair, a priestess and a queen,
Who, full of Mars, in time, with kindly throes,
Shall at a birth two goodly boys disclose.
The royal babes a tawny wolf shall drain:
Then Romulus his grandsire's throne shall gain,
Of martial tow'rs the founder shall become,
The people Romans call, the city Rome.
To them no bounds of empire I assign,
Nor term of years to their immortal line.
Ev'n haughty Juno, who, with endless broils,
Earth, seas, and heav'n, and Jove himself turmoils;
At length aton'd, her friendly pow'r shall join,
To cherish and advance the Trojan line.
The subject world shall Rome's dominion own,
And, prostrate, shall adore the nation of the gown.
An age is ripening in revolving fate
When Troy shall overturn the Grecian state,
And sweet revenge her conqu'ring sons shall call,
To crush the people that conspir'd her fall.
Then Caesar from the Julian stock shall rise,
Whose empire ocean, and whose fame the skies

Alone shall bound; whom, fraught with eastern spoils,
Our heav'n, the just reward of human toils,
Securely shall repay with rites divine;
And incense shall ascend before his sacred shrine.
Then dire debate and impious war shall cease,
And the stern age be soften'd into peace:
Then banish'd Faith shall once again return,
And Vestal fires in hallow'd temples burn;
And Remus with Quirinus shall sustain
The righteous laws, and fraud and force restrain.
Janus himself before his fane shall wait,
And keep the dreadful issues of his gate,
With bolts and iron bars: within remains
Imprison'd Fury, bound in brazen chains;
High on a trophy rais'd, of useless arms,
He sits, and threats the world with vain alarms."

He said, and sent Cyllenius with command
To free the ports, and ope the Punic land
To Trojan guests; lest, ignorant of fate,
The queen might force them from her town and state.
Down from the steep of heav'n Cyllenius flies,
And cleaves with all his wings the yielding skies.
Soon on the Libyan shore descends the god,
Performs his message, and displays his rod:
The surly murmurs of the people cease;
And, as the fates requir'd, they give the peace:
The queen herself suspends the rigid laws,
The Trojans pities, and protects their cause.

Meantime, in shades of night Aeneas lies:
Care seiz'd his soul, and sleep forsook his eyes.
But, when the sun restor'd the cheerful day,
He rose, the coast and country to survey,
Anxious and eager to discover more.
It look'd a wild uncultivated shore;
But, whether humankind, or beasts alone
Possess'd the new-found region, was unknown.
Beneath a ledge of rocks his fleet he hides:
Tall trees surround the mountain's shady sides;
The bending brow above a safe retreat provides.
Arm'd with two pointed darts, he leaves his friends,

And true Achates on his steps attends.
Lo! in the deep recesses of the wood,
Before his eyes his goddess mother stood:
A huntress in her habit and her mien;
Her dress a maid, her air confess'd a queen.
Bare were her knees, and knots her garments bind;
Loose was her hair, and wanton'd in the wind;
Her hand sustain'd a bow; her quiver hung behind.
She seem'd a virgin of the Spartan blood:
With such array Harpalyce bestrode
Her Thracian courser and outstripp'd the rapid flood.
"Ho, strangers! have you lately seen," she said,
"One of my sisters, like myself array'd,
Who cross'd the lawn, or in the forest stray'd?
A painted quiver at her back she bore;
Varied with spots, a lynx's hide she wore;
And at full cry pursued the tusky boar."

Thus Venus: thus her son replied again:
"None of your sisters have we heard or seen,
O virgin! or what other name you bear
Above that style–O more than mortal fair!
Your voice and mien celestial birth betray!
If, as you seem, the sister of the day,
Or one at least of chaste Diana's train,
Let not an humble suppliant sue in vain;
But tell a stranger, long in tempests toss'd,
What earth we tread, and who commands the coast?
Then on your name shall wretched mortals call,
And offer'd victims at your altars fall."
"I dare not," she replied, "assume the name
Of goddess, or celestial honors claim:
For Tyrian virgins bows and quivers bear,
And purple buskins o'er their ankles wear.
Know, gentle youth, in Libyan lands you are-
A people rude in peace, and rough in war.
The rising city, which from far you see,
Is Carthage, and a Tyrian colony.
Phoenician Dido rules the growing state,
Who fled from Tyre, to shun her brother's hate.
Great were her wrongs, her story full of fate;
Which I will sum in short. Sichaeus, known

For wealth, and brother to the Punic throne,
Possess'd fair Dido's bed; and either heart
At once was wounded with an equal dart.
Her father gave her, yet a spotless maid;
Pygmalion then the Tyrian scepter sway'd:
One who condemn'd divine and human laws.
Then strife ensued, and cursed gold the cause.
The monarch, blinded with desire of wealth,
With steel invades his brother's life by stealth;
Before the sacred altar made him bleed,
And long from her conceal'd the cruel deed.
Some tale, some new pretense, he daily coin'd,
To soothe his sister, and delude her mind.
At length, in dead of night, the ghost appears
Of her unhappy lord: the specter stares,
And, with erected eyes, his bloody bosom bares.
The cruel altars and his fate he tells,
And the dire secret of his house reveals,
Then warns the widow, with her household gods,
To seek a refuge in remote abodes.
Last, to support her in so long a way,
He shows her where his hidden treasure lay.
Admonish'd thus, and seiz'd with mortal fright,
The queen provides companions of her flight:
They meet, and all combine to leave the state,
Who hate the tyrant, or who fear his hate.
They seize a fleet, which ready rigg'd they find;
Nor is Pygmalion's treasure left behind.
The vessels, heavy laden, put to sea
With prosp'rous winds; a woman leads the way.
I know not, if by stress of weather driv'n,
Or was their fatal course dispos'd by Heav'n;
At last they landed, where from far your eyes
May view the turrets of new Carthage rise;
There bought a space of ground, which (Byrsa call'd,
From the bull's hide) they first inclos'd, and wall'd.
But whence are you? what country claims your birth?
What seek you, strangers, on our Libyan earth?"

To whom, with sorrow streaming from his eyes,
And deeply sighing, thus her son replies:
"Could you with patience hear, or I relate,

O nymph, the tedious annals of our fate!
Thro' such a train of woes if I should run,
The day would sooner than the tale be done!
From ancient Troy, by force expell'd, we came-
If you by chance have heard the Trojan name.
On various seas by various tempests toss'd,
At length we landed on your Libyan coast.
The good Aeneas am I call'd- a name,
While Fortune favor'd, not unknown to fame.
My household gods, companions of my woes,
With pious care I rescued from our foes.
To fruitful Italy my course was bent;
And from the King of Heav'n is my descent.
With twice ten sail I cross'd the Phrygian sea;
Fate and my mother goddess led my way.
Scarce sev'n, the thin remainders of my fleet,
From storms preserv'd, within your harbor meet.
Myself distress'd, an exile, and unknown,
Debarr'd from Europe, and from Asia thrown,
In Libyan desarts wander thus alone."
His tender parent could no longer bear;
But, interposing, sought to soothe his care.
"Whoe'er you are–not unbelov'd by Heav'n,
Since on our friendly shore your ships are driv'n-
Have courage: to the gods permit the rest,
And to the queen expose your just request.
Now take this earnest of success, for more:
Your scatter'd fleet is join'd upon the shore;
The winds are chang'd, your friends from danger free;
Or I renounce my skill in augury.
Twelve swans behold in beauteous order move,
And stoop with closing pinions from above;
Whom late the bird of Jove had driv'n along,
And thro' the clouds pursued the scatt'ring throng:
Now, all united in a goodly team,
They skim the ground, and seek the quiet stream.
As they, with joy returning, clap their wings,
And ride the circuit of the skies in rings;
Not otherwise your ships, and ev'ry friend,
Already hold the port, or with swift sails descend.
No more advice is needful; but pursue

The path before you, and the town in view."

Thus having said, she turn'd, and made appear
Her neck refulgent, and dishevel'd hair,
Which, flowing from her shoulders, reach'd the ground.
And widely spread ambrosial scents around:
In length of train descends her sweeping gown;
And, by her graceful walk, the Queen of Love is known.
The prince pursued the parting deity
With words like these: "Ah! whither do you fly?
Unkind and cruel! to deceive your son
In borrow'd shapes, and his embrace to shun;
Never to bless my sight, but thus unknown;
And still to speak in accents not your own."
Against the goddess these complaints he made,
But took the path, and her commands obey'd.
They march, obscure; for Venus kindly shrouds
With mists their persons, and involves in clouds,
That, thus unseen, their passage none might stay,
Or force to tell the causes of their way.
This part perform'd, the goddess flies sublime
To visit Paphos and her native clime;
Where garlands, ever green and ever fair,
With vows are offer'd, and with solemn pray'r:
A hundred altars in her temple smoke;
A thousand bleeding hearts her pow'r invoke.

They climb the next ascent, and, looking down,
Now at a nearer distance view the town.
The prince with wonder sees the stately tow'rs,
Which late were huts and shepherds' homely bow'rs,
The gates and streets; and hears, from ev'ry part,
The noise and busy concourse of the mart.
The toiling Tyrians on each other call
To ply their labor: some extend the wall;
Some build the citadel; the brawny throng
Or dig, or push unwieldly stones along.
Some for their dwellings choose a spot of ground,
Which, first design'd, with ditches they surround.
Some laws ordain; and some attend the choice
Of holy senates, and elect by voice.
Here some design a mole, while others there

Lay deep foundations for a theater;
From marble quarries mighty columns hew,
For ornaments of scenes, and future view.
Such is their toil, and such their busy pains,
As exercise the bees in flow'ry plains,
When winter past, and summer scarce begun,
Invites them forth to labor in the sun;
Some lead their youth abroad, while some condense
Their liquid store, and some in cells dispense;
Some at the gate stand ready to receive
The golden burthen, and their friends relieve;
All with united force, combine to drive
The lazy drones from the laborious hive:
With envy stung, they view each other's deeds;
The fragrant work with diligence proceeds.
"Thrice happy you, whose walls already rise!"
Aeneas said, and view'd, with lifted eyes,
Their lofty tow'rs; then, entiring at the gate,
Conceal'd in clouds (prodigious to relate)
He mix'd, unmark'd, among the busy throng,
Borne by the tide, and pass'd unseen along.
Full in the center of the town there stood,
Thick set with trees, a venerable wood.
The Tyrians, landing near this holy ground,
And digging here, a prosp'rous omen found:
From under earth a courser's head they drew,
Their growth and future fortune to foreshew.
This fated sign their foundress Juno gave,
Of a soil fruitful, and a people brave.
Sidonian Dido here with solemn state
Did Juno's temple build, and consecrate,
Enrich'd with gifts, and with a golden shrine;
But more the goddess made the place divine.
On brazen steps the marble threshold rose,
And brazen plates the cedar beams inclose:
The rafters are with brazen cov'rings crown'd;
The lofty doors on brazen hinges sound.
What first Aeneas this place beheld,
Reviv'd his courage, and his fear expell'd.
For while, expecting there the queen, he rais'd
His wond'ring eyes, and round the temple gaz'd,

Admir'd the fortune of the rising town,
The striving artists, and their arts' renown;
He saw, in order painted on the wall,
Whatever did unhappy Troy befall:
The wars that fame around the world had blown,
All to the life, and ev'ry leader known.
There Agamemnon, Priam here, he spies,
And fierce Achilles, who both kings defies.
He stopp'd, and weeping said: "O friend! ev'n here
The monuments of Trojan woes appear!
Our known disasters fill ev'n foreign lands:
See there, where old unhappy Priam stands!
Ev'n the mute walls relate the warrior's fame,
And Trojan griefs the Tyrians' pity claim."
He said (his tears a ready passage find),
Devouring what he saw so well design'd,
And with an empty picture fed his mind:
For there he saw the fainting Grecians yield,
And here the trembling Trojans quit the field,
Pursued by fierce Achilles thro' the plain,
On his high chariot driving o'er the slain.
The tents of Rhesus next his grief renew,
By their white sails betray'd to nightly view;
And wakeful Diomede, whose cruel sword
The sentries slew, nor spar'd their slumb'ring lord,
Then took the fiery steeds, ere yet the food
Of Troy they taste, or drink the Xanthian flood.
Elsewhere he saw where Troilus defied
Achilles, and unequal combat tried;
Then, where the boy disarm'd, with loosen'd reins,
Was by his horses hurried o'er the plains,
Hung by the neck and hair, and dragg'd around:
The hostile spear, yet sticking in his wound,
With tracks of blood inscrib'd the dusty ground.
Meantime the Trojan dames, oppress'd with woe,
To Pallas' fane in long procession go,
In hopes to reconcile their heav'nly foe.
They weep, they beat their breasts, they rend their hair,
And rich embroider'd vests for presents bear;
But the stern goddess stands unmov'd with pray'r.
Thrice round the Trojan walls Achilles drew
The corpse of Hector, whom in fight he slew.

Here Priam sues; and there, for sums of gold,
The lifeless body of his son is sold.
So sad an object, and so well express'd,
Drew sighs and groans from the griev'd hero's breast,
To see the figure of his lifeless friend,
And his old sire his helpless hand extend.
Himself he saw amidst the Grecian train,
Mix'd in the bloody battle on the plain;
And swarthy Memnon in his arms he knew,
His pompous ensigns, and his Indian crew.
Penthisilea there, with haughty grace,
Leads to the wars an Amazonian race:
In their right hands a pointed dart they wield;
The left, for ward, sustains the lunar shield.
Athwart her breast a golden belt she throws,
Amidst the press alone provokes a thousand foes,
And dares her maiden arms to manly force oppose.

Thus while the Trojan prince employs his eyes,
Fix'd on the walls with wonder and surprise,
The beauteous Dido, with a num'rous train
And pomp of guards, ascends the sacred fane.
Such on Eurotas' banks, or Cynthus' height,
Diana seems; and so she charms the sight,
When in the dance the graceful goddess leads
The choir of nymphs, and overtops their heads:
Known by her quiver, and her lofty mien,
She walks majestic, and she looks their queen;
Latona sees her shine above the rest,
And feeds with secret joy her silent breast.
Such Dido was; with such becoming state,
Amidst the crowd, she walks serenely great.
Their labor to her future sway she speeds,
And passing with a gracious glance proceeds;
Then mounts the throne, high plac'd before the shrine:
In crowds around, the swarming people join.
She takes petitions, and dispenses laws,
Hears and determines ev'ry private cause;
Their tasks in equal portions she divides,
And, where unequal, there by lots decides.
Another way by chance Aeneas bends
His eyes, and unexpected sees his friends,

Antheus, Sergestus grave, Cloanthus strong,
And at their backs a mighty Trojan throng,
Whom late the tempest on the billows toss'd,
And widely scatter'd on another coast.
The prince, unseen, surpris'd with wonder stands,
And longs, with joyful haste, to join their hands;
But, doubtful of the wish'd event, he stays,
And from the hollow cloud his friends surveys,
Impatient till they told their present state,
And where they left their ships, and what their fate,
And why they came, and what was their request;
For these were sent, commission'd by the rest,
To sue for leave to land their sickly men,
And gain admission to the gracious queen.
Ent'ring, with cries they fill'd the holy fane;
Then thus, with lowly voice, Ilioneus began:

"O queen! indulg'd by favor of the gods
To found an empire in these new abodes,
To build a town, with statutes to restrain
The wild inhabitants beneath thy reign,
We wretched Trojans, toss'd on ev'ry shore,
From sea to sea, thy clemency implore.
Forbid the fires our shipping to deface!
Receive th' unhappy fugitives to grace,
And spare the remnant of a pious race!
We come not with design of wasteful prey,
To drive the country, force the swains away:
Nor such our strength, nor such is our desire;
The vanquish'd dare not to such thoughts aspire.
A land there is, Hesperia nam'd of old;
The soil is fruitful, and the men are bold-
Th' Oenotrians held it once- by common fame
Now call'd Italia, from the leader's name.
To that sweet region was our voyage bent,
When winds and ev'ry warring element
Disturb'd our course, and, far from sight of land,
Cast our torn vessels on the moving sand:
The sea came on; the South, with mighty roar,
Dispers'd and dash'd the rest upon the rocky shore.
Those few you see escap'd the Storm, and fear,
Unless you interpose, a shipwreck here.

What men, what monsters, what inhuman race,
What laws, what barb'rous customs of the place,
Shut up a desart shore to drowning men,
And drive us to the cruel seas again?
If our hard fortune no compassion draws,
Nor hospitable rights, nor human laws,
The gods are just, and will revenge our cause.
Aeneas was our prince: a juster lord,
Or nobler warrior, never drew a sword;
Observant of the right, religious of his word.
If yet he lives, and draws this vital air,
Nor we, his friends, of safety shall despair;
Nor you, great queen, these offices repent,
Which he will equal, and perhaps augment.
We want not cities, nor Sicilian coasts,
Where King Acestes Trojan lineage boasts.
Permit our ships a shelter on your shores,
Refitted from your woods with planks and oars,
That, if our prince be safe, we may renew
Our destin'd course, and Italy pursue.
But if, O best of men, the Fates ordain
That thou art swallow'd in the Libyan main,
And if our young Iulus be no more,
Dismiss our navy from your friendly shore,
That we to good Acestes may return,
And with our friends our common losses mourn."
Thus spoke Ilioneus: the Trojan crew
With cries and clamors his request renew.

The modest queen a while, with downcast eyes,
Ponder'd the speech; then briefly thus replies:
"Trojans, dismiss your fears; my cruel fate,
And doubts attending an unsettled state,
Force me to guard my coast from foreign foes.
Who has not heard the story of your woes,
The name and fortune of your native place,
The fame and valor of the Phrygian race?
We Tyrians are not so devoid of sense,
Nor so remote from Phoebus' influence.
Whether to Latian shores your course is bent,
Or, driv'n by tempests from your first intent,
You seek the good Acestes' government,

Your men shall be receiv'd, your fleet repair'd,
And sail, with ships of convoy for your guard:
Or, would you stay, and join your friendly pow'rs
To raise and to defend the Tyrian tow'rs,
My wealth, my city, and myself are yours.
And would to Heav'n, the Storm, you felt, would bring
On Carthaginian coasts your wand'ring king.
My people shall, by my command, explore
The ports and creeks of ev'ry winding shore,
And towns, and wilds, and shady woods, in quest
Of so renown'd and so desir'd a guest."

Rais'd in his mind the Trojan hero stood,
And long'd to break from out his ambient cloud:
Achates found it, and thus urg'd his way:
"From whence, O goddess-born, this long delay?
What more can you desire, your welcome sure,
Your fleet in safety, and your friends secure?
One only wants; and him we saw in vain
Oppose the Storm, and swallow'd in the main.
Orontes in his fate our forfeit paid;
The rest agrees with what your mother said."
Scarce had he spoken, when the cloud gave way,
The mists flew upward and dissolv'd in day.

The Trojan chief appear'd in open sight,
August in visage, and serenely bright.
His mother goddess, with her hands divine,
Had form'd his curling locks, and made his temples shine,
And giv'n his rolling eyes a sparkling grace,
And breath'd a youthful vigor on his face;
Like polish'd ivory, beauteous to behold,
Or Parian marble, when enchas'd in gold:
Thus radiant from the circling cloud he broke,
And thus with manly modesty he spoke:

"He whom you seek am I; by tempests toss'd,
And sav'd from shipwreck on your Libyan coast;
Presenting, gracious queen, before your throne,
A prince that owes his life to you alone.
Fair majesty, the refuge and redress

Of those whom fate pursues, and wants oppress,
You, who your pious offices employ
To save the relics of abandon'd Troy;
Receive the shipwreck'd on your friendly shore,
With hospitable rites relieve the poor;
Associate in your town a wand'ring train,
And strangers in your palace entertain:
What thanks can wretched fugitives return,
Who, scatter'd thro' the world, in exile mourn?
The gods, if gods to goodness are inclin'd;
If acts of mercy touch their heav'nly mind,
And, more than all the gods, your gen'rous heart.
Conscious of worth, requite its own desert!
In you this age is happy, and this earth,
And parents more than mortal gave you birth.
While rolling rivers into seas shall run,
And round the space of heav'n the radiant sun;
While trees the mountain tops with shades supply,
Your honor, name, and praise shall never die.
Whate'er abode my fortune has assign'd,
Your image shall be present in my mind."

Thus having said, he turn'd with pious haste,
And joyful his expecting friends embrac'd:
With his right hand Ilioneus was grac'd,
Serestus with his left; then to his breast
Cloanthus and the noble Gyas press'd;
And so by turns descended to the rest.

The Tyrian queen stood fix'd upon his face,
Pleas'd with his motions, ravish'd with his grace;
Admir'd his fortunes, more admir'd the man;
Then recollected stood, and thus began:
"What fate, O goddess-born; what angry pow'rs
Have cast you shipwrack'd on our barren shores?
Are you the great Aeneas, known to fame,
Who from celestial seed your lineage claim?

The same Aeneas whom fair Venus bore
To fam'd Anchises on th' Idaean shore?
It calls into my mind, tho' then a child,
When Teucer came, from Salamis exil'd,
And sought my father's aid, to be restor'd:

My father Belus then with fire and sword
Invaded Cyprus, made the region bare,
And, conqu'ring, finish'd the successful war.
From him the Trojan siege I understood,
The Grecian chiefs, and your illustrious blood.
Your foe himself the Dardan valor prais'd,
And his own ancestry from Trojans rais'd.
Enter, my noble guest, and you shall find,
If not a costly welcome, yet a kind:
For I myself, like you, have been distress'd,
Till Heav'n afforded me this place of rest;
Like you, an alien in a land unknown,
I learn to pity woes so like my own."
She said, and to the palace led her guest;
Then offer'd incense, and proclaim'd a feast.
Nor yet less careful for her absent friends,
Twice ten fat oxen to the ships she sends;
Besides a hundred boars, a hundred lambs,
With bleating cries, attend their milky dams;
And jars of gen'rous wine and spacious bowls
She gives, to cheer the sailors' drooping souls.

Now purple hangings clothe the palace walls,
And sumptuous feasts are made in splendid halls:
On Tyrian carpets, richly wrought, they dine;
With loads of massy plate the sideboards shine,
And antique vases, all of gold emboss'd
(The gold itself inferior to the cost),
Of curious work, where on the sides were seen
The fights and figures of illustrious men,
From their first founder to the present queen.

The good Aeneas, paternal care
Iulus' absence could no longer bear,
Dispatch'd Achates to the ships in haste,
To give a glad relation of the past,
And, fraught with precious gifts, to bring the boy,
Snatch'd from the ruins of unhappy Troy:
A robe of tissue, stiff with golden wire;
An upper vest, once Helen's rich attire,
From Argos by the fam'd adultress brought,
With golden flow'rs and winding foliage wrought,
Her mother Leda's present, when she came

To ruin Troy and set the world on flame;
The scepter Priam's eldest daughter bore,
Her orient necklace, and the crown she wore
Of double texture, glorious to behold,
One order set with gems, and one with gold.
Instructed thus, the wise Achates goes,
And in his diligence his duty shows.

