



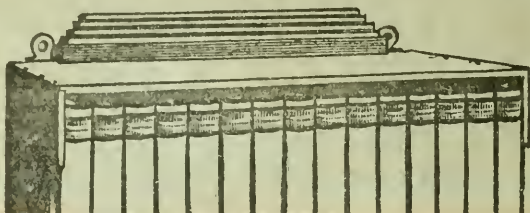
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TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE BY

MICHAEL WODHULL

*WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY HENRY MORLEY*

LL.D., PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE AT  
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## INTRODUCTION.

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WE left the history of the House of Tantalus with a reference to Helen, as we find her in the translated play which is among those which here complete the collection of the extant works of Euripides.

Menelaus sent ambassadors to Troy to demand back Helen, his wife, whom Paris had carried off. The counsels of Antenor were set aside at Troy, by the persuasions of Paris that gave occasion to the Siege of Troy. Agamemnon, on the throne of the deposed Thyestes, had extended his dominion. Homer gave him command over a hundred ships in the expedition against Troy. Some were from Mycene, which although but six or seven miles from Argos had been capital of a separate kingdom until it was reunited to Argos after the defeat and death of Eurystheus; and when Agamemnon succeeded his father Atreus, he enlarged and beautified Mycene. Twenty-eight unsuccessful suitors of Helen were summoned by Menelaus to contribute aid, and under command of the strongest of the confederates, Agamemnon—who was the brother of Menelaus, and who then had by his wife Clytemnestra three daughters, Iphigenia, Chrysothemis, and Electra, also one son, Orestes, then an infant—the expedition sailed for Troy.

But first, when the confederate fleets met as agreed, in the haven of Aulis they were stayed by a dead calm. Guidance was sought from the Oracle, and the soothsayer Calchas reminded Agamemnon of a vow made in the year of Iphigenia's birth that he would sacrifice to Diana the most beautiful production of the year. That was his daughter, Iphigenia, whom now Diana claimed. The fleet would remain bound in Aulis until the sacrifice of Iphigenia. The story of the sacrifice, of the anger of the maiden's mother Clytemnestra, and her lover Achilles, is told by Euripides in his "Iphigenia in Aulis." The Goddess in the act of sacrifice miraculously substituted a hind for the daughter, whom she wafted in a cloud to her temple among the Scythians at Tauris, where she became a Priestess

and where it was the custom of the barbarous people to sacrifice every Greek who landed on their shores.

In the siege of Troy, Paris was slain by the arrows of Philoctetes. Helen then married his brother Deiphobus, whom she betrayed to the Greeks. When she came again into the hands of Menelaus, he was soon reconciled to her. In returning from the ten years' siege of Troy, many of the companions of Agamemnon were lost by wreck on the coast of Eubœa, where the father of Palamedes, to avenge the unjust killing of his son in the camp of the Greeks, had set up false lights. Agamemnon came safely to Argos with the captive prophetess Cassandra, whom he intended for himself. This was a new affront to Clytemnestra; who remembered the murder of her first husband Tantalus and her first infant, who remembered also the sacrifice of Iphigenia, and who had found a paramour in Ægisthus, son of Thyestes. Clytemnestra murdered Agamemnon with an axe as he was coming out of the bath, and then married Ægisthus, who took Agamemnon's throne.

The young Orestes was saved from his stepfather by a faithful servant, who carried him to Phocis, and there put him under the protection of Strophius. Electra remained at Argos and was married to a peasant, lest a husband powerful in the State should help to restore to their birthrights the children of Agamemnon.

When Orestes had passed out of childhood, he went for guidance to the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi, and was directed to avenge the murder of his father. He went then, with his inseparable friend Pylades, in disguise to Argos, and was received in a cottage on the boundary of Argos, by Electra and her peasant husband. He learnt that the peasant, strongly attached to the family of Agamemnon, had cancelled the wrong intended by Ægisthus, and had never claimed rights of a husband. Electra was still a maiden princess. Brother and sister then devised and carried out a plan for the killing of their mother Clytemnestra and Ægisthus.

But when the hands of Orestes were stained with his mother's blood, the Furies rose from Hell, and drove him to distraction. Six days after the murder of Clytemnestra, the citizens of Argos met to pass sentence on Orestes and Electra. Menelaus after a voyage from Troy of seven years' long delays, then landed at Nauplia near Argos, and would have helped his nephew Orestes; but he gave up Orestes and Electra to the people of Argos upon being told by Tyndarus that if he interfered he should never return to Sparta. The Council of Argos gave leave to Orestes and Electra to carry out upon themselves its sentence of death. After consulting with Pylades they resolved to kill Helen and seize their uncle's one daughter, Hermione, as hostage. Helen had vanished; Menelaus breathed revenge; Apollo descended to save Orestes from his uncle, and from the people, by declaring

that Orestes had done what the gods required. But Apollo bade him cleanse away pollution of his mother's blood by a year's banishment, after which he was to submit himself to the judgment of the Areopagus at Athens.