But Venus, anxious for her son's affairs,
New counsels tries, and new designs prepares:
That Cupid should assume the shape and face
Of sweet Ascanius, and the sprightly grace;
Should bring the presents, in her nephew's stead,
And in Eliza's veins the gentle poison shed:
For much she fear'd the Tyrians, double-tongued,
And knew the town to Juno's care belong'd.
These thoughts by night her golden slumbers broke,
And thus alarm'd, to winged Love she spoke:
"My son, my strength, whose mighty pow'r alone
Controls the Thund'rer on his awful throne,
To thee thy much-afflicted mother flies,
And on thy succor and thy faith relies.
Thou know'st, my son, how Jove's revengeful wife,
By force and fraud, attempts thy brother's life;
And often hast thou mourn'd with me his pains.
Him Dido now with blandishment detains;
But I suspect the town where Juno reigns.
For this 't is needful to prevent her art,
And fire with love the proud Phoenician's heart:
A love so violent, so strong, so sure,
As neither age can change, nor art can cure.
How this may be perform'd, now take my mind:
Ascanius by his father is design'd
To come, with presents laden, from the port,
To gratify the queen, and gain the court.
I mean to plunge the boy in pleasing sleep,
And, ravish'd, in Idalian bow'rs to keep,
Or high Cythera, that the sweet deceit
May pass unseen, and none prevent the cheat.
Take thou his form and shape. I beg the grace
But only for a night's revolving space:
Thyself a boy, assume a boy's dissembled face;

That when, amidst the fervor of the feast,
The Tyrian hugs and fonds thee on her breast,
And with sweet kisses in her arms constrains,
Thou may'st infuse thy venom in her veins."
The God of Love obeys, and sets aside
His bow and quiver, and his plumy pride;
He walks Iulus in his mother's sight,
And in the sweet resemblance takes delight.

The goddess then to young Ascanius flies,
And in a pleasing slumber seals his eyes:
Lull'd in her lap, amidst a train of Loves,
She gently bears him to her blissful groves,
Then with a wreath of myrtle crowns his head,
And softly lays him on a flow'ry bed.
Cupid meantime assum'd his form and face,
Foll'wing Achates with a shorter pace,
And brought the gifts. The queen already sate
Amidst the Trojan lords, in shining state,
High on a golden bed: her princely guest
Was next her side; in order sate the rest.

Then canisters with bread are heap'd on high;
Th' attendants water for their hands supply,
And, having wash'd, with silken towels dry.
Next fifty handmaids in long order bore
The censers, and with fumes the gods adore:
Then youths, and virgins twice as many, join
To place the dishes, and to serve the wine.
The Tyrian train, admitted to the feast,
Approach, and on the painted couches rest.
All on the Trojan gifts with wonder gaze,
But view the beauteous boy with more amaze,
His rosy-color'd cheeks, his radiant eyes,
His motions, voice, and shape, and all the god's disguise;
Nor pass unprais'd the vest and veil divine,
Which wand'ring foliage and rich flow'rs entwine.
But, far above the rest, the royal dame,
(Already doom'd to love's disastrous flame,)
With eyes insatiate, and tumultuous joy,
Beholds the presents, and admires the boy.
The guileful god about the hero long,
With children's play, and false embraces, hung;

Then sought the queen: she took him to her arms
With greedy pleasure, and devour'd his charms.
Unhappy Dido little thought what guest,
How dire a god, she drew so near her breast;
But he, not mindless of his mother's pray'r,
Works in the pliant bosom of the fair,
And molds her heart anew, and blots her former care.
The dead is to the living love resign'd;
And all Aeneas enters in her mind.

Now, when the rage of hunger was appeas'd,
The meat remov'd, and ev'ry guest was pleas'd,
The golden bowls with sparkling wine are crown'd,
And thro' the palace cheerful cries resound.
From gilded roofs depending lamps display
Nocturnal beams, that emulate the day.
A golden bowl, that shone with gems divine,
The queen commanded to be crown'd with wine:
The bowl that Belus us'd, and all the Tyrian line.
Then, silence thro' the hall proclaim'd, she spoke:
"O hospitable Jove! we thus invoke,
With solemn rites, thy sacred name and pow'r;
Bless to both nations this auspicious hour!
So may the Trojan and the Tyrian line
In lasting concord from this day combine.
Thou, Bacchus, god of joys and friendly cheer,
And gracious Juno, both be present here!
And you, my lords of Tyre, your vows address
To Heav'n with mine, to ratify the peace."
The goblet then she took, with nectar crown'd
(Sprinkling the first libations on the ground,)
And rais'd it to her mouth with sober grace;
Then, sipping, offer'd to the next in place.
'T was Bitias whom she call'd, a thirsty soul;
He took challenge, and embrac'd the bowl,
With pleasure swill'd the gold, nor ceas'd to draw,
Till he the bottom of the brimmer saw.
The goblet goes around: Iopas brought
His golden lyre, and sung what ancient Atlas taught:
The various labors of the wand'ring moon,
And whence proceed th' eclipses of the sun;
Th' original of men and beasts; and whence

The rains arise, and fires their warmth dispense,
And fix'd and erring stars dispose their influence;
What shakes the solid earth; what cause delays
The summer nights and shortens winter days.
With peals of shouts the Tyrians praise the song:
Those peals are echo'd by the Trojan throng.
Th' unhappy queen with talk prolong'd the night,
And drank large draughts of love with vast delight;
Of Priam much enquir'd, of Hector more;
Then ask'd what arms the swarthy Memnon wore,
What troops he landed on the Trojan shore;
The steeds of Diomede varied the discourse,
And fierce Achilles, with his matchless force;
At length, as fate and her ill stars requir'd,
To hear the series of the war desir'd.
"Relate at large, my godlike guest," she said,
"The Grecian stratagems, the town betray'd:
The fatal issue of so long a war,
Your flight, your wand'rings, and your woes, declare;
For, since on ev'ry sea, on ev'ry coast,
Your men have been distress'd, your navy toss'd,
Sev'n times the sun has either tropic view'd,
The winter banish'd, and the spring renew'd."

BOOK II

All were attentive to the godlike man,
When from his lofty couch he thus began:
"Great queen, what you command me to relate
Renews the sad remembrance of our fate:
An empire from its old foundations rent,
And ev'ry woe the Trojans underwent;
A peopled city made a desart place;
All that I saw, and part of which I was:
Not ev'n the hardest of our foes could hear,
Nor stern Ulysses tell without a tear.
And now the latter watch of wasting night,
And setting stars, to kindly rest invite;
But, since you take such int'rest in our woe,
And Troy's disastrous end desire to know,
I will restrain my tears, and briefly tell
What in our last and fatal night befell.

VII
THE SUPPLIANTS

Characters in the Play

Aethra, *mother of* Theseus
Chorus of Argive Mothers
Theseus, *King of Athens*
Adrastus, *King of Argos*
Herald, *of Creon, King of Thebes*
Messenger
Evadne, *wife of Capaneus*
Iphis, *father of* Evadne
Children *of the slain chieftains*
Athena
Guards, attendants, soldiers

INTRODUCTION

ARGUING from certain fairly apparent allusions in the play to contemporary events of the Peloponnesian War, scholars have generally concluded that *The Suppliants* was first acted about 420 B.C. Like *The Heracleidae,* the central purpose of the piece seems to be a eulogy of Athens. Euripides here again stresses the glory of the Athenian democratic institutions, her religious piety, and her traditional rôle as a defender of the down-trodden and oppressed. The subject-matter of the play derives from the Theban saga, but presents an aspect of it which is not met elsewhere in the extant Greek tragedy. The dramatic action occurs after the Thebans under Eteocles have successfully repulsed the attack upon their city by the Argives under the leadership of Polyneices and Adrastus. The play assumes a knowledge of the unhappy story of Oedipus and his sons, but it centres primarily upon the defeated Argives and their sorrow for their fallen champions. The suppliants, from whom the play takes its name, are the mothers of these slain champions. The victorious Thebans have refused to allow them to bury their dead, and they have come to Athens in order to enlist the support of King Theseus. The play records how Theseus gave his support, recovered the bodies by defeating the Theban army, and finally made it possible for the due rites of burial to be performed.

As in *The Heracleidae,* the emphasis upon the praise of Athens has caused the play to suffer in respect to its dramatic structure and portrayal of character. No one of the characters seems to be adequately drawn, while the lack of integration between the several scenes gives an "episodic" impression which detracts materially from the effect of the whole. Some of the individual scenes in themselves are not without merit. For example, in the argument between Theseus and the Herald of Creon, there is a most able defence of the political structure of democracy, yet from the point of view of the whole play, one cannot but feel that here is the gratuitous introduction of an essentially extraneous element. Similarly, the scene wherein Evadne leaps upon the pyre of her husband, though somewhat melodramatic, carries with it no inconsiderable emotional power, yet one can scarcely discover an adequate reason for its

presence in the play. Even the final appearance of Athena as a *deus ex machina* does not seem to be demanded by the situation. These unfavorable criticisms are partially offset by the fact that there are certain scenes, such as the spectacular funeral procession of the dead heroes, which do tend to focus the play around the glory of Athens and her devotion to the gods. Such force as the play possesses seems to spring from Euripides' insistence throughout that the will of Heaven is of first importance for the life of man.

THE SUPPLIANTS

(SCENE:—*Before the temple of Demeter at Eleusis. On the steps of the great altar is seated* AETHRA. *Around her, in the garb of suppliants, is the* CHORUS OF ARGIVE MOTHERS. ADRASTUS *lies on the ground before the altar, crushed in abject grief. The* CHILDREN *of the slain chieftains stand nearby. Around the altar are the attendants of the goddess.*)

AETHRA

O DEMETER, guardian of this Eleusinian land, and ye servants of the goddess who attend her fane, grant happiness to me and my son Theseus, to the city of Athens and the country of Pittheus, wherein my father reared me, Aethra, in a happy home, and gave me in marriage to Aegeus, Pandion's son, according to the oracle of Loxias. This prayer I make, when I behold these aged dames, who, leaving their homes in Argos, now throw themselves with suppliant branches at my knees in their awful trouble; for around the gates of Cadmus have they lost their seven noble sons, whom on a day Adrastus, king of Argos, led thither, eager to secure for exiled Polyneices, his son-in-law, a share in the heritage of Oedipus; so now their mothers would bury in the grave the dead, whom the spear hath slain, but the victors prevent them and will not allow them to take up the corpses, spurning Heaven's laws. Here lies Adrastus on the ground with streaming eye, sharing with them the burden of their prayer to me, and bemoaning the havoc of the sword and the sorry fate of the warriors whom he led from their homes. And he doth urge me use entreaty, to persuade my son to take up the dead and help to bury them, either by winning words or force of arms, laying on my son and on Athens this task alone. Now it chanced, that I had left my house and come to offer sacrifice on behalf of the earth's crop at this shrine, where first the fruitful corn showed its bristling shocks above the soil. And here at the holy altars of the twain goddesses, Demeter and her daughter, I wait, holding these sprays of foliage, a bond that bindeth not, in compassion for these childless mothers, hoary with age, and from reverence for the sacred fillets. To call Theseus hither is my herald to the city gone, that he may rid the land of that which grieveth them, or loose these my suppliant bonds, with

pious observance of the gods' will; for such as are discreet amongst women should in all cases invoke the aid of men.

CHORUS (*chanting*)

strophe 1

At thy knees I fall, aged dame, and my old lips beseech thee; arise, rescue from the slain my children's bodies, whose limbs, by death relaxed, are left a prey to savage mountain beasts,

antistrophe 1

Beholding the bitter tears which spring to my eyes and my old wrinkled skin torn by my hands; for what can I do else? who never laid out my children dead within my halls, nor now behold their tombs heaped up with earth.

strophe 2

Thou too, honoured lady, once a son didst bear, crowning thy lord's marriage with fond joy; then share, O share with me thy mother's feelings, in such measure as my sad heart grieves for my own dead sons; and persuade thy son, whose aid we implore, to go unto the river Ismenus, there to place within my hapless arms the bodies of my children, slain in their prime and left without a tomb.

antistrophe 2

Though not as piety enjoins, yet from sheer necessity I have come to the fire-crowned altars of the gods, falling on my knees with instant supplication, for my cause is just, and 'tis in thy power, blest as thou art in thy children, to remove from me my woe; so in my sore distress I do beseech thee of my misery place in my hands my son's dead body, that I may throw my arms about his hapless limbs.

(*The attendants of the goddess take up the lament.*)

strophe 3

Behold a rivalry in sorrow! woe takes up the tale of woe; hark! thy servants beat their breasts. Come ye who join the mourners' wail, come, O sympathetic band, to join the dance, which Hades honours; let the pearly nail be stained red, as it rends your cheeks, let your skin be streaked with gore; for honours rendered to the dead are a credit to the living.

antistrophe 3

Sorrow's charm doth drive me wild, insatiate, painful, endless, even as the trickling stream that gushes from some steep rock's face;

for 'tis woman's way to fall a-weeping o'er the cruel calamity of children dead. Ah me! would I could die and forget my anguish!

(THESEUS *and his retinue enter.*)

THESEUS

What is this lamentation that I hear, this beating of the breast, these dirges for the dead, with cries that echo from this shrine? How fluttering fear disquiets me, lest haply my mother have gotten some mischance, in quest of whom I come, for she hath been long absent from home. Ha! what now? A strange sight challenges my speech; I see my aged mother sitting at the altar and stranger dames are with her, who in various note proclaim their woe; from aged eyes the piteous tear is starting to the ground, their hair is shorn, their robes are not the robes of joy. What means it, mother? 'Tis thine to make it plain to me, mine to listen; yea, for I expect some tidings strange.

AETHRA

My son, these are the mothers of those chieftains seven, who fell around the gates of Cadmus' town. With suppliant boughs they keep me prisoner, as thou seest, in their midst.

THESEUS

And who is yonder man, that moaneth piteously in the gateway?

AETHRA

Adrastus, they inform me, king of Argos.

THESEUS

Are those his children, those boys who stand round him?

AETHRA

Not his, but the sons of the fallen slain.

THESEUS

Why are they come to us, with suppliant hand outstretched?

AETHRA

I know; but 'tis for them to tell their story, my son.

THESEUS

To thee, in thy mantle muffled, I address my inquiries; unveil thy head, let lamentation be, and speak; for naught can be achieved save through the utterance of thy tongue.

ADRASTUS (*rising*)

Victorious prince of the Athenian realm, Theseus, to thee and to thy city I, a suppliant, come.

THESEUS

What seekest thou? What need is thine?

ADRASTUS

Dost know how I did lead an expedition to its ruin?

THESEUS

Assuredly; thou didst not pass through Hellas, all in silence.

ADRASTUS

There I lost the pick of Argos' sons.

THESEUS

These are the results of that unhappy war.

ADRASTUS

I went and craved their bodies from Thebes.

THESEUS

Didst thou rely on heralds, Hermes' servants, in order to bury them?

ADRASTUS

I did; and even then their slayers said me nay.

THESEUS

Why, what say they to thy just request?

ADRASTUS

Say! Success makes them forget how to bear their fortune.

THESEUS

Art come to me then for counsel? or wherefore?

ADRASTUS

With the wish that thou, O Theseus, shouldst recover the sons of the Argives.

THESEUS

Where is your Argos now? were its vauntings all in vain?

ADRASTUS

Defeat and ruin are our lot. To thee for aid we come.

THESEUS
Is this thy own private resolve, or the wish of all the city?

ADRASTUS
The sons of Danaus, one and all, implore thee to bury the dead.

THESEUS
Why didst lead thy seven armies against Thebes?

ADRASTUS
To confer that favour on the husbands of my daughters twain.

THESEUS
To which of the Argives didst thou give thy daughters in marriage?

ADRASTUS
I made no match for them with kinsmen of my family.

THESEUS
What! didst give Argive maids to foreign lords?

ADRASTUS
Yea, to Tydeus, and to Polyneices, who was Theban-born.

THESEUS
What induced thee to select this alliance?

ADRASTUS
Dark riddles of Phoebus stole away my judgment.

THESEUS
What said Apollo to determine the maidens' marriage?

ADRASTUS
That I should give my daughters twain to a wild boar and a lion.

THESEUS
How dost thou explain the message of the god?

ADRASTUS
One night came to my door two exiles.

THESEUS
The name of each declare; thou art speaking of both together.

ADRASTUS
They fought together, Tydeus with Polyneices.

THESEUS

Didst thou give thy daughters to them as to wild beasts?

ADRASTUS

Yea, for, as they fought, I likened them to those monsters twain.

THESEUS

Why had they left the borders of their native land and come to thee?

ADRASTUS

Tydeus was exiled for the murder of a kinsman.

THESEUS

Wherefore had the son of Oedipus left Thebes?

ADRASTUS

By reason of his father's curse, not to spill his brother's blood.

THESEUS

Wise no doubt that voluntary exile.

ADRASTUS

But those who stayed at home were for injuring the absent.

THESEUS

What! did brother rob brother of his inheritance?

ADRASTUS

To avenge this I set out; hence my ruin.

THESEUS

Didst consult seers, and gaze into the flame of burnt-offerings?

ADRASTUS

Ah me! thou pressest on the very point wherein I most did fail.

THESEUS

It seems thy going was not favoured by heaven.

ADRASTUS

Worse; I went in spite even of Amphiaraus.

THESEUS

And so heaven lightly turned its face from thee.

ADRASTUS

I was carried away by the clamour of younger men.

THESEUS

Thou didst favour courage instead of discretion.

ADRASTUS

True; and many a general owes defeat to that. O king of Athens, bravest of the sons of Hellas, I blush to throw myself upon the ground and clasp thy knees, I a grey-haired king, blest in days gone by; yet needs must I yield to my misfortunes. I pray thee save the dead; have pity on my sorrows and on these, the mothers of the slain, whom hoary eld finds reft of their sons; yet they endured to journey hither and tread a foreign soil with aged tottering steps, bearing no embassy to Demeter's mysteries; only seeking burial for their dead, which lot should have been theirs, e'en burial by the hands of sons still in their prime. And 'tis wise in the rich to see the poor man's poverty, and in the poor man to turn ambitious eyes toward the rich, that so he may himself indulge a longing for possessions; and they, whom fortune frowns not on, should gaze on misery's presentment; likewise, who maketh songs should take a pleasure in their making; for if it be not so with him, he will in no wise avail to gladden others, if himself have sorrow in his home; nay, 'tis not even right to expect it. Mayhap thou'lt say, "Why pass the land of Pelops o'er, and lay this toil on Athens?" This am I bound to declare. Sparta is cruel, her customs variable; the other states are small and weak. Thy city alone would be able to undertake this labour; for it turns an eye on suffering, and hath in thee a young and gallant king, for want whereof to lead their hosts states ere now have often perished.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

I too, Theseus, urge the same plea to thee; have pity on my hard fate.

THESEUS [1]

Full oft have I argued out this subject with others. For there are who say, there is more bad than good in human nature, to the which I hold a contrary view, that good o'er bad predominates in man, for if it were not so, we should not exist. He hath my praise, whoe'er of gods brought us to live by rule from chaos and from brutishness, first by implanting reason, and next by giving us a tongue to declare our thoughts, so as to know the meaning of what is said, bestowing fruitful crops, and drops of rain from heaven to make them grow, wherewith to nourish earth's fruits and to water her lap; and more than this, protection from the wintry storm, and means to ward from us the sun-god's scorching heat; the art of sailing o'er the sea, so that we might exchange with one another whatso our countries lack. And where sight fails us and our knowledge is not sure, the seer foretells by gazing on the flame, by reading signs in folds of entrails, or by divination from the flight of birds. Are we not then too

proud, when heaven hath made such preparation for our life, not to be content therewith? But our presumption seeks to lord it over heaven, and in the pride of our hearts we think we are wiser than the gods. Methinks thou art even of this number, a son of folly, seeing that thou, though obedient to Apollo's oracle in giving thy daughters to strangers, as if gods really existed, yet hast hurt thy house by mingling the stream of its pure line with muddy waters; no! never should the wise man have joined the stock of just and unjust in one, but should have gotten prosperous friends for his family. For the deity, confusing their destinies, doth oft destroy by the sinner's fate him who never sinned nor committed injustice. Thou didst lead all Argos forth to battle, though seers proclaimed the will of heaven, and then in scorn of them and in violent disregard of the gods hast ruined thy city, led away by younger men, such as court distinction, and add war to war unrighteously, destroying their fellow-citizens; one aspires to lead an army; another fain would seize the reins of power and work his wanton will; a third is bent on gain, careless of any ill the people thereby suffer. For there are three ranks of citizens; the rich, a useless set, that ever crave for more; the poor and destitute, fearful folk, that cherish envy more than is right, and shoot out grievous stings against the men who have aught, beguiled as they are by the eloquence of vicious leaders; while the class that is midmost of the three preserveth cities, observing such order as the state ordains. Shall I then become thy ally? What fair pretext should I urge before my countrymen? Depart in peace! For why shouldst thou, having been ill-advised thyself, seek to drag our fortune down?

LEADER

He erred; but with the young men rests this error, while he may well be pardoned.

ADRASTUS

I did not choose thee, king, to judge my affliction, but came to thee to cure it; no! nor if in aught my fortunes prove me wrong, came I to thee to punish or correct them, but to seek thy help. But if thou wilt not, I must be content with thy decision; for how can I help it? Come, aged dames, away! Yet leave behind you here the woven leaves of pale green foliage, calling to witness heaven and earth, Demeter, that fire-bearing goddess, and the sun-god's light, that our prayers to heaven availed us naught.

CHORUS (*singing*) [2]

. . . who was Pelops' son, and we are of the land of Pelops and share with thee the blood of ancestors. What art thou doing? wilt thou betray these suppliant symbols, and banish from thy land these

aged women without the boon they should obtain? Do not so; e'en the wild beast finds a refuge in the rock, the slave in the altars of the gods, and a state when tempest-tossed cowers to its neighbour's shelter; for naught in this life of man is blest unto its end.

Rise, hapless one, from the sacred floor of Persephone; rise, clasp him by the knees and implore him, "O recover the bodies of our dead sons, the children that I lost—ah, woe is me!—beneath the walls of Cadmus' town." Ah me! ah me! Take me by the hand, poor aged sufferer that I am, support and guide and raise me up. By thy beard, kind friend, glory of Hellas, I do beseech thee, as I clasp thy knees and hands in my misery; O pity me as I entreat for my sons with my tale of wretched woe, like some beggar; nor let my sons lie there unburied in the land of Cadmus, glad prey for beasts, whilst thou art in thy prime, I implore thee. See the teardrop tremble in my eye, as thus I throw me at thy knees to win my children burial.

THESEUS

Mother mine, why weepest thou, drawing o'er thine eyes thy veil? Is it because thou didst hear their piteous lamentations? To my own heart it goes. Raise thy silvered head, weep not where thou sittest at the holy altar of Demeter.

AETHRA

Ah woe!

THESEUS

'Tis not for thee their sorrows to lament.

AETHRA

Ye hapless dames!

THESEUS

Thou art not of their company.

AETHRA

May I a scheme declare, my son, that shall add to thy glory and the state's?

THESEUS

Yea, for oft even from women's lips issue wise counsels.

AETHRA

Yet the word, that lurks within my heart, makes me hesitate.

THESEUS

Shame! to hide from friends good counsel.

AETHRA

Nay then, I will not hold my peace to blame myself hereafter for having now kept silence to my shame, nor will I forego my honourable proposal, from the common fear that it is useless for women to give good advice. First, my son, I exhort thee give good heed to heaven's will, lest from slighting it thou suffer shipwreck; for in this one single point thou failest, though well-advised in all else. Further, I would have patiently endured, had it not been my duty to venture somewhat for injured folk; and this, my son, it is that brings thee now thy honour, and causes me no fear to urge that thou shouldst use thy power to make men of violence, who prevent the dead from receiving their meed of burial and funeral rites, perform this bounden duty, and check those who would confound the customs of all Hellas; for this it is that holds men's states together,—strict observance of the laws. And some, no doubt, will say, 'twas cowardice made thee stand aloof in terror, when thou mightest have won for thy city a crown of glory, and, though thou didst encounter a savage swine,[3] labouring for a sorry task, yet when the time came for thee to face the helmet and pointed spear, and do thy best, thou wert found to be a coward. Nay! do not so if thou be son of mine. Dost see how fiercely thy country looks on its revilers when they mock her for want of counsel? Yea, for in her toils she groweth greater. But states, whose policy is dark and cautious, have their sight darkened by their carefulness. My son, wilt thou not go succour the dead and these poor women in their need? I have no fears for thee, starting as thou dost with right upon thy side; and although I see the prosperity of Cadmus' folk, still am I confident they will throw a different die; for the deity reverses all things again.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Ah! best of friends, right well hast thou pleaded for me and for Adrastus, and hence my joy is doubled.

THESEUS

Mother, the words that I have spoken are his fair deserts, and I have declared my opinion of the counsels that ruined him; yet do I perceive the truth of thy warning to me, that it ill suits my character to shun dangers. For by a long and glorious career have I displayed this my habit among Hellenes, of ever punishing the wicked. Wherefore I cannot refuse toil. For what will spiteful tongues say of me, when thou, my mother, who more than all others fearest for my safety, bidst me undertake this enterprise? Yea, I will go about this business and rescue the dead by words persuasive; or, failing that, the spear forthwith shall decide this issue, nor will heaven grudge me this. But I require the whole city's sanction also, which my mere wish will ensure; still by communicating the proposal to them I shall find the people better disposed. For them I made supreme,

when I set this city free, by giving all an equal vote. So I will take Adrastus as a text for what I have to say and go to their assembly, and when I have won them to these views, I will return hither, after collecting a picked band of young Athenians; and then remaining under arms I will send a message to Creon, begging the bodies of the dead. But do ye, aged ladies, remove from my mother your holy wreaths, that I may take her by the hand and conduct her to the house of Aegeus; for a wretched son is he who rewards not his parents by service; for, when he hath conferred on them the best he hath, he in his turn from his own sons receives all such service as he gave to them.

(AETHRA *leaves the altar and departs.*)

CHORUS (*singing*)

strophe 1

O Argos, home of steeds, my native land! ye have heard with your ears these words, the king's pious will toward the gods in the sight of great Pelasgia and throughout Argos.

antistrophe 1

May he reach the goal! yea, and triumph o'er my sorrows, rescuing the gory corpse, the mother's idol and making the land of Inachus his friend by helping her.

strophe 2

For pious toil is a fair ornament to cities, and carries with it a grace that never wastes away. What will the city decide, I wonder? Will it conclude a friendly truce with me, and shall we obtain burial for our sons?

antistrophe 2

Help, O help, city of Pallas, the mother's cause, that so they may not pollute the laws of all mankind. Thou, I know, dost reverence right, and to injustice dealest out defeat, a protection at all times to the afflicted.

(THESEUS *addresses one of his own heralds. As he speaks, the* HERALD *from King Creon of Thebes enters.*)

THESEUS

Forasmuch as with this thy art thou hast ever served the state and me by carrying my proclamations far and wide, so now cross Asopus and the waters of Ismenus, and declare this message to the haughty king of the Cadmeans: "Theseus, thy neighbour, one who well may win the boon he craves, begs as a favour thy permission to bury the dead, winning to thy-

self thereby the love of all the Erechtheidae." And if they will acquiesce, come back again, but if they hearken not, thy second message runneth thus, they may expect my warrior host; for at the sacred fount of Callichorus my army camps in readiness and is being reviewed. Moreover, the city gladly of its own accord undertook this enterprise, when it perceived my wish. Ha! who comes hither to interrupt my speech? A Theban herald, so it seems, though I am not sure thereof. Stay; haply he may save thee thy trouble. For by his coming he meets my purpose half-way.

THEBAN HERALD

Who is the despot of this land? To whom must I announce the message of Creon, who rules o'er the land of Cadmus, since Eteocles was slain by the hand of his brother Polyneices, at the sevenfold gates of Thebes?

THESEUS

Sir stranger, thou hast made a false beginning to thy speech, in seeking here a despot. For this city is not ruled by one man, but is free. The people rule in succession year by year, allowing no preference to wealth, but the poor man shares equally with the rich.

THEBAN HERALD

Thou givest me here an advantage, as it might be in a game of draughts; for the city, whence I come, is ruled by one man only, not by the mob; none there puffs up the citizens with specious words, and for his own advantage twists them this way or that,—one moment dear to them and lavish of his favours, the next a bane to all; and yet by fresh calumnies of others he hides his former failures and escapes punishment. Besides, how shall the people, if it cannot form true judgments, be able rightly to direct the state? Nay, 'tis time, not haste, that affords a better understanding. A poor hind, granted he be not all unschooled, would still be unable from his toil to give his mind to politics. Verily the better sort count it no healthy sign when the worthless man obtains a reputation by beguiling with words the populace, though aforetime he was naught.

THESEUS

This herald is a clever fellow, a dabbler in the art of talk. But since thou hast thus entered the lists with me, listen awhile, for 'twas thou didst challenge a discussion. Naught is more hostile to a city than a despot; [4] where he is, there are first no laws common to all, but one man is tyrant, in whose keeping and in his alone the law resides, and in that case equality is at an end. But when the laws are written down, rich and poor alike have equal justice, and it is open to the weaker to use the same language to the prosperous when he is reviled by him, and the weaker prevails over the stronger if he have justice on his side. Freedom's mark

is also seen in this: "Who hath wholesome counsel to declare unto the state?" And he who chooses to do so gains renown, while he, who hath no wish, remains silent. What greater equality can there be in a city? Again, where the people are absolute rulers of the land, they rejoice in having a reserve of youthful citizens, while a king counts this a hostile element, and strives to slay the leading men, all such as he deems discreet, for he feareth for his power. How then can a city remain stable, where one cuts short all enterprise and mows down the young like meadow-flowers in spring-time? What boots it to acquire wealth and livelihood for children, merely to add to the tyrant's substance by one's toil? Why train up virgin daughters virtuously in our homes to gratify a tyrant's whim, whenso he will, and cause tears to those who rear them? May my life end if ever my children are to be wedded by violence! This bolt I launch in answer to thy words. Now say, why art thou come? what needest thou of this land? Had not thy city sent thee, to thy cost hadst thou come with thy outrageous utterances; for it is the herald's duty to tell the message he is bidden and hie him back in haste. Henceforth let Creon send to my city some other messenger less talkative than thee.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Look you! how insolent the villains are, when Fortune is kind to them, just as if it would be well with them for ever.

THEBAN HERALD

Now will I speak. On these disputed points hold thou this view, but I the contrary. So I and all the people of Cadmus forbid thee to admit Adrastus to this land, but if he is here, drive him forth in disregard of the holy suppliant bough he bears, ere sinks yon blazing sun, and attempt not violently to take up the dead, seeing thou hast naught to do with the city of Argos. And if thou wilt hearken to me, thou shalt bring thy barque of state into port unharmed by the billows; but if not, fierce shall the surge of battle be, that we and our allies shall raise. Take good thought, nor, angered at my words, because forsooth thou rulest thy city with freedom, return a vaunting answer from thy feebler means. Hope is man's curse; many a state hath it involved in strife, by leading them into excessive rage. For whenso the city has to vote on the question of war, no man ever takes his own death into account, but shifts this misfortune on to his neighbour; but if death had been before their eyes when they were giving their votes, Hellas would ne'er have rushed to her doom in mad desire for battle. And yet each man amongst us knows which of the two to prefer, the good or ill, and how much better peace is for mankind than war,—peace, the Muses' chiefest friend, the foe of sorrow, whose joy is in glad throngs of children, and its delight in prosperity. These are the blessings

we cast away and wickedly embark on war, man enslaving his weaker brother, and cities following suit. Now thou art helping our foes even after death, trying to rescue and bury those whom their own acts of insolence have ruined. Verily then it would seem Capaneus was unjustly blasted by the thunderbolt and charred upon the ladder he had raised against our gates, swearing he would sack our town, whether the god would or no; nor should the yawning earth have snatched away the seer,[5] opening wide her mouth to take his chariot and its horses in, nor should the other chieftains be stretched at our gates, their skeletons to atoms crushed 'neath boulders. Either boast thy wit transcendeth that of Zeus, or else allow that gods are right to slay the ungodly. The wise should love their children first, next their parents and country, whose fortunes it behoves them to increase rather than break down. Rashness in a leader, as in a pilot, causeth shipwreck; who knoweth when to be quiet is a wise man. Yea and this too is bravery, even forethought.

LEADER

The punishment Zeus hath inflicted was surely enough; there was no need to heap this wanton insult on us.

ADRASTUS

Abandoned wretch!

THESEUS

Peace, Adrastus! say no more; set not thy words before mine, for 'tis not to thee this fellow is come with his message, but to me, and I must answer him. Thy first assertion will I answer first: I am not aware that Creon is my lord and master, or that his power outweigheth mine, that so he should compel Athens to act on this wise; nay! for then would the tide of time have to flow backward, if we are to be ordered, as he thinks. 'Tis not I who choose this war, seeing that I did not even join these warriors to go unto the land of Cadmus; but still I claim to bury the fallen dead, not injuring any state nor yet introducing murderous strife, but preserving the law of all Hellas. What is not well in this? If ye suffered aught from the Argives—lo! they are dead; ye took a splendid vengeance on your foes and covered them with shame, and now your right is at an end. Let the dead now be buried in the earth, and each element return to the place from whence it came to the body, the breath to the air, the body to the ground; for in no wise did we get it for our own, but to live our life in, and after that its mother earth must take it back again. Dost think 'tis Argos thou art injuring in refusing burial to the dead? Nay! all Hellas shares herein, if a man rob the dead of their due and keep them from the tomb; for, if this law be enacted, it will strike dismay into the stoutest hearts. And art thou come to cast dire threats at me, while thy

own folk are afraid of giving burial to the dead? What is your fear? Think you they will undermine your land in their graves, or that they will beget children in the womb of earth, from whom shall rise an avenger? A silly waste of words, in truth it was, to show your fear of paltry goundless terrors. Go, triflers, learn the lesson of human misery; our life is made up of struggles; some men there be that find their fortune soon, others have to wait, while some at once are blest. Fortune lives a dainty life; to her the wretched pays his court and homage to win her smile; her likewise doth the prosperous man extol, for fear the favouring gale may leave him. These lessons should we take to heart, to bear with moderation, free from wrath, our wrongs, and do naught to hurt a whole city. What then? Let us, who will the pious deed perform, bury the corpses of the slain. Else is the issue clear; I will go and bury them by force. For never shall it be proclaimed through Hellas that heaven's ancient law was set at naught, when it devolved on me and the city of Pandion.

LEADER

Be of good cheer; for if thou preserve the light of justice, thou shalt escape many a charge that men might urge.

THEBAN HERALD

Wilt thou that I sum up in brief all thou wouldst say?

THESEUS

Say what thou wilt; for thou art not silent as it is.

THEBAN HERALD

Thou shalt never take the sons of Argos from our land.

THESEUS

Hear, then, my answer too to that, if so thou wilt.

THEBAN HERALD

I will hear thee; not that I wish it, but I must give thee thy turn.

THESEUS

I will bury the dead, when from Asopus' land I have removed them.

THEBAN HERALD

First must thou adventure somewhat in the front of war.

THESEUS

Many an enterprise and of a different kind have I ere this endured.

THEBAN HERALD

Wert thou then begotten of thy sire to cope with every foe?

THESEUS

Ay, with all wanton villains; virtue I punish not.

THEBAN HERALD

To meddle is aye thy wont and thy city's too.

THESEUS

Hence her enterprise on many a field hath won her many blessings.

THEBAN HERALD

Come then, that the warriors of the dragon-crop may catch thee in our city.

THESEUS

What furious warrior-host could spring from dragon's seed?

THEBAN HERALD

Thou shalt learn that to thy cost. As yet thou art young and rash.

THESEUS

Thy boastful speech stirs not my heart at all to rage. Yet get thee gone from my land, taking with thee the idle words thou broughtest; for we are making no advance. (*The* THEBAN HERALD *withdraws.*) 'Tis time for all to start, each stout footman, and whoso mounts the car; 'tis time the bit, dripping with foam, should urge the charger on toward the land of Cadmus. For I will march in person to the seven gates thereof with the sharp sword in my hand, and be myself my herald. But thee, Adrastus, I bid stay, nor blend with mine thy fortunes, for I will take my own good star to lead my host, a chieftain famed in famous deeds of arms. One thing alone I need, the favour of all gods that reverence right, for the presence of these things insures victory. For their valour availeth men naught, unless they have the god's goodwill.

(THESEUS *and his retinue depart. The following lines between the* SEMI-CHORUSES *are chanted responsively.*)

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS

Unhappy mothers of those hapless chiefs! How wildly in my heart pale fear stirs up alarm!

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS

What is this new cry thou utterest?

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS

I fear the issue of the strife, whereto the hosts of Pallas march.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS

Dost speak of issues of the sword, or interchange of words?

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS

That last were gain indeed; but if the carnage of battle, fighting, and the noise of beaten breasts again be heard in the land, what, alas! will be said of me, who am the cause thereof?

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS

Yet may fate again bring low the brilliant victor; 'tis this brave thought that twines about my heart.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS

Thou speak'st of the gods as if they were just.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS

For who but they allot whate'er betides?

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS

I see much at variance in their dealings with men.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS

The former fear hath warped thy judgment. Vengeance calls vengeance forth; slaughter calls for slaughter, but the gods give respite from affliction, holding in their own hands each thing's allotted end.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS

Would I could reach yon plains with turrets crowned, leaving Callichorus, fountain of the goddess!

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS

O that some god would give me wings to fly to the city of rivers twain!

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS

So might'st thou see and know the fortunes of thy friends.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS

What fate, what issue there awaits the valiant monarch of this land?

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS

Once more do we invoke the gods we called upon before; yea, in our fear this is our first and chiefest trust.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS

O Zeus, father to the child the heifer-mother bore in days long past, that daughter of Inachus!

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS

O be gracious, I pray, and champion this city!

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS

'Tis thy own darling, thy own settler in the city of Argos that I am striving from outrage to rescue for the funeral pyre.

(*A* MESSENGER *enters.*)

MESSENGER

Ladies, I bring you tidings of great joy, myself escaped—for I was taken prisoner in the battle which cost those chieftains seven their lives near Dirce's fount—to bear the news of Theseus' victory. But I will save thee tedious questioning; I was the servant of Capaneus, whom Zeus with scorching bolt to ashes burnt.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Friend of friends, fair thy news of thy own return, nor less the news about Theseus; and if the host of Athens, too, is safe, welcome will all thy message be.

MESSENGER

'Tis safe, and all hath happened as I would it had befallen Adrastus and his Argives, whom from Inachus he led, to march against the city of the Cadmeans.

LEADER

How did the son of Aegeus and his fellow-warriors raise their trophy to Zeus? Tell us, for thou wert there and canst gladden us who were not.

MESSENGER

Bright shone the sun, one levelled line of light, upon the world, as by Electra's gate I stood to watch, from a turret with a far outlook. And lo! I saw the host in three divisions, deploying its mail-clad warriors on the high ground by the banks of Ismenus; this last I heard; and with them was the king himself, famous son of Aegeus; his own men, natives of old Cecropia, were ranged upon the right; while on the left, hard by the fountain of Ares, were the dwellers by the sea, harnessed spearmen they; on either wing were posted cavalry, in equal numbers, and chariots were stationed in the shelter of Amphion's holy tomb. Meantime, the folk of Cadmus set themselves before the walls, placing in the rear the bodies for which they fought. Horse to horse, and car to car stood ranged. Then did the herald of Theseus cry aloud to all: "Be still, ye folk! hush, ye ranks of Cadmus, hearken! we are come to fetch the bodies of the slain, wishing to bury them in observance of the universal law of Hellas; no

wish have we to lengthen out the slaughter." Not a word would Creon let his herald answer back, but there he stood in silence under arms. Then did the drivers of the four-horse cars begin the fray; on, past each other they drave their chariots, bringing the warriors at their sides up into line. Some fought with swords, some wheeled the horses back to the fray again for those they drove. Now when Phorbas, who captained the cavalry of the Erechtheidae, saw the thronging chariots, he and they who had the charge of the Theban horse met hand to hand, and by turns were victors and vanquished. The many horrors happening there I saw, not merely heard about, for I was at the spot where the chariots and their riders met and fought, but which to tell of first I know not,—the clouds of dust that mounted to the sky, the warriors tangled in the reins and dragged this way and that, the streams of crimson gore, when men fell dead, or when, from shattered chariot-seats, they tumbled headlong to the ground, and, mid the splinters of their cars, gave up the ghost. But Creon, when he marked our cavalry's success on one wing, caught up a shield and rushed into the fray, ere that despondency should seize his men; but not for that did Theseus recoil in fear; no! snatching up at once his glittering harness he hied him on. And the twain, clashing their shields together as they met in the midst of the assembled host, were dealing death and courting it, shouting loudly each to his fellow the battle-cry: "Slay, and with thy spear strike home against the sons of Erechtheus." Fierce foes to cope with were the warriors whom the dragon's teeth to manhood reared; so fierce, they broke our left wing, albeit theirs was routed by our right and put to flight, so that the struggle was evenly balanced. Here again our chief deserved all praise, for this success was not the only one he gained; no! next he sought that part of his army which was wavering; and loud he called to them, that the earth rang again, "My sons, if ye cannot restrain the earth-born warriors' stubborn spear, the cause of Pallas is lost." His word inspired new courage in all the Danaid host. Therewith himself did seize a fearsome mace, weapon of Epidaurian warfare, and swung it to and fro, and with that club, as with a sickle, he shore off necks and heads and helmets thereupon. Scarce even then they turned themselves to fly. I cried aloud for joy, and danced and clapped my hands; while to the gates they ran. Throughout the town echoed the shrieks of young and old, as they crowded the temples in terror. But Theseus, when he might have come inside the walls, held back his men, for he had not come, said he, to sack the town, but to ask for the bodies of the dead. Such the general men should choose, one who shows his bravery in danger, yet hates the pride of those that in their hour of fortune lose the bliss they might have enjoyed, through seeking to scale the ladder's topmost step.

LEADER

Now do I believe in the gods after seeing this unexpected day, and I feel my woes are lighter now that these have paid their penalty.

ADRASTUS

O Zeus, why do men assert the wisdom of the wretched human race? On thee we all depend, and all we do is only what thou listest. We thought our Argos irresistible, ourselves a young and lusty host, and so when Eteocles was for making terms, in spite of his fair offer we would not accept them, and so we perished. Then in their turn those foolish folk of Cadmus, to fortune raised, like some beggar with his newly-gotten wealth, waxed wanton, and, waxing so, were ruined in their turn. Ye foolish sons of men! who strain your bow like men who shoot beyond their mark, and only by suffering many evils as ye deserve, though deaf to friends, yet yield to circumstances; ye cities likewise, though ye might by parley end your ills, yet ye choose the sword instead of reason to settle all disputes. But wherefore these reflections? This I fain would learn, the way thou didst escape; and after that I will ask thee of the rest.

MESSENGER

During the uproar which prevailed in the city owing to the battle, I passed the gates, just as the host had entered them.

ADRASTUS

Are ye bringing the bodies, for the which the strife arose?

MESSENGER

Ay, each of the seven chiefs who led their famous hosts.

ADRASTUS

What sayest thou? the rest who fell—say, where are they?

MESSENGER

They have found burial in the dells of Cithaeron.

ADRASTUS

On this or that side of the mount? And who did bury them?

MESSENGER

Theseus buried them 'neath the shadow of Eleutherae's cliff.

ADRASTUS

Where didst thou leave the dead he hath not buried?

MESSENGER

Not far away; earnest haste makes every goal look close.

ADRASTUS

No doubt in sorrow slaves would gather them from the carnage.

MESSENGER

Slaves! not one of them was set to do this toil.

[*A speech belonging to* ADRASTUS *has been lost.*]

MESSENGER

Thou wouldst say so, hadst thou been there to see his loving tendance of the dead.

ADRASTUS

Did he himself wash the bloody wounds of the hapless youths?

MESSENGER

Ay, and strewed their biers and wrapped them in their shrouds.

ADRASTUS

An awful burden this, involving some disgrace.

MESSENGER

Why, what disgrace to men are their fellows' sorrows?

ADRASTUS

Ah me! how much rather had I died with them!

MESSENGER

'Tis vain to weep and move to tears these women.

ADRASTUS

Methinks 'tis they who give the lesson. Enough of that! My hands I lift at meeting of the dead, and pour forth a tearful dirge to Hades, calling on my friends, whose loss I mourn in wretched solitude; for this one thing, when once 'tis spent, man cannot recover, the breath of life, though he knoweth ways to get his wealth again.

CHORUS (*singing*)

strophe

Joy is here and sorrow too,—for the state fair fame, and for our captains double meed of honour. Bitter for me it is to see the limbs of my dead sons, and yet a welcome sight withal, because I shall behold the unexpected day after sorrow's cup was full.

antistrophe

Would that Father Time had kept me unwed from my youth up e'en till now when I am old! What need had I of children? Methinks

I should not have suffered overmuch, had I never borne the marriage-yoke; but now I have my sorrow full in view, the loss of children dear.

Lo! I see the bodies of the fallen youths. Woe is me! would I could join these children in their death and descend to Hades with them!

(THESEUS *and his soldiers enter, carrying the corpses of the slain chieftains.* ADRASTUS *and the* CHORUS *chant the lament responsively.*)

ADRASTUS

Mothers, raise the wail for the dead departed; cry in answer when ye hear my note of woe.

CHORUS

My sons, my sons! O bitter words for loving mothers to address to you! To thee, my lifeless child, I call.

ADRASTUS

Woe! woe!

CHORUS

Ah me, my sufferings!

ADRASTUS

Alas! We have endured, alas!—

CHORUS

Sorrows most grievous.

ADRASTUS

O citizens of Argos! do ye not behold my fate?

CHORUS

They see thee, and me the hapless mother, reft of her children.

ADRASTUS

Bring near the blood-boltered corpses of those hapless chiefs, foully slain by foes unworthy, with whom lay the decision of the contest.

CHORUS

Let me embrace and hold my children to my bosom in my enfolding arms.

ADRASTUS

There, there! thou hast—

CHORUS

Sorrows heavy enough to bear.

ADRASTUS

Ah me!

CHORUS

Thy groans mingle with those of their parents.

ADRASTUS

Hear me.

CHORUS

O'er both of us thou dost lament.

ADRASTUS

Would God the Theban ranks had laid me dead in the dust!

CHORUS

Oh that I had ne'er been wedded to a husband!

ADRASTUS

Ah! hapless mothers, behold this sea of troubles!

CHORUS

Our nails have ploughed our cheeks in furrows, and o'er our heads have we strewn ashes.

ADRASTUS

Ah me! ah me! Oh that earth's floor would swallow me, or the whirlwind snatch me away, or Zeus's flaming bolt descend upon my head!

CHORUS

Bitter the marriages thou didst witness, bitter the oracle of Phoebus! The curse of Oedipus, fraught with sorrow, after desolating his house, is come on thee.

THESEUS

I meant to question thee when thou wert venting thy lamentations to the host, but I will let it pass; yet, though I dropped the matter then and left it alone, I now do ask Adrastus, "Of what lineage sprang those youths, to shine so bright in chivalry?" Tell it to our younger citizens of thy fuller wisdom, for thou art skilled to know. Myself beheld their daring deeds,

too high for words to tell, whereby they thought to capture Thebes. One question will I spare thee, lest I provoke thy laughter; the foe that each of them encountered in the fray, the spear from which each received his death-wound. These be idle tales alike for those who hear or him who speaks, that any man amid the fray, when clouds of darts are hurtling before his eyes, should declare for certain who each champion is. I could not ask such questions, nor yet believe those who dare assert the like; for when a man is face to face with the foe, he scarce can see even that which 'tis his bounden duty to observe.

ADRASTUS

Hearken then. For in giving this task to me thou findest a willing eulogist of friends, whose praise I would declare in all truth and sincerity. Dost see yon corpse by Zeus's bolt transfixed? That is Capaneus; though he had ample wealth, yet was he the last to boast of his prosperity; nor would he ever vaunt himself above a poorer neighbour, but shunned the man whose sumptuous board had puffed him up too high and made him scorn mere competence, for he held that virtue lies not in greedy gluttony, but that moderate means suffice. True friend was he, alike to present or to absent friends the same; of such the number is not great. His was a guileless character, a courteous address, that left no promise unperformed either towards his own household or his fellow-citizens. The next I name is Eteoclus; a master he of other kinds of excellence; young, nor richly dowered with store, yet high in honour in the Argive land. And though his friends oft offered gifts of gold, he would not have it in his house, to make his character its slave by taking wealth's yoke upon him. Not his city, but those that sinned against her did he hate, for a city is no wise to be blamed if it get an evil name by reason of an evil governor. Such another was Hippomedon, third of all this band; from his very boyhood he refrained from turning towards the allurements of the Muses, to lead a life of ease; his home was in the fields, and gladly would he school his nature to hardships with a view to manliness, aye hasting to the chase, rejoicing in his steeds or straining of his bow, because he would make himself of use unto his state. Next behold the huntress Atalanta's son, Parthenopaeus, a youth of peerless beauty; from Arcady he came even to the streams of Inachus, and in Argos spent his boyhood. There, when he grew to man's estate, first, as is the duty of strangers settled in another land, he showed no pique or jealousy against the state, became no quibbler, chiefest source of annoyance citizen or stranger can give, but took his stand amid the host, and fought for Argos as he were her own son, glad at heart whenso the city prospered, deeply grieved if e'er reverses came; many a lover though he had midst men and maids, yet was he careful to avoid offence. Of Tydeus next the lofty praise I will express in brief; no

brilliant spokesman he, but a clever craftsman in the art of war, with many a shrewd device; inferior in judgment to his brother Meleager, yet through his warrior skill lending his name to equal praise, for he had found in arms a perfect science; his was an ambitious nature, a spirit rich in store of deeds, with words less fully dowered. From this account then wonder not, Theseus, that they dared to die before the towers; for noble nurture carries honour with it, and every man, when once he hath practised virtue, scorns the name of villain. Courage may be learnt, for even a babe doth learn to speak and hear things it cannot comprehend; and whatso'er a child hath learnt, this it is his wont to treasure up till he is old. So train up your children in a virtuous way.

CHORUS (*chanting*)

Alas! my son, to sorrow I bare thee and carried thee within my womb, enduring the pangs of travail; but now Hades takes the fruit of all my hapless toil, and I that had a son am left, ah me! with none to nurse my age.

THESEUS

As for the noble son of Oecleus, him, while yet he lived, the gods snatched hence to the bowels of the earth, and his chariot too, manifestly blessing him; while I myself may truthfully tell the praises of the son of Oedipus, that is, Polyneices, for he was my guest-friend ere he left the town of Cadmus and crossed to Argos in voluntary exile. But dost thou know what I would have thee do in this?

ADRASTUS

I know naught save this,—to yield obedience to thy hests.

THESEUS

As for yon Capaneus, stricken by the bolt of Zeus—

ADRASTUS

Wilt bury him apart as a consecrated corpse?

THESEUS

Even so; but all the rest on one funeral pyre.

ADRASTUS

Where wilt thou set the tomb apart for him?

THESEUS

Here near this temple have I builded him a sepulchre.

ADRASTUS

Thy thralls forthwith must undertake this toil.

THESEUS

Myself will look to those others; let the biers advance.

ADRASTUS

Approach your sons, unhappy mothers.

THESEUS

This thy proposal, Adrastus, is anything but good.

ADRASTUS

Must not the mothers touch their sons?

THESEUS

It would kill them to see how they are altered.

ADRASTUS

'Tis bitter, truly, to see the dead even at the moment of death.

THESEUS

Why then wilt thou add fresh grief to them?

ADRASTUS

Thou art right. Ye needs must patiently abide, for the words of Theseus are good. But when we have committed them unto the flames, ye shall collect their bones. O wretched sons of men! Why do ye get you weapons and bring slaughter on one another? Cease therefrom, give o'er your toiling, and in mutual peace keep safe your cities. Short is the span of life, so 'twere best to run its course as lightly as we may, from trouble free.

(*The corpses, followed by the* CHILDREN *of the slain chieftains, are carried off to the pyre which is kindled within the sight of the persons on the stage.*)

CHORUS (*singing*)

strophe

No more a happy mother I, with children blest; no more I share, among Argive women, who have sons, their happy lot; nor any more will Artemis in the hour of travail kindly greet these childless mothers. Most dreary is my life, and like some wandering cloud I drift before the howling blast.

antistrophe

The seven noblest sons in Argos once we had, we seven hapless mothers; but now my sons are dead, I have no child, and on me steals old age in piteous wise, nor 'mongst the dead nor 'mongst the living do I count myself, having as it were a lot apart from these.

epode

Tears alone are left me; in my house sad memories of my son are stored; mournful tresses shorn from his head, chaplets that he wore, libations for the dead departed, and songs, but not such as golden-haired Apollo welcometh; and when I wake to weep, my tears will ever drench the folds of my robe upon my bosom. Ah! there I see the sepulchre ready e'en now for Capaneus, his consecrated tomb, and the votive offerings Theseus gives unto the dead outside the shrine, and nigh yon lightning-smitten chief I see his noble bride, Evadne, daughter of King Iphis. Wherefore stands she on the towering rock, which o'ertops this temple, advancing along yon path?

(EVADNE *is seen on a rock which overhangs the burning pyre. She is dressed as though for a festival.*)

EVADNE (*chanting*)

What light, what radiancy did the sun-god's car dart forth, and the moon athwart the firmament, while round her in the gloom swift stars careered, in the day that the city of Argos raised the stately chant of joy at my wedding, in honour of my marriage with mail-clad Capaneus? Now from my home in frantic haste with frenzied mind I rush to join thee, seeking to share with thee the fire's bright flame and the self-same tomb, to rid me of my weary life in Hades' halls, and of the pains of life; yea, for 'tis the sweetest end to share the death of those we love, if only fate will sanction it.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Behold yon pyre, which thou art overlooking, nigh thereto, set apart for Zeus! There is thy husband's body, vanquished by the blazing bolt.

EVADNE (*chanting*)

Life's goal I now behold from my station here; may fortune aid me in my headlong leap from this rock in honour's cause, down into the fire below, to mix my ashes in the ruddy blaze with my husband's, to lay me side by side with him, there in the couch of Persephone; for ne'er will I, to save my life, prove untrue to thee where thou liest in thy grave. Away with life and marriage too! Oh! may my children live to see the dawn of a fairer, happier wedding-day in Argos! May loyalty inspire the husband's heart, his nature fusing with his wife's!

LEADER

Lo! the aged Iphis, thy father, draweth nigh to hear thy startling speech, which yet he knows not and will grieve to learn.

(IPHIS *enters.*)

IPHIS

Unhappy child! lo! I am come, a poor old man, with twofold sorrow in my house to mourn, that I may carry to his native land the corpse of my son Eteoclus, slain by the Theban spear, and further in quest of my daughter who rushed headlong from the house, for she was the wife of Capaneus and longed with him to die. Ere this she was well guarded in my house, but, when I took the watch away in the present troubles, she escaped. But I feel sure that she is here; tell me if ye have seen her.

EVADNE

Why question them? Lo, here upon the rock, father, o'er the pyre of Capaneus, like some bird I hover lightly, in my wretchedness.

IPHIS

What wind hath blown thee hither, child? Whither thy journey? Why didst thou pass the threshold of my house and seek this land?

EVADNE

It would but anger thee to hear what I intend, and so I fain would keep thee ignorant, my father.

IPHIS

What! hath not thy own father a right to know?

EVADNE

Thou wouldst not wisely judge my purpose.

IPHIS

Why dost thou deck thyself in that apparel?

EVADNE

A purport strange this robe conveys, father.

IPHIS

Thou hast no look of mourning for thy lord.

EVADNE

No, the reason why I thus am decked is strange, maybe.

IPHIS

Dost thou in such garb appear before a funeral-pyre?

EVADNE

Yea, for hither it is I come to take the meed of victory.

IPHIS

"Victory!" What victory? This would I learn of thee.

EVADNE

A victory o'er all women on whom the sun looks down.

IPHIS

In Athena's handiwork or in prudent counsel?

EVADNE

In bravery; for I will lay me down and die with my lord.

IPHIS

What dost thou say? What is this silly riddle thou propoundest?

EVADNE

To yonder pyre where lies dead Capaneus, I will leap down.

IPHIS

My daughter, speak not thus before the multitude!

EVADNE

The very thing I wish, that every Argive should learn it.

IPHIS

Nay, I will ne'er consent to let thee do this deed.

EVADNE

'Tis all one; thou shalt never catch me in thy grasp. Lo! I cast me down, no joy to thee, but to myself and to my husband blazing on the pyre with me.

(*She leaps into the pyre.*)

CHORUS (*chanting*)

O lady, thou hast done a fearful deed!

IPHIS

Ah me! I am undone, ye dames of Argos!

CHORUS (*chanting*)

Alack, alack! a cruel blow is this to thee, but thou must yet witness, poor wretch, the full horror of this deed.

IPHIS

A more unhappy wretch than me ye could not find.

CHORUS (*chanting*)

Woe for thee, unhappy man! Thou, old sir, hast been made partaker in the fortune of Oedipus, thou and my poor city too.

IPHIS

Ah, why are mortal men denied this boon, to live their youth twice o'er, and twice in turn to reach old age? If aught goes wrong within our homes, we set it right by judgment more maturely formed, but our life we may not so correct. Now if we had a second spell of youth and age, this double term of life would let us then correct each previous slip. For I, seeing others blest with children, longed to have them too, and found my ruin in that wish. Whereas if I had had my present experience, and by a father's light had learnt how cruel a thing it is to be bereft of children, never should I have fallen on such evil days as these,—I who did beget a brave young son, proud parent that I was, and after all am now bereft of him. Enough of this. What remains for such a hapless wretch as me? Shall I to my home, there to see its utter desolation and the blank within my life? or shall I to the halls of that dead Capaneus?—halls I smiled to see in days gone by, when yet my daughter was alive. But she is lost and gone, she that would ever draw down my cheek to her lips, and take my head between her hands; for naught is there more sweet unto an aged sire than a daughter's love; our sons are made of sterner stuff, but less winning are their caresses. Oh! take me to my house at once, in darkness hide me there, to waste and fret this aged frame with fasting! What shall it avail me to touch my daughter's bones? Old age, resistless foe, how do I loathe thy presence! Them too I hate, whoso desire to lengthen out the span of life, seeking to turn the tide of death aside by philtres, drugs, and magic spells, —folk that death should take away to leave the young their place, when they no more can benefit the world.

(IPHIS *departs. A procession enters from the direction of the pyre, led by the* CHILDREN *of the slain chieftains, who carry the ashes of their fathers in funeral urns. The following lines between the* CHORUS *and the* CHILDREN *are chanted responsively.*)

CHORUS

Woe, woe! Behold your dead sons' bones are brought hither; take them, servants of your weak old mistress, for in me is no strength left by reason of my mourning for my sons; time's comrade long have I been, and many a tear for many a sorrow have I shed. For what sharper pang wilt thou ever find for mortals than the sight of children dead?

CHILDREN

Poor mother mine, behold I bring my father's bones gathered from the fire, a burden grief has rendered heavy, though this tiny urn contains my all.

CHORUS

Ah me! ah me! Why bear thy tearful load to the fond mother of the dead, a handful of ashes in the stead of those who erst were men of mark in Mycenae?

CHILDREN

Woe worth the hour! woe worth the day! Reft of my hapless sire, a wretched orphan shall I inherit a desolate house, torn from my father's arms.

CHORUS

Woe is thee! Where is now the toil I spent upon my sons? what thank have I for nightly watch? Where the mother's nursing care? the sleepless vigils mine eyes have kept? the loving kiss upon my children's brow?

CHILDREN

Thy sons are dead and gone. Poor mother! dead and gone; the boundless air now wraps them round.

CHORUS

Turned to ashes by the flame, they have winged their flight to Hades.

CHILDREN

Father, thou hearest thy children's lamentation; say, shall I e'er, as warrior dight, avenge thy slaughter?

CHORUS

God grant it, O my child!

CHILDREN

Some day, if god so will, shall the avenging of my father be my task; not yet this sorrow sleeps.

CHORUS

Alas! Fortune's sorrows are enough for me, I have enough of troubles now.

CHILDREN

Shall Asopus' laughing tide ever reflect my brazen arms as I lead on my Argive troops?

CHORUS

To avenge thy fallen sire.

CHILDREN

Methinks I see thee still before my eyes, my father—

CHORUS

Printing a loving kiss upon thy cheek.

CHILDREN

But thy words of exhortation are borne on the winds away.

CHORUS

Two mourners hath he left behind, thy mother and thee, bequeathing to thee an endless legacy of grief for thy father.

CHILDREN

The weight of grief I have to bear hath crushed me utterly.

CHORUS

Come, let me clasp the ashes of my son to my bosom.

CHILDREN

I weep to hear that piteous word; it stabs me to the heart.

CHORUS

My child, thou art undone; no more shall I behold thee, thy own fond mother's treasure.

THESEUS

Adrastus, and ye dames from Argos sprung, ye see these children bearing in their hands the bodies of their valiant sires whom I redeemed; to thee I give these gifts, I and Athens. And ye must bear in mind the memory of this favour, marking well the treatment ye have had of me. And to these children I repeat the self-same words, that they may honour this city, to children's children ever handing on the kindness ye received from us. Be Zeus the witness, with the gods in heaven, of the treatment we vouchsafed you ere you left us.

ADRASTUS

Theseus, well we know all the kindness thou hast conferred upon the land of Argos in her need, and ours shall be a gratitude that never waxeth old, for your generous treatment makes us debtors for a like return.

THESEUS

What yet remains, wherein I can serve you?

ADRASTUS

Fare thee well, for such is thy desert and such thy city's too.

THESEUS

Even so. Mayst thou too have the self-same fortune!

(ATHENA *appears from above.*)

ATHENA

Hearken, Theseus, to the words that I Athena utter, telling thee thy duty, which, if thou perform it, will serve thy city. Give not these bones to the children to carry to the land of Argos, letting them go so lightly; nay, take first an oath of them that they will requite thee and thy city for your efforts. This oath must Adrastus swear, for as their king it is his right to take the oath for the whole realm of Argos. And this shall be the form thereof: "We Argives swear we never will against this land lead on our mail-clad troops to war, and, if others come, we will repel them." But if they violate their oath and come against the city, pray that the land of Argos may be miserably destroyed. Now hearken while I tell thee where thou must slay the victims. Thou hast within thy halls a tripod with brazen feet, which Heracles, in days gone by, after he had o'erthrown the foundations of Ilium and was starting on another enterprise, enjoined thee to set up at the Pythian shrine. O'er it cut the throats of three sheep; then grave within the tripod's hollow belly the oath; this done, deliver it to the god who watches over Delphi to keep, a witness and memorial unto Hellas of the oath. And bury the sharp-edged knife, wherewith thou shalt have laid the victims open and shed their blood, deep in the bowels of the earth, hard by the pyres where the seven chieftains burn; for its appearance shall strike them with dismay, if e'er against thy town they come, and shall cause them to return with sorrow. When thou hast done all this, dismiss the dead from thy land. And to the god resign as sacred land the spot where their bodies were purified by fire, there by the meeting of the triple roads that lead unto the Isthmus. Thus much to thee, Theseus, I address; next to the sons of Argos I speak; when ye are grown to men's estate, the town beside Ismenus shall ye sack, avenging the slaughter of your dead sires; thou too, Aegialeus, shalt take thy father's place and in thy youth command the host, and with thee Tydeus' son marching from Aetolia,—him whom his father named Diomedes. Soon as the beards your cheeks o'ershadow must ye lead an armed Danaid host against the battlements of Thebes with sevenfold gates. For to their sorrow shall ye come like lion's whelps in full-grown might to sack their city. No otherwise is it to be; and ye shall be a theme for minstrels' songs in days to come, known through Hellas as "the After-born"; so famous shall your expedition be, thanks to Heaven.

THESEUS

Queen Athena, I will hearken to thy bidding; for thou it is dost set me up, so that I go not astray. And I will bind this monarch by an oath; do

thou but guide my steps aright. For if thou art friendly to our state, we shall henceforth live secure.

(ATHENA *vanishes.*)

CHORUS (*chanting*)

Let us go, Adrastus, and take the oath to this monarch and his state; for the service they have already done us claims our reverence.

THE translation of Coleridge has been slightly modified in the following lines: 178, 237, 430, 521, 577, 612, 632, 708, 719, 748, 791, 932, 1005, 1032, 1048, 1053, 1087, 1149, 1234.

1. The first portion of this speech calls to mind Prometheus' account of his benefits to man in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound,* as well as Sophocles' famous chorus on man in the *Antigone.*

2. Some words seem to have been lost at the beginning of this choral ode.

3. This refers to the monster Phaea, which infested the neighbourhood of Corinth.

4. This passage may be compared with Plato's description of tyranny and the tyrant in the *Republic,* Books VIII and IX.

5. *i.e.,* Amphiaraus.

The Birds
By Aristophanes

Dramatis Personae
EUELPIDES
PITHETAERUS
TROCHILUS, Servant to Epops
Epops (the Hoopoe)
A BIRD
A HERALD
A PRIEST
A POET
AN ORACLE-MONGER
METON, a Geometrician
AN INSPECTOR
A DEALER IN DECREES
IRIS
A PARRICIDE
CINESIAS, a Dithyrambic Poet
AN INFORMER
PROMETHEUS
POSIDON
TRIBALLUS
HERACLES
SLAVES OF PITHETAERUS
MESSENGERS
CHORUS OF BIRDS

A wild and desolate region; only thickets, rocks, and a single tree are seen. EUELPIDES and PITHETAERUS enter, each with a bird in his hand.

EUELPIDES (*to his jay*) Do you think I should walk straight for yon tree?
PITHETAERUS (*to his crow*) Cursed beast, what are you croaking to me?...to retrace my steps?
EUELPIDES Why, you wretch, we are wandering at random, we are exerting ourselves only to return to the same spot; we're wasting our time.
PITHETAERUS To think that I should trust to this crow, which has made me cover more than a thousand furlongs!
EUELPIDES And that I, in obedience to this jay, should have worn my toes down to the nails!
PITHETAERUS If only I knew where we were....
EUELPIDES Could you find your country again from here?
PITHETAERUS No, I feel quite sure I could not, any more than could Execestides find his.
EUELPIDES Alas!
PITHETAERUS Aye, aye, my friend, it's surely the road of "alases" we are following.
EUELPIDES That Philocrates, the bird-seller, played us a scurvy trick, when he pretended these two guides could help us to find Tereus, the Epops, who is a bird, without being born of one. He has indeed sold us this jay, a true son of Tharrhelides, for an obolus, and this crow

for three, but what can they do? Why, nothing whatever but bite and scratch! (*To his jay*) What's the matter with you then, that you keep opening your beak? Do you want us to fling ourselves headlong down these rocks? There is no road that way.

PITHETAERUS Not even the vestige of a trail in any direction

EUELPIDES And what does the crow say about the road to follow?

PITHETAERUS By Zeus, it no longer croaks the same thing it did.

EUELPIDES And which way does it tell us to go now?

PITHETAERUS It says that, by dint of gnawing, it will devour my fingers.

EUELPIDES What misfortune is ours! we strain every nerve to get to the crows, do everything we can to that end, and we cannot find our way! Yes, spectators, our madness is quite different from that of Sacas. He is not a citizen, and would fain be one at any cost; we, on the contrary, born of an honourable tribe and family and living in the midst of our fellow-citizens, we have fled from our country as hard as ever we could go. It's not that we hate it; we recognize it to be great and rich, likewise that everyone has the right to ruin himself paying taxes; but the crickets only chirrup among the fig-trees for a month or two, whereas the Athenians spend their whole lives in chanting forth judgments from their law-courts. That is why we started off with a basket, a stew-pot and some myrtle boughs! And have come to seek a quiet country in which to settle. We are going to Tereus, the Epops, to learn from him, whether, in his aerial flights, he has noticed some town of this kind.

PITHETAERUS Here! look!

EUELPIDES What's the matter?

PITHETAERUS Why, the crow has been directing me to something up there for some time now.

EUELPIDES And the jay is also opening it beak and craning its neck to show me I know not what. Clearly, there are some birds about here. We shall soon know, if we kick up a noise to start them.

PITHETAERUS Do you know what to do? Knock your leg against this rock.

EUELPIDES And you your head to double the noise.

PITHETAERUS Well then use a stone instead; take one and hammer with it.

EUELPIDES Good idea! (*He does so.*) Ho there, within! Slave! slave!

PITHETAERUS What's that, friend! You say, "slave," to summon Epops? It would be much better to shout, "Epops, Epops!

EUELPIDES Well then, Epops! Must I knock again? Epops!

TROCHILUS (*rushing out of a thicket*) Who's there? Who calls my master?

PITHETAERUS (*in terror*) Apollo the Deliverer! what an enormous beak! (*He defecates. In the confusion both the jay and the crow fly away.*)

TROCHILUS (*equally frightened*) Good god! they are bird-catchers.

EUELPIDES (*reassuring himself*) But is it so terrible? Wouldn't it be better to explain things?

TROCHILUS (*also reassuring himself*) You're done for.

EUELPIDES But we are not men.

TROCHILUS What are you, then?

EUELPIDES (*defecating also*) I am the Fearling, an African bird.

TROCHILUS You talk nonsense.

EUELPIDES Well, then, just ask it of my feet.

TROCHILUS And this other one, what bird is it? (*To PITHETAERUS*) Speak up

PITHETAERUS (*weakly*) I? I am a Crapple, from the land of the pheasants.

EUELPIDES But you yourself, in the name of the gods! what animal are you?

TROCHILUS Why, I am a slave-bird.

EUELPIDES Why, have you been conquered by a cock?
TROCHILUS No, but when my master was turned into a hoopoe, he begged me to become a bird also, to follow and to serve him.
EUELPIDES Does a bird need a servant, then?
TROCHILUS That's no doubt because he was once a man. At times he wants to eat a dish of sardines from Phalerum; I seize my dish and fly to fetch him some. Again he wants some pea-soup; I seize a ladle and a pot and run to get it.
EUELPIDES This is, then, truly a running-bird. Come, Trochilus, do us the kindness to call your master.
TROCHILUS Why, he has just fallen asleep after a feed of myrtle-berries and a few grubs.
EUELPIDES Never mind; wake him up.
TROCHILUS I am certain he will be angry. However, I will wake him to please you. (*He goes back into the thicket*.)
PITHETAERUS (*as soon as TROCHILUS is out of sight*) You cursed brute! why, I am almost dead with terror!
EUELPIDES Oh! my god! it was sheer fear that made me lose my jay.
PITHETAERUS Ah! you big coward! were you so frightened that you let go your jay?
EUELPIDES And did you not lose your crow, when you fell sprawling on the ground? Tell me that.
PITHETAERUS Not at all.
EUELPIDES Where is it, then?
PITHETAERUS It flew away.
EUELPIDES And you did not let it go? Oh! you brave fellow!
EPOPS (*from within*) Open the thicket, that I may go out! (*He comes out of the thicket*.)
EUELPIDES By Heracles! what a creature! what plumage! What means this triple crest?
EPOPS Who wants me?
EUELPIDES (*banteringly*) The twelve great gods have used you ill, it seems.
EPOPS Are you twitting me about my feathers? I have been a man, strangers.
EUELPIDES It's not you we are jeering at.
EPOPS At what, then?
EUELPIDES Why, it's your beak that looks so ridiculous to us.
EPOPS This is how Sophocles outrages me in his tragedies. Know, I once was Tereus.
EUELPIDES You were Tereus, and what are you now? a bird or a peacock?
EPOPS I am a bird.
EUELPIDES Then where are your feathers? I don't see any.
EPOPS They have fallen off.
EUELPIDES Through illness?
EPOPS No. All birds moult their feathers, you know, every winter, and others grow in their place. But tell me, who are you?
EUELPIDES We? We are mortals.
EPOPS From what country?
EUELPIDES From the land of the beautful galleys.
EPOPS Are you dicasts?
EUELPIDES No, if anything, we are anti-dicasts.
EPOPS Is that kind of seed sown among you?
EUELPIDES You have to look hard to find even a little in our fields.
EPOPS What brings you here?

EUELPIDES We wish to pay you a visit.
EPOPS What for?
EUELPIDES Because you formerly were a man, like we are, formerly you had debts, as we have, formerly you did not want to pay them, like ourselves; furthermore, being turned into a bird, you have when flying seen all lands and seas. Thus you have all human knowledge as well as that of birds. And hence we have come to you to beg you to direct us to some cosy town, in which one can repose as if on thick coverlets.
EPOPS And are you looking for a greater city than Athens?
EUELPIDES No, not a greater, but one more pleasant to live in.
EPOPS Then you are looking for an aristocratic country.
EUELPIDES I? Not at all! I hold the son of Scellias in horror.
EPOPS But, after all, what sort of city would please you best?
EUELPIDES A place where the following would be the most important business: transacted.- Some friend would come knocking at the door quite early in the morning saying, "By Olympian Zeus, be at my house early. as soon as you have bathed, and bring your children too. I am giving a feast, so don't fail, or else don't cross my threshold when I am in distress."
EPOPS Ah! that's what may be called being fond of hardships! (*To PITHETAERUS*) And what say you?
PITHETAERUS My tastes are similar.
EPOPS And they are?
PITHETAERUS I want a town where the father of a handsome lad will stop in the street and say to me reproachfully as if I had failed him, "Ah! Is this well done, Stilbonides? You met my son coming from the bath after the gymnasium and you neither spoke to him, nor kissed him, nor took him with you, nor ever once felt his balls. Would anyone call you an old friend of mine?"
EPOPS Ah! wag, I see you are fond of suffering. But there is a city of delights such as you want. It's on the Red Sea.
EUELPIDES Oh, no. Not a sea-port, where some fine morning the Salaminian galley can appear, bringing a process-server along. Have you no Greek town you can propose to us?
EPOPS Why not choose Lepreum in Elis for your settlement?
EUELPIDES By Zeus! I could not look at Lepreum without disgust, because of Melanthius.
EPOPS Then, again, there is the Opuntian Locris, where you could live.
EUELPIDES I would not be Opuntian for a talent. But come, what is it like to live with the birds? You should know pretty well.
EPOPS Why, it's not a disagreeable life. In the first place, one has no purse.
EUELPIDES That does away with a lot of roguery.
EPOPS For food the gardens yield us white sesame, myrtle-berries, poppies and mint.
EUELPIDES Why, 'tis the life of the newly-wed indeed.
PITHETAERUS Ha! I am beginning to see a great plan, which will transfer the supreme power to the birds, if you will but take my advice.
EPOPS Take your advice? In what way?
PITHETAERUS In what way? Well, firstly, do not fly in all directions with open beak; it is not dignified. Among us, when we see a thoughtless man, we ask, "What sort of bird is this?" and Teleas answers, "It's a man who has no brain, a bird that has lost his head, a creature you cannot catch, for it never remains in any one place."
EPOPS By Zeus himself! your jest hits the mark. What then is to be done?
PITHETAERUS Found a city.

EPOPS We birds? But what sort of city should we build?
PITHETAERUS Oh, really, really! you talk like such a fool! Look down.
EPOPS I am looking.
PITHETAERUS Now look up.
EPOPS I am looking.
PITHETAERUS Turn your head round.
EPOPS Ah! it will be pleasant for me if I end in twisting my neck of!
PITHETAERUS What have you seen?
EPOPS The clouds and the sky.
PITHETAERUS Very well! is not this the pole of the birds then?
EPOPS How their pole?
PITHETAERUS Or, if you like it, their place. And since it turns and passes through the whole universe, it is called 'pole.' If you build and fortify it, you will turn your pole into a city. In this way you will reign over mankind as you do over the grasshoppers and you will cause the gods to die of rabid hunger
EPOPS How so?
PITHETAERUS The air is between earth and heaven. When we want to go to Delphi, we ask the Boeotians for leave of passage; in the same way, when men sacrifice to the gods, unless the latter pay you tribute, you exercise the right of every nation towards strangers and don't allow the smoke of the sacrifices to pass through your city and territory.
EPOPS By earth! by snares! by network! by cages! I never heard of anything more cleverly conceived; and, if the other birds approve,
I am going to build the city along with you.
PITHETAERUS Who will explain the matter to them?
EPOPS You must yourself. Before I came they were quite ignorant, but since I have lived with them I have taught them to speak.
PITHETAERUS But how can they be gathered together?
EPOPS Easily. I will hasten down to the thicket to waken my dear Procne and as soon as they hear our voices, they will come to us hot wing.
PITHETAERUS My dear bird, lose no time, please! Fly at once into the thicket and awaken Procne. (*EPOPS rushes into the thicket*.)
EPOPS (*from within; singing*) Chase off drowsy sleep, dear companion.
Let the sacred hymn gush from thy divine throat in melodious strains;
roll forth in soft cadence your refreshing melodies to bewail the
fate of Itys, which has been the cause of so many tears to us both.
Your pure notes rise through the thick leaves of the yew-tree right
up to the throne of Zeus, where Phoebus listens to you, Phoebus with
his golden hair. And his ivory lyre responds to your plaintive accents;
he gathers the choir of the gods and from their immortal lips pours
forth a sacred chant of blessed voices. (*The flute is played behind the scene, imitating the song of the nightingale*.)
PITHETAERUS Oh! by Zeus! what a throat that little bird possesses. He has filled the whole thicket with honey-sweet melody!
EUELPIDES Hush!
PITHETAERUS What's the matter?
EUELPIDES Be still!
PITHETAERUS What for?

EUELPIDES Epops is going to sing again.
EPOPS (*in the thicket, singing*) Epopopoi popoi popopopoi popoi,
here, here, quick, quick, quick, my comrades in the air; all you who
pillage the fertile lands of the husbandmen, the numberless tribes
who gather and devour the barley seeds, the swift flying race that
sings so sweetly. And you whose gentle twitter resounds through the
fields with the little cry of tiotictiotiotiotiotiotio; and you who
hop about the branches of the ivy in the gardens; the mountain birds,
who feed on the wild olive-berries or the arbutus, hurry to come at
my call, trioto, trioto, totobrix; you also, who snap up the sharp-stinging
gnats in the marshy vales, and you who dwell in the fine plain of
Marathon, all damp with dew, and you, the francolin with speckled
wings; you too, the halcyons, who flit over the swelling waves of
the sea, come hither to hear the tidings; let all the tribes of long-necked
birds assemble here; know that a clever old man has come to us, bringing
an entirely new idea and proposing great reforms. Let all come to
the debate here, here, here, here. Torotorotorotorotorotix, kikkabau,
kikkabau, torotorotorolililix.
PITHETAERUS Can you see any bird?
EUELPIDES By Phoebus, no! and yet I am straining my eyesight to scan the sky.
PITHETAERUS It was hardly worth Epops' while to go and bury himself in the thicket like a hatching plover.
A BIRD (*entering*) Torotix, torotix.
PITHETAERUS Wait, friend, there's a bird.
EUELPIDES By Zeus, it is a bird, but what kind? Isn't it a peacock?
PITHETAERUS (*as EPOPS comes out of the thicket*) Epops will tell us. What is this bird?
EPOPS It's not one of those you are used to seeing; it's a bird from the marshes.
EUELPIDES Oh! oh! but he is very handsome with his wings as crimson as flame.
EPOPS Undoubtedly; indeed he is called flamingo.
EUELPIDES (*excitedly*) Hi! I say! You!
PITHETAERUS What are you shouting for?
EUELPIDES Why, here's another bird.
PITHETAERUS Aye, indeed; this one's a foreign bird too. (*To EPOPS*) What is this bird from beyond the mountains with a look as solemn as it is stupid?
EPOPS He is called the Mede.
EUELPIDES The Mede! But, by Heracles, how, if a Mede, has he flown here without a camel?
PITHETAERUS Here's another bird with a crest. (*From here on, the numerous birds that make up the CHORUS keep rushing in.*)
EUELPIDES Ah! that's curious. I say, Epops, you are not the only one of your kind then?
EPOPS This bird is the son of Philocles, who is the son of Epops; so that, you see, I am his grandfather; just as one might say, Hipponicus, the son of Callias, who is the son of Hipponicus.
EUELPIDES Then this bird is Callias! Why, what a lot of his feathers he has lost!
EPOPS That's because he is honest; so the informers set upon him and the women too pluck out his feathers.
EUELPIDES By Posidon, do you see that many-coloured bird? What is his name?
EPOPS This one? That's the glutton.

EUELPIDES Is there another glutton besides Cleonymus? But why, if he is Cleonymus, has he not thrown away his crest? But what is the meaning of all these crests? Have these birds come to contend for the double stadium prize?
EPOPS They are like the Carians, who cling to the crests of their mountains for greater safety.
PITHETAERUS Oh, Posidon! look what awful swarms of birds are gathering here!
EUELPIDES By Phoebus! what a cloud! The entrance to the stage is no longer visible, so closely do they fly together.
PITHETAERUS Here is the partridge.
EUELPIDES Why, there is the francolin.
PITHETAERUS There is the poachard.
EUELPIDES Here is the kingfisher. (*To EPOPS*) What's that bird behind the king fisher?
EPOPS That's the barber.
EUELPIDES What? a bird a barber?
PITHETAERUS Why, Sporgilus is one.
EPOPS Here comes the owl.
EUELPIDES And who is it brings an owl to Athens?
EPOPS (*pointing to the various species*) Here is the magpie, the turtle-dove, the swallow, the horned-owl, the buzzard, the pigeon, the falcon, the ring-dove, the cuckoo, the red-foot, the red-cap, the purple-cap. the kestrel, the diver, the ousel, the osprey, the woodpecker...
PITHETAERUS Oh! what a lot of birds!
EUELPIDES Oh! what a lot of blackbirds!
PITHETAERUS How they scold, how they come rushing up! What a noise! what a noise!
EUELPIDES Can they be bearing us ill-will?
PITHETAERUS Oh! there! there! they are opening their beaks and staring at us.
EUELPIDES Why, so they are.
LEADER OF THE CHORUS Popopopopopo. Where is he who called me? Where am I to find him?
EPOPS I have been waiting for you a long while! I never fail in my word to my friends.
LEADER OF THE CHORUS Tititititititi. What good news have you for me?
EPOPS Something that concerns our common safety, and that is just as pleasant as it is to the point. Two men, who are subtle reasoners, have come here to seek me.
LEADER OF THE CHORUS Where? How? What are you saying?
EPOPS I say, two old men have come from the abode of humans to propose a vast and splendid scheme to us.
LEADER OF THE CHORUS Oh! it's a horrible, unheard-of crime! What are you saying?
EPOPS Never let my words scare you.
LEADER OF THE CHORUS What have you done to me?
EPOPS I have welcomed two men, who wish to live with us.
LEADER OF THE CHORUS And you have dared to do that!
EPOPS Yes, and I am delighted at having done so.
LEADER OF THE CHORUS And are they already with us?
EPOPS Just as much as I am.
CHORUS (*singing*) Ah! ah! we are betrayed; 'tis sacrilege! Our friend,
he who picked up corn-seeds in the same plains as ourselves, has violated
our ancient laws; he has broken the oaths that bind all birds; he
has laid a snare for me, he has handed us over to the attacks of that
impious race which, throughout all time, has never ceased to war against us.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS As for this traitorous bird, we will decide his case later, but the two old men shall be punished forthwith; weare going to tear them to pieces.

PITHETAERUS It's all over with us.

EUELPIDES You are the sole cause of all our trouble. Why did you bring me from down yonder?

PITHETAERUS To have you with me.

EUELPIDES Say rather to have me melt into tears.

PITHETAERUS Go on! you are talking nonsense. How will you weep with your eyes pecked out?

CHORUS (singing) Io! io! forward to the attack, throw yourselves upon the foe, spill his blood; take to your wings and surround them on all sides. Woe to them! let us get to work with our beaks, let us devour them. Nothing can save them from our wrath, neither the mountain forests, nor the clouds that float in the sky, nor the foaming deep.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Come, peck, tear to ribbons. Where is the chief of the cohort? Let him engage the right wing. (They rush at the two Athenians.)

EUELPIDES This is the fatal moment. Where shall I fly to, unfortunate wretch that am?

PITHETAERUS Wait! Stay here!

EUELPIDES That they may tear me to pieces?

PITHETAERUS And how do you think to escape them?

EUELPIDES I don't know at all.

PITHETAERUS Come, I will tell you. We must stop and fight them. Let us arm ourselves with these stew-pots.

EUELPIDES Why with the stew-pots?

PITHETAERUS The owl will not attack us then.

EUELPIDES But do you see all those hooked claws?

PITHETAERUS Take the spit and pierce the foe on your side.

EUELPIDES And how about my eyes?

PITHETAERUS Protect them with this dish or this vinegar-pot.

EUELPIDES Oh! what cleverness! what inventive genius! You are a great general, even greater than Nicias, where stratagem is concerned.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Forward, forward, charge with your beaks! Come, no delay. Tear, pluck, strike, flay them, and first of all smash the stew-pot.

EPOPS (stepping in front of the CHORUS) Oh, most cruel of all animals, why tear these two men to pieces, why kill them? What have they done to you? They belong to the same tribe, to the same family as my wife.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Are wolves to be spared? Are they not our most mortal foes? So let us punish them.

EPOPS If they are your foes by nature, they are your friends in heart, and they come here to give you useful advice.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Advice or a useful word from their lips, from them, the enemies of my forebears?

EPOPS The wise can often profit by the lessons of a foe, for caution is the mother of safety. It is just such a thing as one will not learn from a friend and which an enemy compels you to know. To begin with, it's the foe and not the friend that taught cities to build high walls, to

equip long vessels of war; and it's this knowledge that protects our children, our slaves and our wealth.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Well then, I agree, let us first hear them, for that is best; one can even learn something in an enemy's school.

PITHETAERUS (to EUELPIDES) Their wrath seems to cool. Draw back a little.

EPOPS It's only justice, and you will thank me later.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Never have we opposed your advice up to now.

PITHETAERUS They are in a more peaceful mood,-put down your stew-pot and your two dishes; spit in hand, doing duty for a spear, let us mount guard inside the camp close to the pot and watch in our arsenal closely; for we must not fly.

EUELPIDES You are right. But where shall we be buried, if we die?

PITHETAERUS In the Ceramicus; for, to get a public funeral, we shall tell the Strategi that we fell at Orneae, fighting the country's foes.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Return to your ranks and lay down your courage beside your wrath as the hoplites do. Then let us ask these men who they are, whence they come, and with what intent. Here, Epops, answer me.

EPOPS Are you calling me? What do you want of me?

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Who are they? From what country?

EPOPS Strangers, who have come from Greece, the land of the wise.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS And what fate has led them hither to the land of the birds?

EPOPS Their love for you and their wish to share your kind of life; to dwell and remain with you always.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Indeed, and what are their plans?

EPOPS They are wonderful, incredible, unheard of.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Why, do they think to see some advantage that determines them to settle here? Are they hoping with our help to triumph over their foes or to be useful to their friends?

EPOPS They speak of benefits so great it is impossible either to describe or conceive them; all shall be yours, all that we see here, there, above and below us; this they vouch for.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Are they mad?

EPOPS They are the sanest people in the world.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Clever men?

EPOPS The slyest of foxes, cleverness its very self, men of the world, cunning, the cream of knowing folk.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Tell them to speak and speak quickly; why, as I listen to you, I am beside myself with delight.

EPOPS (to two attendants) Here, you there, take all these weapons and hang them up inside close to the fire, near the figure of the god who presides there and under his protection; (to PITHETAERUS) as for you, address the birds, tell them why I have gathered them together.

PITHETAERUS Not I, by Apollo, unless they agree with me as the little ape of an armourer agreed with his wife, not to bite me, nor pull me by the balls, nor shove things into my...

EUELPIDES (bending over and pointing his finger at his anus) Do you mean this?

PITHETAERUS No, I mean my eyes.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Agreed.

PITHETAERUS Swear it.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS I swear it and, if I keep my promise, let judges and spectators give me the victory unanimously.

PITHETAERUS It is a bargain.
LEADER OF THE CHORUS And if I break my word, may I succeed by one vote only.
EPOPS (as HERALD) Hearken, ye people! Hoplites, pick up your weapons and return to your firesides; do not fail to read the decrees of dismissal we have posted.
CHORUS (singing) Man is a truly cunning creature, but nevertheless
explain. Perhaps you are going to show me some good way to extend
my power, some way that I have not had the wit to find out and which
you have discovered. Speak! 'tis to your own interest as well as to
mine, for if you secure me some advantage, I will surely share it
with you.
LEADER OF THE CHORUS But what object can have induced you to come among us? Speak boldly, for I shall not break the truce,-until you have told us all.
PITHETAERUS I am bursting with desire to speak; I have already mixed the dough of my address and nothing prevents me from kneading it.... Slave! bring the chaplet and water, which you must pour over my hands. Be quick!
EUELPIDES Is it a question of feasting? What does it all mean?
PITHETAERUS By Zeus, no! but I am hunting for fine, tasty words to break down the hardness of their hearts. (To the CHORUS) I grieve so much for you, who at one time were kings...
LEADER OF THE CHORUS We kings? Over whom?
PITHETAERUS ...of all that exists, firstly of me and of this man, even of Zeus himself. Your race is older than Saturn, the Titans and the Earth.
LEADER OF THE CHORUS What, older than the Earth!
PITHETAERUS By Phoebus, yes.
LEADER OF THE CHORUS By Zeus, but I never knew that before!
PITHETAERUS That's because you are ignorant and heedless, and have never read your Aesop. He is the one who tells us that the lark was born before all other creatures, indeed before the Earth; his father died of sickness, but the Earth did not exist then; he remained unburied for five days, when the bird in its dilemma decided, for want of a better place, to entomb its father in its own head.
EUELPIDES So that the lark's father is buried at Cephalae.
PITHETAERUS Hence, if they existed before the Earth, before the gods, the kingship belongs to them by right of priority.
EUELPIDES Undoubtedly, but sharpen your beak well; Zeus won't be in a hurry to hand over his sceptre to the woodpecker.
PITHETAERUS It was not the gods, but the birds, who were formerly the masters and kings over men; of this I have a thousand proofs. First of all, I will point you to the cock, who governed the Persians before all other monarchs, before Darius and Megabazus. It's in memory of his reign that he is called the Persian bird.
EUELPIDES For this reason also, even to-day, he alone of all the birds wears his tiara straight on his head, like the Great King.
PITHETAERUS He was so strong, so great, so feared, that even now, on account of his ancient power, everyone jumps out of bed as soon as ever he crows at daybreak. Blacksmiths, potters, tanners, shoemakers, bathmen, corndealers, lyre-makers and armourers, all put on their shoes and go to work before it is daylight.
EUELPIDES I can tell you something about that. It was the cock's fault that I lost a splendid tunic of Phrygian wool. I was at a feast in town, given to celebrate the birth of a child; I had drunk pretty freely and had just fallen asleep, when a cock, I suppose in a greater hurry

than the rest, began to crow. I thought it was dawn and set out for Halimus. I had hardly got beyond the walls, when a footpad struck me in the back with his bludgeon; down I went and wanted to shout, but he had already made off with my mantle.

PITHETAERUS Formerly also the kite was ruler and king over the Greeks.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS The Greeks?

PITHETAERUS And when he was king, he was the one who first taught them to fall on their knees before the kites.

EUELPIDES By Zeus! that's what I did myself one day on seeing a kite; but at the moment I was on my knees, and leaning backwards with mouth agape, I bolted an obolus and was forced to carry my meal-sack home empty.

PITHETAERUS The cuckoo was king of Egypt and of the whole of Phoenicia. When he called out "cuckoo," all the Phoenicians hurried to the fields to reap their wheat and their barley.

EUELPIDES Hence no doubt the proverb, "Cuckoo! cuckoo! go to the fields, ye circumcised."

PITHETAERUS So powerful were the birds that the kings of Grecian cities, Agamemnon, Menelaus, for instance, carried a bird on the tip of their sceptres, who had his share of all presents.

EUELPIDES That I didn't know and was much astonished when I saw Priam come upon the stage in the tragedies with a bird, which kept watching Lysicrates to see if he got any present.

PITHETAERUS But the strongest proof of all is that Zeus, who now reigns, is represented as standing with an eagle on his head as a symbol of his royalty; his daughter has an owl, and Phoebus, as his servant, has a hawk.

EUELPIDES By Demeter, the point is well taken. But what are all these birds doing in heaven?

PITHETAERUS When anyone sacrifices and, according to the rite, offers the entrails to the gods, these birds take their share before Zeus. Formerly men always swore by the birds and never by the gods.

EUELPIDES And even now Lampon swears by the goose whenever he wishes to deceive someone.

PITHETAERUS Thus it is clear that you were once great and sacred, but now you are looked upon as slaves, as fools, as Maneses; stones are thrown at you as at raving madmen, even in holy places. A crowd of bird-catchers sets snares, traps, limed twigs and nets of all sorts for you; you are caught, you are sold in heaps and the buyers finger you over to be certain you are fat. Again, if they would but serve you up simply roasted; but they rasp cheese into a mixture of oil, vinegar and laserwort, to which another sweet and greasy sauce is added, and the whole is poured scalding hot over your back, for all the world as if you were diseased meat.

CHORUS (singing) Man, your words have made my heart bleed; I have groaned over the treachery of our fathers, who knew not how to transmit to us the high rank they held from their forefathers. But 'tis a benevolent Genius, a happy Fate, that sends you to us; you shall be our deliverer and I place the destiny of my little ones and my own in your hands with every confidence.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS But hasten to tell me what must be done; we should not be worthy to live, if we did not seek to regain our royalty by every possible means.

PITHETAERUS First I advise that the birds gather together in one city and that they build a wall of great bricks, like that at Babylon, round the plains of the air and the whole region of space that divides earth from heaven.

EPOPS Oh, Cebriones! oh, Porphyrion! what a terribly strong place!

PITHETAERUS Then, when this has been well done and completed, you demand back the empire from Zeus; if he will not agree, if he refuses and does not at once confess himself beaten, you declare a sacred war against him and forbid the gods henceforward to pass through your country with their tools up, as hitherto, for the purpose of laying their Alcmenas, their Alopes, or their Semeles! if they try to pass through, you put rings on their tools so that they can't make love any longer. You send another messenger to mankind, who will proclaim to them that the birds are kings, that for the future they must first of all sacrifice to them, and only afterwards to the gods; that it is fitting to appoint to each deity the bird that has most in common with it. For instance, are they sacrificing to Aphrodite, let them at the same time offer barley to the coot; are they immolating a sheep to Posidon, let them consecrate wheat in honour of the duck; if a steer is being offered to Heracles, let honey-cakes be dedicated to the gull; if a goat is being slain for King Zeus, there is a King-Bird, the wren, to whom the sacrifice of a male gnat is due before Zeus himself even.

EUELPIDES This notion of an immolated gnat delights me! And now let the great Zeus thunder!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS But how will mankind recognize us as gods and not as jays? Us, who have wings and fly?

PITHETAERUS You talk rubbish! Hermes is a god and has wings and flies, and so do many other gods. First of all, Victory flies with golden wings, Eros is undoubtedly winged too, and Iris is compared by Homer to a timorous dove.

EUELPIDES But will not Zeus thunder and send his winged bolts against us?

LEADER OF THE CHORUS If men in their blindness do not recognize us as gods and so continue to worship the dwellers in Olympus?

PITHETAERUS Then a cloud of sparrows greedy for corn must descend upon their fields and eat up all their seeds; we shall see then if Demeter will mete them out any wheat.

EUELPIDES By Zeus, she'll take good care she does not, and you will see her inventing a thousand excuses.

PITHETAERUS The crows too will prove your divinity to them by pecking out the eyes of their flocks and of their draught-oxen; and then let Apollo cure them, since he is a physician and is paid for the purpose.

EUELPIDES Oh! don't do that! Wait first until I have sold my two young bullocks.

PITHETAERUS If on the other hand they recognize that you are God, the principle of life, that, you are Earth, Saturn, Posidon, they shall be loaded with benefits.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Name me one of these then.

PITHETAERUS Firstly, the locusts shall not eat up their vine-blossoms; a legion of owls and kestrels will devour them. Moreover, the gnats and the gallbugs shall no longer ravage the figs; a flock of thrushes shall swallow the whole host down to the very last.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS And how shall we give wealth to mankind? This is their strongest passion.

PITHETAERUS When they consult the omens, you will point them to the richest mines, you will reveal the paying ventures to the diviner, and not another shipwreck will happen or sailor perish.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS No more shall perish? How is that?

PITHETAERUS When the auguries are examined before starting on a voyage, some bird will not fail to say, "Don't start! there will be a storm," or else, "Go! you will make a most profitable venture."

EUELPIDES I shall buy a trading-vessel and go to sea, I will not stay with you.

PITHETAERUS You will discover treasures to them, which were buried in former times, for you know them. Do not all men say, "None knows where my treasure lies, unless perchance it be some bird."

EUELPIDES I shall sell my boat and buy a spade to unearth the vessels.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS And how are we to give them health, which belongs to the gods?

PITHETAERUS If they are happy, is not that the chief thing towards health? The miserable man is never well.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Old Age also dwells in Olympus. How will they get at it? Must they die in early youth?

PITHETAERUS Why, the birds, by Zeus, will add three hundred years to their life.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS From whom will they take them?

PITHETAERUS From whom? Why, from themselves. Don't you know the cawing crow lives five times as long as a man?

EUELPIDES Ah! ah! these are far better kings for us than Zeus!

PITHETAERUS (solemnly) Far better, are they not? And firstly, we shall not have to build them temples of hewn stone, closed with gates of gold; they will dwell amongst the bushes and in the thickets of green oak; the most venerated of birds will have no other temple than the foliage of the olive tree; we shall not go to Delphi or to Ammon to sacrifice; but standing erect in the midst of arbutus and wild olives and holding forth our hands filled with wheat and barley, we shall pray them to admit us to a share of the blessings they enjoy and shall at once obtain them for a few grains of wheat.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Old man, whom I detested, you are now to me the dearest of all; never shall I, if I can help it, fail to follow your advice.

CHORUS (singing) Inspirited by your words, I threaten my rivals the gods, and I swear that if you march in alliance with me against the gods and are faithful to our just, loyal and sacred bond, we shall soon have shattered their scepter.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS We shall charge ourselves with the performance of everything that requires force; that which demands thought and deliberation shall be yours to supply.

EPOPS By Zeus! it's no longer the time to delay and loiter like Nicias; let us act as promptly as possible.... In the first place, come, enter my nest built of brushwood and blades of straw, and tell me your names.

PITHETAERUS That is soon done; my name is Pithetaerus, and his, Euelpides, of the deme Crioa.

EPOPS Good! and good luck to you.

PITHETAERUS We accept the omen.

EPOPS Come in here.

PITHETAERUS Very well, you are the one who must lead us and introduce us.

EPOPS Come then. (He starts to fly away.)

PITHETAERUS (stopping himself) Oh! my god! do come back here. Hi! tell us how we are to follow you. You can fly, but we cannot.

EPOPS Well, well.

PITHETAERUS Remember Aesop's fables. It is told there that the fox fared very badly, because he had made an alliance with the eagle.

EPOPS Be at ease. You shall eat a certain root and wings will grow on your shoulders.

PITHETAERUS Then let us enter. Xanthias and Manodorus, pick up our baggage.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Hi! Epops! do you hear me?

EPOPS What's the matter?

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Take them off to dine well and call your mate, the melodious Procne, whose songs are worthy of the Muses; she will delight our leisure moments.

PITHETAERUS Oh! I conjure you, accede to their wish; for this delightful bird will leave her rushes at the sound of your voice; for the sake of the gods, let her come here, so that we may contemplate the nightingale.

EPOPS Let it be as you desire. Come forth, Procne, show yourself to these strangers. (PROCNE appears; she resembles a young flute-girl.)

PITHETAERUS Oh! great Zeus! what a beautiful little bird! what a dainty form! what brilliant plumage! Do you know how dearly I should like to get between her thighs?

EUELPIDES She is dazzling all over with gold, like a young girl. Oh! how I should like to kiss her!

PITHETAERUS Why, wretched man, she has two little sharp points on her beak!

EUELPIDES I would treat her like an egg, the shell of which we remove before eating it; I would take off her mask and then kiss her pretty face.

EPOPS Let us go in.

PITHETAERUS Lead the way, and may success attend us. (EPOPS goes into the thicket, followed by PITHETAERUS and EUELPIDES.)

CHORUS (singing) Lovable golden bird, whom I cherish above all others, you, whom I associate with all my songs, nightingale, you have come, you have come, to show yourself to me and to charm me with your notes. Come, you, who play spring melodies upon the harmonious flute, lead off our anapests. (The CHORUS turns and faces the audience.)

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Weak mortals, chained to the earth, creatures of clay as frail as the foliage of the woods, you unfortunate race, whose life is but darkness, as unreal as a shadow, the illusion of a dream, hearken to us, who are immortal beings, ethereal, ever young and occupied with eternal thoughts, for we shall teach you about all celestial matters; you shall know thoroughly what is the nature of the birds, what the origin of the gods, of the rivers, of Erebus, and Chaos; thanks to us, even Prodicus will envy you your knowledge. At the beginning there was only Chaos, Night, dark Erebus, and deep Tartarus. Earth, the air and heaven had no existence. Firstly, black-winged Night laid a germless egg in the bosom of the infinite deeps of Erebus, and from this, after the revolution of long ages, sprang the graceful Eros with his glittering golden wings, swift as the whirlwinds of the tempest. He mated in deep Tartarus with dark Chaos, winged like himself, and thus hatched forth our race, which was the first to see the light. That of the Immortals did not exist until Eros had brought together all the ingredients of the world, and from their marriage Heaven, Ocean, Earth and the imperishable race of blessed gods sprang into being. Thus our origin is very much older than that of the dwellers in Olympus. We are the offspring of Eros; there are a thousand proofs to show it. We have wings and we lend assistance to lovers. How many handsome youths, who had sworn to remain insensible, have opened their thighs because of our power and have yielded themselves to their lovers when almost at the end of their youth, being led away by the gift of a quail, a waterfowl, a goose, or a cock. And what important services do not the birds render to mortals! First of all, they mark the seasons for them, springtime, winter, and autumn. Does the screaming crane migrate to Libya,-it warns the husbandman to sow, the pilot to take his ease beside his tiller hung up in his dwelling, and Orestes to weave a tunic, so that the rigorous cold may not drive him any more to strip other folk. When the kite reappears, he tells of the return of spring and of the period when the fleece of the sheep must be clipped. Is the swallow in sight? All hasten to sell their warm tunic and to buy some light clothing. We are your

Ammon, Delphi, Dodona, your Phoebus Apollo. Before undertaking anything, whether a business transaction, a marriage, or the purchase of food, you consult the birds by reading the omens, and you give this name of omen to all signs that tell of the future. With you a word is an omen, you call a sneeze an omen, a meeting an omen, an unknown sound an omen, a slave or an ass an omen. Is it not clear that we are a prophetic Apollo to you? (*More and more rapidly from here on*.) If you recognize us as gods, we shall be your divining Muses, through us you will know the winds and the seasons, summer, winter, and the temperate months. We shall not withdraw ourselves to the highest clouds like Zeus, but shall be among you and shall give to you and to your children and the children of your children, health and wealth, long life, peace, youth, laughter, songs and feasts; in short, you will all be so well off, that you will be weary and cloyed with enjoyment.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS (*singing*) Oh, rustic Muse of such varied note,
tiotiotiotiotiotinx, I sing with you in the groves and on the mountain
tops, tiotiotiotinx. I poured forth sacred strains from my golden
throat in honour of the god Pan, tiotiotiotinx, from the top of the
thickly leaved ash, and my voice mingles with the mighty choirs who
extol Cybele on the mountain tops, totototototototototototinx. 'Tis to
our concerts that Phrynichus comes to pillage like a bee the ambrosia
of his songs, the sweetness of which so charms the ear, tiotiotiotinx.

LEADER OF FIRST SEMI-CHORUS If there is one of you spectators who wishes to spend the rest of his life quietly among the birds, let him come to us. All that is disgraceful and forbidden by law on earth is on the contrary honourable among us, the birds. For instance, among you it's a crime to beat your father, but with us it's an estimable deed; it's considered fine to run straight at your father and hit him, saying, "Come, lift your spur if you want to fight." The runaway slave, whom you brand, is only a spotted francolin with us. Are you Phrygian like Spintharus? Among us you would be the Phrygian bird, the goldfinch, of the race of Philemon. Are you a slave and a Carian like Execestides? Among us you can create yourself fore-fathers; you can always find relations. Does the son of Pisias want to betray the gates of the city to the foe? Let him become a partridge, the fitting offspring of his father; among us there is no shame in escaping as cleverly as a partridge.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS (*singing*) So the swans on the banks of the Hebrus,
tiotiotiotiotiotinx, mingle their voices to serenade Apollo, tiotiotiotinx,
flapping their wings the while, tiotiotiotinx; their notes reach beyond
the clouds of heaven; they startle the various tribes of the beasts;
a windless sky calms the waves, totototototototototototinx; all Olympus
resounds, and astonishment seizes its rulers; the Olympian graces
and Muses cry aloud the strain, tiotiotiotinx.

LEADER OF SECOND SEMI-CHORUS There is nothing more useful nor more pleasant than to have wings. To begin with, just let us suppose a spectator to be dying with hunger and to be weary of the choruses of the tragic poets; if he were winged, he would fly off, go home to dine and come back with his stomach filled. Some Patroclides, needing to take a crap, would not have to spill it out on his cloak, but could fly off, satisfy his requirements, let a few farts and, having recovered his breath, return. If one of you, it matters not who, had adulterous relations and saw the husband of his mistress in the seats of the senators, he might stretch his wings, fly to her, and, having laid her, resume his place. Is it not the most priceless gift of all, to be winged? Look at Diitrephes! His wings were only wicker-work ones, and yet he got himself chosen Phylarch and

then Hipparch; from being nobody, he has risen to be famous; he's now the finest gilded cock of his tribe. (*PITHETAERUS and EUELPIDES return; they now have wings*.)

PITHETAERUS Halloa! What's this? By Zeus! I never saw anything so funny in all my life.

EUELPIDES What makes you laugh?

PITHETAERUS Your little wings. D'you know what you look like? Like a goose painted by some dauber.

EUELPIDES And you look like a close-shaven blackbird.

PITHETAERUS We ourselves asked for this transformation, and, as Aeschylus has it, "These are no borrowed feathers, but truly our own."

EPOPS Come now, what must be done?

PITHETAERUS First give our city a great and famous name, then sacrifice to the gods.

EUELPIDES I think so too.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Let's see. What shall our city be called?

PITHETAERUS Will you have a high-sounding Laconian name? Shall we call it Sparta?

EUELPIDES What! call my town Sparta? Why, I would not use esparto for my bed, even though I had nothing but bands of rushes.

PITHETAERUS Well then, what name can you suggest?

EUELPIDES Some name borrowed from the clouds, from these lofty regions in which we dwell- in short, some well-known name.

PITHETAERUS Do you like Nephelococcygia?

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Oh! capital! truly that's a brilliant thought!

EUELPIDES Is it in Nephelococcygia that all the wealth of Theogenes and most of Aeschines' is?

PITHETAERUS No, it's rather the plain of Phlegra, where the gods withered the pride of the sons of the Earth with their shafts.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Oh! what a splendid city! But what god shall be its patron? for whom shall we weave the peplus?

EUELPIDES Why not choose Athene Polias?

PITHETAERUS Oh! what a well-ordered town it would be to have a female deity armed from head to foot, while Clisthenes was spinning!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Who then shall guard the Pelargicon?

PITHETAERUS A bird.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS One of us? What kind of bird?

PITHETAERUS A bird of Persian strain, who is everywhere proclaimed to be the bravest of all, a true chick of Ares.

EUELPIDES Oh! noble chick!

PITHETAERUS Because he is a god well suited to live on the rocks. Come! into the air with you to help the workers who are building the wall; carry up rubble, strip yourself to mix the mortar, take up the hod, tumble down the ladder, if you like, post sentinels, keep the fire smouldering beneath the ashes, go round the walls, bell in hand, and go to sleep up there yourself then despatch two heralds, one to the gods above, the other to mankind on earth and come back here.

EUELPIDES As for yourself, remain here, and may the plague take you for a troublesome fellow! (He departs.)

PITHETAERUS Go, friend, go where I send you, for without you my orders cannot be obeyed. For myself, I want to sacrifice to the new god, and I am going to summon the priest who must preside at the ceremony. Slaves! slaves! bring forward the basket and the lustral water.

CHORUS (singing) I do as you do, and I wish as you wish, and I implore you to address powerful and solemn prayers to the gods, and in addition to immolate a sheep as a token of our gratitude. Let us sing the Pythian chant in honour of the god, and let Chaeris accompany our voices.

PITHETAERUS Enough! but, by Heracles! what is this? Great gods! I have seen many prodigious things, but I never saw a muzzled raven. (*The PRIEST arrives*.) Priest! it's high time! Sacrifice to the new gods.

PRIEST I begin, but where is the man with the basket? Pray to the Hestia of the birds, to the kite, who presides over the hearth, and to all the god and goddess-birds who dwell in Olympus...

PITHETAERUS Oh! Hawk, the sacred guardian of Sunium, oh, god of the storks!

PRIEST ...to the swan of Delos, to Leto the mother of the quails, and to Artemis, the goldfinch...

PITHETAERUS It's no longer Artemis Colaenis, but Artemis the goldfinch.

PRIEST ...to Bacchus, the finch and Cybele, the ostrich and mother of the gods and mankind...

PITHETAERUS Oh! sovereign ostrich Cybele, mother of Cleocritus!

PRIEST ...to grant health and safety to the Nephelococcygians as well as to the dwellers in Chios...

PITHETAERUS The dwellers in Chios! Ah! I am delighted they should be thus mentioned on all occasions.

PRIEST ...to the heroes, the birds, to the sons of heroes, to the porphyrion, the pelican, the spoon-bill, the redbreast, the grouse, the peacock, the horned-owl, the teal, the bittern, the heron, the stormy petrel, the fig-pecker, the titmouse...

PITHETAERUS Stop! stop! you drive me crazy with your endless list. Why, wretch, to what sacred feast are you inviting the vultures and the sea-eagles? Don't you see that a single kite could easily carry off the lot at once? Begone, you and your fillets and all; I shall know how to complete the sacrifice by myself. (*The PRIEST departs*.) It is imperative that I sing another sacred chant for the rite of the lustral water, and that I invoke the immortals, or at least one of them, provided always that you have some suitable food to offer him; from what I see here, in the shape of gifts, there is naught whatever but horn and hair.

PITHETAERUS Let us address our sacrifices and our prayers to the winged gods. (A POET enters.)

POET Oh, Muse! celebrate happy Nephelococcygia in your hymns.

PITHETAERUS What have we here? Where did you come from, tell me? Who are you?

POET I am he whose language is sweeter than honey, the zealous slave of the Muses, as Homer has it.

PITHETAERUS You a slave! and yet you wear your hair long?

POET No, but the fact is all we poets are the assiduous slaves of the Muses, according to Homer.

PITHETAERUS In truth your little cloak is quite holy too through zeal! But, poet, what ill wind drove you here?

POET I have composed verses in honour of your Nephelococcygia, a host of splendid dithyrambs and parthenia worthy of Simonides himself.

PITHETAERUS And when did you compose them? How long since?

POET Oh! 'tis long, aye, very long, that I have sung in honour of this city.

PITHETAERUS But I am only celebrating its foundation with this sacrifice; I have only just named it, as is done with little babies.

POET "Just as the chargers fly with the speed of the wind, so does the voice of the Muses take its flight. Oh! thou noble founder of the town of Aetna, thou, whose name recalls the holy sacrifices, make us such gift as thy generous heart shall suggest." (*He puts out his hand*.)

PITHETAERUS He will drive us silly if we do not get rid of him by some present. (*To the PRIEST'S acolyte*) Here! you, who have a fur as well as your tunic, take it off and give it to this clever poet. Come, take this fur; you look to me to be shivering with cold.

POET My Muse will gladly accept this gift; but engrave these verses of Pindar's on your mind.

PITHETAERUS Oh! what a pest! It's impossible then to get rid of him!

POET "Straton wanders among the Scythian nomads, but has no linen garment. He is sad at only wearing an animal's pelt and no tunic."

Do you get what I mean?

PITHETAERUS I understand that you want me to offer you a tunic. Hi! you, (*to the acolyte*) take off yours; we must help the poet....Come, you, take it and get out.

POET I am going, and these are the verses that I address to this city: "Phoebus of the golden throne, celebrate this shivery, freezing city; I have travelled through fruitful and snow-covered plains. Tralala! Tralala!" (*He departs*.)

PITHETAERUS What are you chanting us about frosts? Thanks to the tunic, you no longer fear them. Ah! by Zeus! I could not have believed this cursed fellow could so soon have learnt the way to our city. (*To a slave*) Come, take the lustral water and circle the altar. Let all keep silence! (*An ORACLE-MONGER enters*.)

ORACLE-MONGER Let not the goat be sacrificed.

PITHETAERUS Who are you?

ORACLE-MONGER Who am I? An oracle-monger.

PITHETAERUS Get out!

ORACLE-MONGER Wretched man, insult not sacred things. For there is an oracle of Bacis, which exactly applies to Nephelococcygia.

PITHETAERUS Why did you not reveal it to me before I founded my city?

ORACLE-MONGER The divine spirit was against it.

PITHETAERUS Well, I suppose there's nothing to do but hear the terms of the oracle.

ORACLE-MONGER "But when the wolves and the white crows shall dwell together between Corinth and Sicyon..."

PITHETAERUS But how do the Corinthians concern me?

ORACLE-MONGER It is the regions of the air that Bacis indicates in this manner. "They must first sacrifice a white-fleeced goat to Pandora, and give the prophet who first reveals my words a good cloak and new sandals."

PITHETAERUS Does it say sandals there?

ORACLE-MONGER Look at the book. "And besides this a goblet of wine and a good share of the entrails of the entrails of the victim."

PITHETAERUS Of the entrails-does it say that?

ORACLE-MONGER Look at the book. "If you do as I command, divine youth, you shall be an eagle among the clouds; if not, you shall be neither turtle-dove, nor eagle, nor woodpecker."

PITHETAERUS Does it say all that?

ORACLE-MONGER Look at the book.

PITHETAERUS This oracle in no sort of way resembles the one Apollo dictated to me: "If an impostor comes without invitation to annoy you during the sacrifice and to demand a share of the victim, apply a stout stick to his ribs."

ORACLE-MONGER You are drivelling.

PITHETAERUS Look at the book. "And don't spare him, were he an eagle from out of the clouds, were it Lampon himself or the great Diopithes."
ORACLE-MONGER Does it say that?
PITHETAERUS Look at the book and go and hang yourself.
ORACLE-MONGER Oh! unfortunate wretch that I am. (*He departs*.)
PITHETAERUS Away with you, and take your prophecies elsewhere. (*Enter METON, With surveying instruments.)*
METON I have come to you...
PITHETAERUS (interrupting) Yet another pest! What have you come to do? What's your plan? What's the purpose of your journey? Why these splendid buskins?
METON I want to survey the plains of the air for you and to parcel them into lots.
PITHETAERUS In the name of the gods, who are you?
METON Who am I? Meton, known throughout Greece and at Colonus.
PITHETAERUS What are these things?
METON Tools for measuring the air. In truth, the spaces in the air have precisely the form of a furnace. With this bent ruler I draw a line from top to bottom; from one of its points I describe a circle with the compass. Do you understand?
PITHETAERUS Not in the least.
METON With the straight ruler I set to work to inscribe a square within this circle; in its centre will be the market-place, into which all the straight streets will lead, converging to this centre like a star, which, although only orbicular, sends forth its rays in a straight line from all sides.
PITHETAERUS A regular Thales! Meton...
METON What d'you want with me?
PITHETAERUS I want to give you a proof of my friendship. Use your legs.
METON Why, what have I to fear?
PITHETAERUS It's the same here as in Sparta. Strangers are driven away, and blows rain down as thick as hail.
METON Is there sedition in your city?
PITHETAERUS No, certainly not.
METON What's wrong then?
PITHETAERUS We are agreed to sweep all quacks and impostors far from our borders.
METON Then I'll be going.
PITHETAERUS I'm afraid it's too late. The thunder growls already. (*He beats him*.)
METON Oh, woe! oh, woe!
PITHETAERUS I warned you. Now, be off, and do your surveying somewhere else. (*METON takes to his heels. He is no sooner gone than an INSPECTOR arrives.)*
INSPECTOR Where are the Proxeni?
PITHETAERUS Who is this Sardanapalus?
INSPECTOR I have been appointed by lot to come to Nephelococcygia as inspector.
PITHETAERUS An inspector! and who sends you here, you rascal?
INSPECTOR A decree of Teleas.
PITHETAERUS Will you just pocket your salary, do nothing, and get out?
INSPECTOR Indeed I will; I am urgently needed to be at Athens to attend the Assembly; for I am charged with the interests of Pharnaces.
PITHETAERUS Take it then, and get on your way. This is your salary. (He beats him.)
INSPECTOR What does this mean?

PITHETAERUS This is the assembly where you have to defend Pharnaces.
INSPECTOR You shall testify that they dare to strike me, the inspector.
PITHETAERUS Are you not going to get out with your urns? It's not to be believed; they send us inspectors before we have so much as paid sacrifice to the gods. (*The INSPECTOR goes into hiding. A DEALER IN DECREES arrives*.)
DEALER IN DECREES (reading) "If the Nephelococcygian does wrong to the Athenian..."
PITHETAERUS What trouble now? What book is that?
DEALER IN DECREES I am a dealer in decrees, and I have come here to sell you the new laws.
PITHETAERUS Which?
DEALER IN DECREES "The Nephelococcygians shall adopt the same weights, measures and decrees as the Olophyxians."
PITHETAERUS And you shall soon be imitating the Ototyxians. (*He beats him.)*
DEALER IN DECREES Ow! what are you doing?
PITHETAERUS Now will you get out of here with your decrees? For I am going to let you see some severe ones. (*The DEALER IN DECREES departs; the INSPECTOR comes out of hiding*.)
INSPECTOR (returning) I summon Pithetaerus for outrage for the month of Munychion.
PITHETAERUS Ha! my friend! are you still here? (*The DEALER IN DECREES also returns.)*
DEALER IN DECREES "Should anyone drive away the magistrates and not receive them, according to the decree duly posted..."
PITHETAERUS What! rascal! you are back too? (*He rushes at him.)*
INSPECTOR Woe to you! I'll have you condemned to a fine of ten thousand drachmae.
PITHETAERUS And I'll smash your urns.
INSPECTOR Do you recall that evening when you crapped on the column where the decrees are posted?
PITHETAERUS Here! here! let him be seized. (*The INSPECTOR runs off*.)
Why, don't you want to stay any longer? But let us get indoors as quick as possible; we will sacrifice the goat inside.
FIRST SEMI-CHORUS (singing) Henceforth it is to me that mortals must address their sacrifices and their prayers. Nothing escapes my sight nor my might. My glance embraces the universe, I preserve the fruit in the flower by destroying the thousand kinds of voracious insects the soil produces, which attack the trees and feed on the germ when it has scarcely formed in the calyx; I destroy those who ravage the balmy terrace gardens like a deadly plague; all these gnawing crawling creatures perish beneath the lash of my wing.
LEADER OF FIRST SEMI-CHORUS I hear it proclaimed everywhere: "A talent for him who shall kill Diagoras of Melos, and a talent for him who destroys one of the dead tyrants." We likewise wish to make our proclamation: "A talent to him among you who shall kill Philocrates, the Struthian; four, if he brings him to us alive. For this Philocrates skewers the finches together and sells them at the rate of an obolus for seven. He tortures the thrushes by blowing them out, so that they may look bigger, sticks their own feathers into the nostrils of blackbirds, and collects pigeons, which he shuts up and forces them, fastened in a net, to decoy others." That is what we wish to proclaim. And if anyone is keeping birds shut up in his yard, let him hasten to let them loose; those who disobey shall be seized by the birds and we shall put them in chains, so that in their turn they may decoy other men.
SECOND SEMI-CHORUS (singing) Happy indeed is the race of winged birds who need no cloak in winter! Neither do I fear the relentless rays of the fiery dog-days; when the divine grasshopper, intoxicated with the sunlight, as noon is burning the ground, is breaking out into shrill melody; my home is beneath the foliage in the flowery meadows. I winter in deep

caverns, where I frolic with the mountain nymphs, while in spring I despoil the gardens of the Graces and gather the white, virgin berry on the myrtle bushes.

LEADER OF SECOND SEMI-CHORUS I want now to speak to the judges about the prize they are going to award; if they are favourable to us, we will load them with benefits far greater than those Paris received. Firstly, the owls of Laurium, which every judge desires above all things, shall never be wanting to you; you shall see them homing with you, building their nests in your money-bags and laying coins. Besides, you shall be housed like the gods, for we shall erect gables over your dwellings; if you hold some public post and want to do a little pilfering, we will give you the sharp claws of a hawk. Are you dining in town, we will provide you with stomachs as capacious as a bird's crop. But, if your award is against us, don't fail to have metal covers fashioned for yourselves, like those they place over statues; else, look out! for the day you wear a white tunic all the birds will soil it with their droppings.

PITHETAERUS Birds! the sacrifice is propitious. But I see no messenger coming from the wall to tell us what is happening. Ah! here comes one running himself out of breath as though he were in the Olympic stadium.

MESSENGER (running back and forth) Where, where, where is he? Where, where, where is he? Where, where, where is he? Where is Pithetaerus, our leader?

PITHETAERUS Here am I.

MESSENGER The wall is finished.

PITHETAERUS That's good news.

MESSENGER It's a most beautiful, a most magnificent work of art. The wall is so broad that Proxenides, the Braggartian, and Theogenes could pass each other in their chariots, even if they were drawn by steeds as big as the Trojan horse.

PITHETAERUS That's fine!

MESSENGER Its length is one hundred stadia; I measured it myself.

PITHETAERUS A decent length, by Posidon! And who built such a wall?

MESSENGER Birds-birds only; they had neither Egyptian brickmaker, nor stone-mason, nor carpenter; the birds did it all themselves; I could hardly believe my eyes. Thirty thousand cranes came from Libya with a supply of stones, intended for the foundations. The water-rails chiselled them with their beaks. Ten thousand storks were busy making bricks; plovers and other water fowl carried water into the air.

PITHETAERUS And who carried the mortar?

MESSENGER Herons, in hods.

PITHETAERUS But how could they put the mortar into the hods?

MESSENGER Oh! it was a truly clever invention; the geese used their feet like spades; they buried them in the pile of mortar and then emptied them into the hods.

PITHETAERUS Ah! to what use cannot feet be put?

MESSENGER You should have seen how eagerly the ducks carried bricks. To complete the tale, the swallows came flying to the work, their beaks full of mortar and their trowels on their backs, just the way little children are carried.

PITHETAERUS Who would want paid servants after this? But tell me, who did the woodwork?

MESSENGER Birds again, aid clever carpenters too, the pelicans, for they squared up the gates with their beaks in such a fashion that one would have thought they were using axes; the noise was just like a dockyard. Now the whole wall is tight everywhere, securely bolted and well guarded; it is patrolled, bell in hand; the sentinels stand everywhere and beacons burn on the towers. But I must run off to clean myself; the rest is your business. (*He departs*.)

LEADER OF THE CHORUS (to PITHETAERUS) Well! what do you say to it? Are you not astonished at the wall being completed so quickly?
PITHETAERUS By the gods, yes, and with good reason. It's really not to be believed. But here comes another messenger from the wall to bring us some further news! What a fighting look he has!
SECOND MESSENGER (rushing in) Alas! alas! alas! alas! alas! alas!
PITHETAERUS What's the matter?
SECOND MESSENGER A horrible outrage has occurred; a god sent by Zeus has passed through our gates and has penetrated the realms of the air without the knowledge of the jays, who are on guard in the daytime.
PITHETAERUS It's a terrible and criminal deed. What god was it?
SECOND MESSENGER We don't know that. All we know is, that he has got wings.
PITHETAERUS Why were not patrolmen sent against him at once?
SECOND MESSENGER We have despatched thirty thousand hawks of the legion of Mounted Archers. All the hook-clawed birds are moving against him, the kestrel, the buzzard, the vulture, the great-horned owl; they cleave the air so that it resounds with the flapping of their wings; they are looking everywhere for the god, who cannot be far away; indeed, if I mistake not, he is coming from yonder side.
PITHETAERUS To arms, all, with slings and bows! This way, all our soldiers; shoot and strike! Some one give me a sling!
CHORUS (*singing*) War, a terrible war is breaking out between us and the gods! Come, let each one guard Air, the son of Erebus, in which the clouds float. Take care no immortal enters it without your knowledge.
LEADER OF THE CHORUS Scan all sides with your glance. Hark! methinks I can hear the rustle of the swift wings of a god from heaven. (*The Machine brings in IRIS, in the form of a young girl.*)
PITHETAERUS Hi! you woman! where, where, are you flying to? Halt, don't stir! keep motionless! not a beat of your wing! (She pauses in her flight.) Who are you and from what country? You must say whence you come.
IRIS I come from the abode of the Olympian gods.
PITHETAERUS What's your name, ship or head-dress?
IRIS I am swift Iris.
PITHETAERUS Paralus or Salaminia?
IRIS What do you mean?
PITHETAERUS Let a buzzard rush at her and seize her.
IRIS Seize me? But what do all these insults mean?
PITHETAERUS Woe to you!
IRIS I do not understand it.
PITHETAERUS By which gate did you pass through the wall, wretched woman?
IRIS By which gate? Why, great gods, I don't know.
PITHETAERUS You hear how she holds us in derision. Did you present yourself to the officers in command of the jays? You don't answer. Have you a permit, bearing the seal of the storks?
IRIS Am I dreaming?
PITHETAERUS Did you get one?
IRIS Are you mad?
PITHETAERUS No head-bird gave you a safe-conduct?

IRIS A safe-conduct to me. You poor fool!
PITHETAERUS Ah! and so you slipped into this city on the sly and into these realms of air-land that don't belong to you.
IRIS And what other roads can the gods travel?
PITHETAERUS By Zeus! I know nothing about that, not I. But they won't pass this way. And you still dare to complain? Why, if you were treated according to your deserts, no Iris would ever have more justly suffered death.
IRIS I am immortal.
PITHETAERUS You would have died nevertheless.-Oh! that would be truly intolerable! What! should the universe obey us and the gods alone continue their insolence and not understand that they must submit to the law of the strongest in their due turn? But tell me, where are you flying to?
IRIS I? The messenger of Zeus to mankind, I am going to tell them to sacrifice sheep and oxen on the altars and to fill their streets with the rich smoke of burning fat.
PITHETAERUS Of which gods are you speaking?
IRIS Of which? Why, of ourselves, the gods of heaven.
PITHETAERUS You, gods?
IRIS Are there others then?
PITHETAERUS Men now adore the birds as gods, and it's to them, by Zeus, that they must offer sacrifices, and not to Zeus at all!
IRIS (*in tragic style*) Oh! fool! fool! fool! Rouse not the wrath of the gods, for it is terrible indeed. Armed with the brand of Zeus, justice would annihilate your race; the lightning would strike you as it did Licymnius and consume both your body and the porticos of your palace.
PITHETAERUS Here! that's enough tall talk. Just you listen and keep quiet! Do you take me for a Lydian or a Phrygian and think to frighten me with your big words? Know, that if Zeus worries me again, I shall go at the head of my eagles, who are armed with lightning, and reduce his dwelling and that of Amphion to cinders. I shall send more than six hundred porphyrions clothed in leopards' skins up to heaven against him; and formerly a single Porphyrion gave him enough to do. As for you, his messenger, if you annoy me, I shall begin by getting between your thighs, and even though you are Iris, you will be surprised at the erection the old man can produce; it's three times as good as the ram on a ship's prow!
IRIS May you perish, you wretch, you and your infamous words!
PITHETAERUS Won't you get out of here quickly? Come, stretch your wings or look out for squalls!
IRIS If my father does not punish you for your insults... (*The Machine takes IRIS away.)*
PITHETAERUS Ha!... but just you be off elsewhere to roast younger folk than us with your lightning.
CHORUS (*singing*) We forbid the gods, the sons of Zeus, to pass through our city and the mortals to send them the smoke of their sacrifices by this road.
PITHETAERUS It's odd that the messenger we sent to the mortals has never returned. (*The HERALD enters, wearing a golden garland on his head.)*
HERALD Oh! blessed Pithetaerus, very wise, very illustrious, very gracious, thrice happy, very...Come, prompt me, somebody, do
PITHETAERUS Get to your story!
HERALD All peoples are filled with admiration for your wisdom, and they award you this golden crown.
PITHETAERUS I accept it. But tell me, why do the people admire me?

HERALD Oh you, who have founded so illustrious a city in the air, you know not in what esteem men hold you and how many there are who burn with desire to dwell in it. Before your city was built, all men had a mania for Sparta; long hair and fasting were held in honour, men went dirty like Socrates and carried staves. Now all is changed. Firstly, as soon as it's dawn, they all spring out of bed together to go and seek their food, the same as you do; then they fly off towards the notices and finally devour the decrees. The bird-madness is so clear that many actually bear the names of birds. There is a halting victualler, who styles himself the partridge; Menippus calls himself the swallow; Opuntius the one-eyed crow; Philocles the lark; Theogenes the fox-goose; Lycurgus the ibis; Chaerephon the bat; Syracosius the magpie; Midias the quail; indeed he looks like a quail that has been hit hard on the head. Out of love for the birds they repeat all the songs which concern the swallow, the teal, the goose or the pigeon; in each verse you see wings, or at all events a few feathers. This is what is happening down there. Finally, there are more than ten thousand folk who are coming here from earth to ask you for feathers and hooked claws; so, mind you supply yourself with wings for the immigrants.

PITHETAERUS Ah! by Zeus, there's no time for idling. (*To some slaves*) Go as quick as possible and fill every hamper, every basket you can find with wings. Manes will bring them to me outside the walls, where I will welcome those who present themselves.

CHORUS (*Singing*) This town will soon be inhabited by a crowd of men. Fortune favours us alone and thus they have fallen in love with our city.

PITHETAERUS (*to the slave MANES, who brings in a basket full of wings*) Come, hurry up and bring them along.

CHORUS (*singing*) Will not man find here everything that can please him-wisdom, love, the divine Graces, the sweet face of gentle peace?

PITHETAERUS (as MANES Comes in with another basket) Oh! you lazy servant! won't you hurry yourself?

CHORUS (singing) Let a basket of wings be brought speedily. Come, beat him as I do, and put some life into him; he is as lazy as an ass.

PITHETAERUS Aye, Manes is a great craven.

CHORUS (*singing*) Begin by putting this heap of wings in order; divide them in three parts according to the birds from whom they came; the singing, the prophetic and the aquatic birds; then you must take care to distribute them to the men according to their character.

PITHETAERUS (*to MANES, who is bringing in another basket*) Oh! by the kestrels! I can keep my hands off you no longer; you are too slow and lazy altogether. (*He hits MANES, who runs away. A young PARRICIDE enters.)*

PARRICIDE (singing) Oh! might I but become an eagle, who soars in the skies! Oh! might I fly above the azure waves of the barren sea!

PITHETAERUS Ha! it would seem the news was true; I hear someone coming who talks of wings.

PARRICIDE Nothing is more charming than to fly; I am bird-mad and fly towards you, for I want to live with you and to obey your laws.

PITHETAERUS Which laws? The birds have many laws.

PARRICIDE All of them; but the one that pleases me most is that among
the birds it is considered a fine thing to peck and strangle one's father.

PITHETAERUS Yes, by Zeus! according to us, he who dares to strike his father, while still a chick, is a brave fellow.

PARRICIDE And therefore I want to dwell here, for I want to strangle my father and inherit his wealth.

PITHETAERUS But we have also an ancient law written in the code of the storks, which runs thus, "When the stork father has reared his young and has taught them to fly, the young must in their turn support the father."

PARRICIDE (*petulantly*) It's hardly worth while coming all this distance to be compelled to keep my father!

PITHETAERUS No, no, young friend, since you have come to us with such willingness, I am going to give you these black wings, as though you were an orphan bird; furthermore, some good advice, that I received myself in infancy. Don't strike your father, but take these wings in one hand and these spurs in the other; imagine you have a cock's crest on your head and go and mount guard and fight; live on your pay and respect your father's life. You're a gallant fellow! Very well, then! Fly to Thrace and fight.

PARRICIDE By Bacchus! You're right; I will follow your counsel.

PITHETAERUS It's acting wisely, by Zeus. (*The PARRICIDE departs, and the dithyrambic poet CINESIAS arrives.)*

CINESIAS (*singing*) "On my light pinions I soar off to Olympus; in its capricious flight my Muse flutters along the thousand paths of poetry in turn..."

PITHETAERUS This is a fellow will need a whole shipload of wings.

CINESIAS (*singing*) "...and being fearless and vigorous, it is seeking fresh outlet."

PITHETAERUS Welcome, Cinesias, you lime-wood man! Why have you come here twisting your game leg in circles?

CINESIAS (singing) "I want to become a bird, a tuneful nightingale."

PITHETAERUS Enough of that sort of ditty. Tell me what you want.

CINESIAS Give me wings and I will fly into the topmost airs to gather fresh songs in the clouds, in the midst of the vapours and the fleecy snow.

PITHETAERUS Gather songs in the clouds?

CINESIAS 'Tis on them the whole of our latter-day art depends. The most brilliant dithyrambs are those that flap their wings in empty space and are clothed in mist and dense obscurity. To appreciate this, just listen.

PITHETAERUS Oh! no, no, no!

CINESIAS By Hermes! but indeed you shall. (*He sings*.) "I shall travel through thine ethereal empire like a winged bird, who cleaveth space with his long neck..."

PITHETAERUS Stop! Way enough!

CINESIAS "...as I soar over the seas, carried by the breath of the winds..."

PITHETAERUS By Zeus! I'll cut your breath short. (*He picks up a pair of wings and begins trying to stop CINESIAS' mouth with them*.)

CINESIAS (*running away*) "...now rushing along the tracks of Notus, now nearing Boreas across the infinite wastes of the ether." Ah! Old man, that's a pretty and clever idea truly!

PITHETAERUS What! are you not delighted to be cleaving the air?

CINESIAS To treat a dithyrambic poet, for whom the tribes dispute with each other, in this style!

PITHETAERUS Will you stay with us and form a chorus of winged birds as slender as Leotrophides for the Cecropid tribe?

CINESIAS You are making game of me, that's clear; but know that I shall never leave you in peace if I do not have wings wherewith to traverse the air. (*CINESIAS departs and an INFORMER arrives.)*

INFORMER What are these birds with downy feathers, who look so pitiable to me? Tell me, oh swallow with the long dappled wings.
PITHETAERUS Oh! it's a regular invasion that threatens us. Here comes another one, humming along.
INFORMER Swallow with the long dappled wings, once more I summon you.
PITHETAERUS It's his cloak I believe he's addressing; it stands in great need of the swallows' return.
INFORMER Where is he who gives out wings to all comers?
PITHETAERUS Here I am, but you must tell me for what purpose you want them.
INFORMER Ask no questions. I want wings, and wings I must have.
PITHETAERUS Do you want to fly straight to Pellene?
INFORMER I? Why, I am an accuser of the islands, an informer...
PITHETAERUS A fine trade, truly!
INFORMER ...a hatcher of lawsuits. Hence I have great need of wingsto prowl round the cities and drag them before justice.
PITHETAERUS Would you do this better if you had wings?
INFORMER No, but I should no longer fear the pirates; I should return with the cranes, loaded with a supply of lawsuits by way of ballast.
PITHETAERUS So it seems, despite all your youthful vigour, you make it your trade to denounce strangers?
INFORMER Well, and why not? I don't know how to dig.
PITHETAERUS But, by Zeus! there are honest ways of gaining a living at your age without all this infamous trickery.
INFORMER My friend, I am asking you for wings, not for words.
PITHETAERUS It's just my words that gives you wings.
INFORMER And how can you give a man wings with your words?
PITHETAERUS They all start this way.
INFORMER How?
PITHETAERUS Have you not often heard the father say to young men in the barbers' shops, "It's astonishing how Diitrephes' advice has made my son fly to horse-riding."-"Mine," says another, "has flown towards tragic poetry on the wings of his imagination."
INFORMER So that words give wings?
PITHETAERUS Undoubtedly; words give wings to the mind and make a man soar to heaven. Thus I hope that my wise words will give you wings to fly to some less degrading trade.
INFORMER But I do not want to.
PITHETAERUS What do you reckon on doing then?
INFORMER I won't belie my breeding; from generation to generation we have lived by informing. Quick, therefore, give me quickly some light, swift hawk or kestrel wings, so that I may summon the islanders, sustain the accusation here, and haste back there again on flying pinions.
PITHETAERUS I see. In this way the stranger will be condemned even before he appears.
INFORMER That's just it.
PITHETAERUS And while he is on his way here by sea, you will be flying to the islands to despoil him of his property.
INFORMER You've hit it, precisely; I must whirl hither and thither like a perfect humming-top.
PITHETAERUS I catch the idea. Wait, I've got some fine Corcyraean wings. How do you like them?

INFORMER Oh! woe is me! Why, it's a whip!
PITHETAERUS No, no; these are the wings, I tell you, that make the top spin.
INFORMER (as PITHETAERUS lashes him) Oh! oh! oh!
PITHETAERUS Take your flight, clear off, you miserable cur, or you will soon see what comes of quibbling and lying. (*The INFORMER flees. To his slaves*) Come, let us gather up our wings and withdraw. (*The baskets are taken away.)*
CHORUS (*singing*) In my ethereal flights I have seen many things new and strange and wondrous beyond belief. There is a tree called Cleonymus belonging to an unknown species; it has no heart, is good for nothing and is as tall as it is cowardly. In springtime it shoots forth calumnies instead of buds and in autumn it strews the ground with bucklers in place of leaves. Far away in the regions of darkness, where no ray of light ever enters, there is a country, where men sit at the table of the heroes and dwell with them always-except in the evening. Should any mortal meet the hero Orestes at night, he would soon be stripped and covered with blows from head to foot. (*PROMETHEUS enters, masked to conceal his identity.)*
PROMETHEUS Ah! by the gods! if only Zeus does not espy me! Where is Pithetaerus?
PITHETAERUS Ha! what is this? A masked man!
PROMETHEUS Can you see any god behind me?
PITHETAERUS No, none. But who are you, pray?
PROMETHEUS What's the time, please?
PITHETAERUS The time? Why, it's past noon. Who are you?
PROMETHEUS Is it the fall of day? Is it no later than that?
PITHETAERUS This is getting dull!
PROMETHEUS What is Zeus doing? Is he dispersing the clouds or gathering them?
PITHETAERUS Watch out for yourself!
PROMETHEUS Come, I will raise my mask.
PITHETAERUS Ah! my dear Prometheus!
PROMETHEUS Sh! Sh! speak lower!
PITHETAERUS Why, what's the matter, Prometheus?
PROMETHEUS Sh! sh! Don't call me by my name; you will be my ruin, if Zeus should see me here. But, if you want me to tell you how things are going in heaven, take this umbrella and shield me, so that the gods don't see me.
PITHETAERUS I can recognize Prometheus in this cunning trick. Come, quick then, and fear nothing; speak on.
PROMETHEUS Then listen.
PITHETAERUS I am listening, proceed!
FROM-ETHEUS Zeus is done for.
PITHETAERUS Ah! and since when, pray?
PROMETHEUS Since you founded this city in the air. There is not a man who now sacrifices to the gods, the smoke of the victims no longer reaches us. Not the smallest offering comes! We fast as though it were the festivall of Demeter. The barbarian gods, who are dying of hunger, are bawling like Illyrians and threaten to make an armed descent upon Zeus, if he does not open markets where joints of the victims are sold.
PITHETAERUS What! there are other gods besides you, barbarian gods who dwell above Olympus?
PROMETHEUS If there were no barbarian gods, who would be the patron of Execestides?
PITHETAERUS And what is the name of these gods?

PROMETHEUS Their name? Why, the Triballi.
PITHETAERUS Ah, indeed! 'tis from that no doubt that we derive the word 'tribulation.'
PROMETHEUS Most likely. But one thing I can tell you for certain, namely, that Zeus and the celestial Triballi are going to send deputies here to sue for peace. Now don't you treat with them, unless Zeus restores the sceptre to the birds and gives you Basileia in marriage.
PITHETAERUS Who is this Basileia?
PROMETHEUS A very fine young damsel, who makes the lightning for Zeus; all things come from her, wisdom, good laws, virtue, the fleet, calumnies, the public paymaster and the triobolus.
PITHETAERUS Ah! then she is a sort of general manageress to the god.
PROMETHEUS Yes, precisely. If he gives you her for your wife, yours will be the almighty power. That is what I have come to tell you; for you know my constant and habitual goodwill towards men.
PITHETAERUS Oh, yes! it's thanks to you that we roast our meat.
PROMETHEUS I hate the gods, as you know.
PITHETAERUS Aye, by Zeus, you have always detested them.
PROMETHEUS Towards them I am a veritable Timon; but I must return in all haste, so give me the umbrella; if Zeus should see me from up there, he would think I was escorting one of the Canephori.
PITHETAERUS Wait, take this stool as well. (*PROMETHEUS leaves. PITHETAERUS goes into the thicket.)*
CHORUS (*singing*) Near by the land of the Sciapodes there is a marsh, from the borders whereof the unwashed Socrates evokes the souls of men. Pisander came one day to see his soul, which he had left there when still alive. He offered a little victim, a camel, slit his throat and, following the example of Odysseus, stepped one pace backwards. Then that bat of a Chaerephon came up from hell to drink the camel's blood. (*POSIDON enters, accompanied by HERACLES and TRIBALLUS.*)
POSIDON This is the city of Nephelococcygia, to which we come as ambassadors. (To TRIBALLUS) Hi! what are you up to? you are throwing your cloak over the left shoulder. Come, fling it quick over the right! And why, pray, does it draggle in this fashion? Have you ulcers to hide like Laespodias? Oh! democracy! whither, oh! whither are you leading us? Is it possible that the gods have chosen such an envoy? You are undisturbed? Ugh! you cursed savage! you are by far the most barbarous of all the gods.-Tell me, Heracles, what are we going to do?
HERACLES I have already told you that I want to strangle the fellow who dared to wall us out.
POSIDON But, my friend, we are envoys of peace.
HERACLES All the more reason why I wish to strangle him. (*PITHETAERUS comes out of the thicket, followed by slaves, who are carrying various kitchen utensils; one of them sets up a table on which he places poultry dressed for roasting.)*
PITHETAERUS Hand me the cheese-grater; bring me the silphium for sauce; pass me the cheese and watch the coals.
HERACLES Mortal! we who greet you are three gods.
PITHETAERUS Wait a bit till I have prepared my silphium pickle.
HERACLES What are these meats?
PITHETAERUS These are birds that have been punished with death for attacking the people's friends.
HERACLES And you are going to season them before answering us?

PITHETAERUS (looking up from his work for the first time) Ah! Heracles! welcome, welcome! What's the matter?
POSIDON The gods have sent us here as ambassadors to treat for peace.
PITHETAERUS (ignoring this) There's no more oil in the flask.
HERACLES And yet the birds must be thoroughly basted with it.
POSIDON We have no interest to serve in fighting you; as for you, be friends and we promise that you shall always have rain-water in your pools and the warmest of warm weather. So far as these points go we are plenipotentiaries.
PITHETAERUS We have never been the aggressors, and even now we are as well disposed for peace as yourselves, provided you agree to one equitable condition. namely, that Zeus yield his sceptre to the birds. If only this is agreed to, I invite the ambassadors to dinner.
HERACLES That's good enough for me. I vote for peace.
POSIDON You wretch! you are nothing but a fool and a glutton. Do you want to dethrone your own father?
PITHETAERUS What an error. Why, the gods will be much more powerful if the birds govern the earth. At present the mortals are hidden beneath the clouds, escape your observation, and commit perjury in your name; but if you had the birds for your allies, and a man, after having sworn by the crow and Zeus, should fail to keep his oath, the crow would dive down upon him unawares and pluck out his eye.
POSIDON Well thought of, by Posidon!
HERACLES My notion too.
PITHETAERUS (*to TRIBALLUS*) And you, what's your opinion?
TRIBALLUS Nabaisatreu.
PITHETAERUS D'you see? he also approves. But listen, here is another thing in which we can serve you. If a man vows to offer a sacrifice to some god, and then procrastinates, pretending that the gods can wait, and thus does not keep his word, we shall punish his stinginess.
POSIDON Ah! and how?
PITHETAERUS While he is counting his money or is in the bath, a kite will relieve him, before he knows it, either in coin or in clothes, of the value of a couple of sheep, and carry it to the god.
HERACLES I vote for restoring them the sceptre.
POSIDON Ask Triballus.
HERACLES Hi Triballus, do you want a thrashing?
TRIBALLUS Sure, bashum head withum stick.
HERACLES He says, "Right willingly."
POSIDON If that be the opinion of both of you, why, I consent too.
HERACLES Very well! we accord you the sceptre.
PITHETAERUS Ah! I was nearly forgetting another condition. I will leave Here to Zeus, but only if the young Basileia is given me in marriage.
POSIDON Then you don't want peace. Let us withdraw.
PITHETAERUS It matters mighty little to me. Cook, look to the gravy.
HERACLES What an odd fellow this Posidon is! Where are you off to? Are we going to war about a woman?
POSIDON What else is there to do?
HERACLES What else? Why, conclude peace.

POSIDON Oh! you blockhead! do you always want to be fooled? Why, you are seeking your own downfall. If Zeus were to die, after having yielded them the sovereignty, you would be ruined, for you are the heir of all the wealth he will leave behind.

PITHETAERUS Oh! by the gods! how he is cajoling you. Step aside, that I may have a word with you. Your uncle is getting the better of you, my poor friend. The law will not allow you an obolus of the paternal property, for you are a bastard and not a legitimate child.

HERACLES I a bastard! What's that you tell me?

PITHETAERUS Why, certainly; are you not born of a stranger woman? Besides, is not Athene recognized as Zeus' sole heiress? And no daughter would be that, if she had a legitimate brother.

HERACLES But what if my father wished to give me his property on his death-bed, even though I be a bastard?

PITHETAERUS The law forbids it, and this same Posidon would be the first to lay claim to his wealth, in virtue of being his legitimate brother. Listen; thus runs Solon's law: "A bastard shall not inherit, if there are legitimate children; and if there are no legitimate children, the property shall pass to the nearest kin."

HERACLES And I get nothing whatever of the paternal property?

PITHETAERUS Absolutely nothing. But tell me, has your father had you entered on the registers of his phratry?

HERACLES No, and I have long been surprised at the omission.

PITHETAERUS Why do you shake your fist at heaven? Do you want to fight? Why, be on my side, I will make you a king and will feed you on bird's milk and honey.

HERACLES Your further condition seems fair to me. I cede you the young damsel.

POSIDON But I, I vote against this opinion.

PITHETAERUS Then it all depends on the Triballus. (*To the TRIBALLUS*) What do you say?

TRIBALLUS Givum bird pretty gel bigum queen.

HERACLES He says give her.

POSIDON Why no, he does not say anything of the sort, or else, like the swallows he does not know how to walk.

PITHETAERUS Exactly so. Does he not say she must be given to the swallows?

POSIDON (*resignedly*) All right, you two arrange the matter; make peace, since you wish it so; I'll hold my tongue.

HERACLES We are of a mind to grant you all that you ask. But come up there with us to receive Basileia and the celestial bounty.

PITHETAERUS Here are birds already dressed, and very suitable for a nuptial feast.

HERACLES You go and, if you like, I will stay here to roast them.

PITHETAERUS You to roast them? you are too much the glutton; come along with us.

HERACLES Ah! how well I would have treated myself!

PITHETAERUS Let some one bring me a beautiful and magnificent tunic for the wedding. *(The tunic is brought. PITHETAERUS and the three gods depart.)*

CHORUS (singing) At Phanae, near the Clepsydra, there dwells a people who have neither faith nor law, the Englottogastors, who reap, sow, pluck the vines and the figs with their tongues; they belong to a barbaric race, and among them the Philippi and the Gorgiases are to be found; 'tis these Englottogastorian Philippi who introduced the custom all over Attica of cutting out the tongue separately at sacrifices. (*A MESSENGER enters.*)

MESSENGER (in tragic style) Oh, you, whose unbounded happiness I cannot express in words, thrice happy race of airy birds, receive your king in your fortunate dwellings. More brilliant

than the brightest star that illumes the earth, he is approaching his glittering golden palace; the sun itself does not shine with more dazzling glory. He is entering with his bride at his side, whose beauty no human tongue can express; in his hand he brandishes the lightning, the winged shaft of Zeus; perfumes of unspeakable sweetness pervade the ethereal realms. 'Tis a glorious spectacle to see the clouds of incense wafting in light whirlwinds before the breath of the zephyr! But here he is himself. Divine Muse! let thy sacred lips begin with songs of happy omen. (*PITHETAERUS enters, with a crown on his head; he is accompanied by BASILEIA*.)

CHORUS (*singing*) Fall back! to the right! to the left! advance! Fly around this happy mortal, whom Fortune loads with her blessings. Oh! oh! what grace! what beauty! Oh, marriage so auspicious for our city! All honour to this man! 'tis through him that the birds are called to such glorious destinies. Let your nuptial hymns, your nuptial songs, greet him and his Basileia! 'Twas in the midst of such festivities that the Fates formerly united Olympian Here to the King who governs the gods from the summit of his inaccessible throne. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus! Rosy Eros with the golden wings held the reins and guided the chariot; 'twas he, who presided over the union of Zeus and the fortunate Here. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

PITHETAERUS I am delighted with your songs, I applaud your verses. Now celebrate the thunder that shakes the earth, the flaming lightning of Zeus and the terrible flashing thunderbolt. CHORUS (singing) Oh, thou golden flash of the lightning! oh, ye divine shafts of flame, that Zeus has hitherto shot forth! Oh, ye rolling thunders, that bring down the rain! 'Tis by the order of our king that ye shall now stagger the earth! Oh, Hymen! 'tis through thee that he commands the universe and that he makes Basileia, whom he has robbed from Zeus, take her seat at his side. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

PITHETAERUS (singing) Let all the winged tribes of our fellow-citizens follow the bridal couple to the palace of Zeus and to the nuptial couch! Stretch forth your hands, my dear wife! Take hold of me by my wings and let us dance; I am going to lift you up and carry you through the air. (*PITHETAERUS and BASILEIA leave dancing; the CHORUS follows them.)*

CHORUS (singing) Alalai! Ie Paion! Tenilla kallinike! Loftiest art thou of gods!

THE END

Tell me in what land flowers grow inscribed

with royal names, and have Phyllis for your own.

Palaemon:

It’s not for me to settle so great a contest between you:
you and he both deserve the calf – and he who fears
the sweetness, or tastes the bitterness, of love.
Close off the ditches now, boys: the meadows have drunk enough.

Eclogue IV: The Golden Age

Muses of Sicily, let me sing a little more grandly.
Orchards and humble tamarisks don’t please everyone:
if I sing of the woods, let the woods be fit for a Consul.
Now the last age of the Cumaean prophecy begins:
the great roll-call of the centuries is born anew:
now Virgin Justice returns, and Saturn’s reign:
now a new race descends from the heavens above.
Only favour the child who’s born, pure Lucina, under whom
the first race of iron shall end, and a golden race
rise up throughout the world: now your Apollo reigns.
For, Pollio, in your consulship, this noble age begins,
and the noble months begin their advance:
any traces of our evils that remain will be cancelled,
while you lead, and leave the earth free from perpetual fear.
He will take on divine life, and he will see gods
mingled with heroes, and be seen by them,
and rule a peaceful world with his father’s powers.
And for you, boy, the uncultivated earth will pour out
her first little gifts, straggling ivy and cyclamen everywhere
and the bean flower with the smiling acanthus.
The goats will come home themselves, their udders swollen
with milk, and the cattle will have no fear of fierce lions:
Your cradle itself will pour out delightful flowers:

And the snakes will die, and deceitful poisonous herbs
will wither: Assyrian spice plants will spring up everywhere.
And you will read both of heroic glories, and your father's deeds,
and will soon know what virtue can be.
The plain will slowly turn golden with tender wheat,
and the ripe clusters hang on the wild briar,
and the tough oak drip with dew-wet honey.
Some small traces of ancient error will lurk,
that will command men to take to the sea in ships,
encircle towns with walls, plough the earth with furrows.
Another Argo will arise to carry chosen heroes, a second
Tiphys as helmsman: there will be another War,
and great Achilles will be sent once more to Troy.
Then when the strength of age has made you a man,
the merchant himself will quit the sea, nor will the pine ship
trade its goods: every land will produce everything.
The soil will not feel the hoe: nor the vine the pruning hook:
the strong ploughman too will free his oxen from the yoke:
wool will no longer be taught to counterfeit varied colours,
the ram in the meadow will change his fleece of himself,
now to a sweet blushing purple, now to a saffron yellow:
scarlet will clothe the browsing lambs of its own accord.
'Let such ages roll on' the Fates said, in harmony,
to the spindle, with the power of inexorable destiny.
O dear child of the gods, take up your high honours
(the time is near), great son of Jupiter!
See the world, with its weighty dome, bowing,
earth and wide sea and deep heavens:
see how everything delights in the future age!
O let the last days of a long life remain to me,
and the inspiration to tell how great your deeds will be:
Thracian Orpheus and Linus will not overcome me in song,
though his mother helps the one, his father the other,
Calliope Orpheus, and lovely Apollo Linus.
Even Pan if he competed with me, with Arcady as Judge,
even Pan, with Arcady as judge, would account himself beaten.
Little child, begin to recognise your mother with a smile:

ten months have brought a mother’s long labour.
Little child, begin: he on whom his parents do not smile
no god honours at his banquets, no goddess in her bed.

Eclogue V: The Dialogue of Menalcas and Mopsus (Daphnis)

Menalcas:

Mopsus, since we’ve met and we’re both skilled,
you at breathing through thin pipes, I at singing verses,
why not sit here amongst this mix of elms and hazels?

Mopsus:

You’re the elder, Menalcas: it’s right for me to obey you,
whether we walk beneath the shade, stirred by the breeze,
or enter the cave instead. See, how the wild vine,
with its wandering shoots, has spread about the cave.

Menalcas:

Only Amyntas can compete with you among our hills.

Mopsus:

Why, is he also trying his utmost to defeat Phoebus in song?

Menalcas:

You begin first, Mopsus, if you’ve any praise for your flame
Phyllis, or for Alcon, or any quarrel with Codrus,
begin: Tityrus will watch the grazing kids.

Mopsus:

I’ll try these verses I carved, the other day, in the bark
of a green beech, and marked with elegiac measure:

then you can order Amyntas to compete with me.

Menalcas:

As much as the pliant willow yields to the pale olive,
as much as humble Celtic nard yields to the crimson rose,
so much, to my mind, Amyntas yields to you,
but say no more, boy: we have entered the cave.

Mopsus:

‘The Nymphs wept for Daphnis, taken by cruel death
(hazels and streams bear witness to the Nymphs),
when sadly clasping the body of her son
his mother cried out the cruelty of stars and gods.
Daphnis, on those days, no one drove the grazing cattle
to the cool river: no four-footed creature drank
from the streams, or touched a blade of grass.
Daphnis, the wild woods and the mountains say,
that even African lions roared for your death.
Daphnis taught men to yoke Armenian tigers
to chariots, and to lead the Bacchic dance
and to entwine the pliant spears with soft leaves.
As vines bring glory to the trees, grapes to the vines,
bulls to the herds, corn to the rich fields,
so you alone to your people. Since the Fates took you,
Pales and Apollo themselves have left our lands.
Often fruitless darnel, and barren oats, spring up
in the furrows we sowed with fat grains of barley:
thistles and thorns with sharp spikes grow
instead of sweet violets and bright narcissi.
Shepherds, scatter the ground with leaves, cover
the streams with shade (such Daphnis commands),
and raise a tomb, and on it set this verse:
“I was Daphnis in the woods, known from here to the stars,
lovely the flock I guarded, lovelier was I.”’

Menalcas:

Divine poet, your song to me is like sleep,
on the grass, to the weary, like slaking one's thirst,
in summer, in a dancing stream of sweet water.
You don't just equal your master in pipe but in song.
Lucky boy, you'll be the next in succession.
Still, I'll sing to you in turn, in whatever way I can, and exalt
your Daphnis to the stars: Daphnis also loved me.

Mopsus:

Could any such gift be greater than this to me?
Not only was the boy himself fit to be sung of,
but Stimichon praised your songs to me long ago.

Menalcas:

'Bright Daphnis marvels at Heaven's unfamiliar threshold
and sees the stars and clouds under his feet.
Then joyful delight seizes the woods, and the fields,
Pan, and the shepherds, and the Dryad girls.
The wolf meditates no ambush for the flock,
nor the nets for the deer: kind Daphnis loves peace.
The un-felled mountainsides themselves send their voice
to the stars in joy: the rocks and woods themselves
now ring with song: 'A god, Menalcas, he is a god!'
O be kind and auspicious to your own! See, four altars:
look, two are yours Daphnis, two more are for Phoebus.
Each year I'll set up dual cups foaming with fresh milk
for you, and two bowls of rich olive oil,
and, most important, to gladden the feast with wine,
I'll pour fresh Chian nectar from the bowls,
if it's cold, before the fire, if it's harvest, in the shade.
Damoetas and Lyctian Aegon will sing to me,

and Alphesiboeus will imitate the leaping Satyrs.
These rites will be yours, forever, when we purify our fields
and when we pay our solemn vows to the Nymphs.
While the boar loves the mountain ridge, the fish the stream,
while the bees browse the thyme, the cicadas the dew,
your honour, name, and praise will always remain.
The farmers will pay their dues each year, this way,
and you too will oblige them to fulfil their vows.'

Mopsus:

What gifts can I give you, for such a song?
The breath of the rising south wind does not delight me
as much, nor the shore struck by the waves, nor those streams
that cascade down through the rock-strewn valleys.

Menalcas:

First I'll give you this frail hemlock pipe.
This taught me: 'Corydon burned for lovely Alexis,'
and this too: ' Whose is the flock? Is it Meliboeus'?

Mopsus:

But you take this crook that, often as he asked it, Antigenes
did not carry off (and once he was worthy of my love),
a handsome one, Menalcas, with even bands of bronze.

Eclogue VI The Song of Silenus

My first Muse was fit to play Sicilian measures,
and never blushed at living in the woods.
When I sang of kings and battles the Cynthian grasped
my ear and warned me: 'Tityrus, a shepherd
should graze fat sheep, but sing a slender song.'
Now (since there are more than enough who desire to sing

translations were of more account, could scarcely have failed to rank high among the cultivators of this branch of literature.

BOOK I.

SATIRE I.

QUI FIT, MAECENAS.

How comes it, say, Maecenas, if you can,
That none will live like a contented man
Where choice or chance directs, but each must praise
The folk who pass through life by other ways?
"Those lucky merchants!" cries the soldier stout,
When years of toil have well-nigh worn him out:
What says the merchant, tossing o'er the brine?
"Yon soldier's lot is happier, sure, than mine:
One short, sharp shock, and presto! all is done:
Death in an instant comes, or victory's won."
The lawyer lauds the farmer, when a knock
Disturbs his sleep at crowing of the cock:
The farmer, dragged to town on business, swears
That only citizens are free from cares.
I need not run through all: so long the list,
Fabius himself would weary and desist:
So take in brief my meaning: just suppose
Some God should come, and with their wishes close:
"See, here am I, come down of my mere grace
To right you: soldier, take the merchant's place!
You, counsellor, the farmer's! go your way,
One here, one there! None stirring? all say nay?
How now? you won't be happy when you may."
Now, after this, would Jove be aught to blame
If with both cheeks he burst into a flame,
And vowed, when next they pray, they shall not find
His temper easy, or his ear inclined?

Well, not to treat things lightly (though, for me,
Why truth may not be gay, I cannot see:
Just as, we know, judicious teachers coax
With sugar-plum or cake their little folks
To learn their alphabet):—still, we will try
A graver tone, and lay our joking by.
The man that with his plough subdues the land,
The soldier stout, the vintner sly and bland,
The venturous sons of ocean, all declare
That with one view the toils of life they bear,
When age has come, and labour has amassed
Enough to live on, to retire at last:
E'en so the ant (for no bad pattern she),
That tiny type of giant industry,
Drags grain by grain, and adds it to the sum
Of her full heap, foreseeing cold to come:
Yet she, when winter turns the year to chill,
Stirs not an inch beyond her mounded hill,
But lives upon her savings: you, more bold,

Ne'er quit your gain for fiercest heat or cold:
Fire, ocean, sword, defying all, you strive
To make yourself the richest man alive.
Yet where's the profit, if you hide by stealth
In pit or cavern your enormous wealth?
"Why, once break in upon it, friend, you know,
And, dwindling piece by piece, the whole will go."
But, if 'tis still unbroken, what delight
Can all that treasure give to mortal wight?
Say, you've a million quarters on your floor:
Your stomach is like mine: it holds no more:
Just as the slave who 'neath the bread-bag sweats
No larger ration than his fellows gets.
What matters it to reasonable men
Whether they plough a hundred fields or ten?
"But there's a pleasure, spite of all you say,
In a large heap from which to take away."
If both contain the modicum we lack,
Why should your barn be better than my sack?
You want a draught of water: a mere urn,
Perchance a goblet, well would serve your turn:
You say, "The stream looks scanty at its head;
I'll take my quantum where 'tis broad instead."
But what befalls the wight who yearns for more
Than Nature bids him? down the waters pour,
And whelm him, bank and all; while he whose greed
Is kept in check, proportioned to his need,
He neither draws his water mixed with mud,
Nor leaves his life behind him in the flood.

But there's a class of persons, led astray
By false desires, and this is what they say:
"You cannot have enough: what you possess,
That makes your value, be it more or less."
What answer would you make to such as these?
Why, let them hug their misery if they please,
Like the Athenian miser, who was wont
To meet men's curses with a hero's front:
"Folks hiss me," said he, "but myself I clap
When I tell o'er my treasures on my lap."
So Tantalus catches at the waves that fly
His thirsty palate—Laughing, are you? why?
Change but the name, of you the tale is told:
You sleep, mouth open, on your hoarded gold;
Gold that you treat as sacred, dare not use,
In fact, that charms you as a picture does.
Come, will you hear what wealth can fairly do?
'Twill buy you bread, and vegetables too,
And wine, a good pint measure: add to this
Such needful things as flesh and blood would miss.
But to go mad with watching, nights and days
To stand in dread of thieves, fires, runaways
Who filch and fly,—in these if wealth consist,
Let me rank lowest on the paupers' list.

“But if you suffer from a chill attack,
Or other chance should lay you on your back,
You then have one who’ll sit by your bed-side,
Will see the needful remedies applied,
And call in a physician, to restore
Your health, and give you to your friends once more.”
Nor wife nor son desires your welfare: all
Detest you, neighbours, gossips, great and small.
What marvel if, when wealth’s your one concern,
None offers you the love you never earn?
Nay, would you win the kinsmen Nature sends
Made ready to your hand, and keep them friends,
‘Twere but lost labour, as if one should train
A donkey for the course by bit and rein.

Make then an end of getting: know, the more
Your wealth, the less the risk of being poor;
And, having gained the object of your quest,
Begin to slack your efforts and take rest;
Nor act like one Ummidius (never fear,
The tale is short, and ’tis the last you’ll hear),
So rich, his gold he by the peck would tell,
So mean, the slave that served him dressed as well;
E’en to his dying day he went in dread
Of perishing for simple want of bread,
Till a brave damsel, of Tyndarid line
The true descendant, clove him down the chine.

“What? would you have me live like some we know,
Maenius or Nomentanus?” There you go!
Still in extremes! in bidding you forsake
A miser’s ways, I say not, Be a rake.
‘Twixt Tanais and Visellius’ sire-in-law
A step there is, and broader than a straw.
Yes, there’s a mean in morals: life has lines,
To north or south of which all virtue pines.

Now to resume our subject: why, I say,
Should each man act the miser in his way,
Still discontented with his natural lot,
Still praising those who have what he has not?
Why should he waste with very spite, to see
His neighbour has a milkier cow than he,
Ne’er think how much he’s richer than the mass,
But always strive this man or that to pass?
In such a contest, speed we as we may,
There’s some one wealthier ever in the way.
So from their base when vying chariots pour,
Each driver presses on the car before,
Wastes not a thought on rivals overpast,
But leaves them to lag on among the last.
Hence comes it that the man is rarely seen
Who owns that his a happy life has been,
And, thankful for past blessings, with good will
Retires, like one who has enjoyed his fill.