Before the Areopagus one of the Furies was his accuser, Apollo witnessed in his favour. The votes of the Court were equal, and Athené gave the casting vote for his acquittal. But still the Furies were implacable, and Orestes, again appealing to Apollo's Oracle, was ordered to bring the statue of Diana from Tauris to Athens. Orestes sailed upon this mission with Pylades, whom he had affianced to his sister Electra. When the friends landed on the coast of Tauris, the barbarous people seized them and they were carried to Iphigenia to be sacrificed according to the custom of the land. When on the point of being sacrificed, discovery was made, and, with help of Minerva, not only the image of the goddess Diana, but also Iphigenia her priestess, was conveyed to Athens, in whose territories, at Brauronia, Iphigenia remained priestess until her death.

Meanwhile Menelaus had married his only daughter, Hermione, to Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles. Neoptolemus, who had offended Apollo by making the god answerable for the death of Achilles, went to Delphi to appease his wrath. Orestes, who sought Hermione for wife, went also to Delphi and persuaded the people there that Neoptolemus sought plunder of the temple. Neoptolemus was, therefore, murdered by the people of Delphi, as he was going unarmed to the temple to propitiate the god. Then Orestes carried off Hermione, and married her, at the same time when his sister Electra was married to Pylades. The plays of Euripides here leave Orestes ; ruler on the throne of Agamemnon, reconciled to Menelaus, and married to Hermione, through whom, by right of her mother Helen and her father Menelaus, he may hope to bring also under his rule the dominions of Sparta.

Here ends an abstract of an abstract of the History of the House of Tantalus, as given by Michael Wodhull, Esq., to show the relations to each other of the stories upon which Euripides based many of his plays.

This volume completes our set of English versions of all extant plays of Euripides.

H. M.

*April 1888*

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# EURIPIDES.

## HECUBA.

### PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

POLYDORÉ'S GHOST.

HECUBA.

CHORUS OF CAPTIVE TROJAN

DAMES.

POLYXENA.

ULYSSES.

FEMALE ATTENDANT OF HECUBA.

AGAMEMNON.

POLYMESTOR.

TALTHYBIUS.

SCENE.—THE THRACIAN CHERSONESUS.

### THE GHOST OF POLYDORÉ.

LEAVING the cavern of the dead, and gates  
Of darkness, where from all the gods apart  
Dwells Pluto, come I Polydore, the son  
Of Hecuba from royal Cisseus sprung,  
And Priam, who, when danger threatened Troy,  
Fearing his city by the Grecian arms  
Would be laid low in dust, from Phrygia's realm  
In privacy conveyed me to the house  
Of Polymestor, of his Thracian friend,  
Who tills the Chersonesus' fruitful soil,  
Ruling a nation famed for generous steeds ;  
But secretly, with me, abundant gold  
My father sent, that his surviving children  
Might lack no sustenance, if Ilion's walls  
Should by the foe be levelled with the ground.  
I was the youngest of all Priam's sons,  
By stealth he therefore sent me from the realm ;  
Nor could my feeble arm sustain the shield,  
Or launch the javelin ; but while yet entire  
Each ancient landmark on our frontiers stood,  
The turrets of the Phrygian state remained  
Unshaken, and my brother Hector's spear

Prospered in battle ; nurtured by the man  
 Of Thrace, my father's friend, I, wretched youth,  
 Grew like a vigorous scion. But when Troy,  
 When Hector failed, when my paternal dome  
 Was from its basis rent, and Priam's self,  
 My aged father, at the altar bled  
 Which to the gods his pious hands had reared,  
 Butchered by curst Achilles' ruthless son ;  
 Me, his unhappy guest, my father's friend  
 Slew for the sake of gold, and having slain,  
 Plunged me into the sea, that he might keep  
 Those treasures in his house. My breathless corse,  
 In various eddies by the rising waves  
 Of ocean tost, lies on the craggy shore,  
 Unwept, unburied. But by filial love  
 For Hecuba now prompted, I ascend  
 A disembodied ghost, and thrice have seen  
 The morning dawn, to Chersonesus land,  
 Since my unhappy mother came from Troy.  
 But all the Grecian army, in their ships,  
 Here anchoring on this coast of Thrace remain  
 Inactive ; for appearing on his tomb  
 Achilles, Peleus' son, restrained the troops,  
 Who homeward else had steered their barks, and claims  
 Polyxena my sister, as a victim  
 10. Most precious at his sepulchre to bleed ;  
 And her will he obtain, nor will his friends  
 Withhold the gift ; for fate this day decrees  
 That she shall die : my mother must behold  
 Two of her slaughtered children's corses, mine,  
 And this unhappy maid's—that in a tomb  
 I may be lodged, where the firm beach resists  
 The waves, I to her servant will appear,  
 Since from the powers of hell I have obtained  
 The privilege of honourable interment,  
 And that a mother's hand these rites perform :  
 I shall accomplish what my soul desired.  
 But on the aged Hecuba's approach,  
 Far hence must I retreat ; for from the tent  
 Of Agamemnon she comes forth, alarmed  
 By my pale spectre. O my wretched mother,  
 How art thou torn from princely roofs to view  
 This hour of servitude ! what sad reverse  
 Of fortune ! some malignant god hath balanced  
 Thy present misery 'gainst thy former bliss.

[Exit.

HECUBA, attended by TROJAN DAMSELS.

HEC. Forth from these doors, ye gentle virgins, lead me,  
 A weak old woman : O ye nymphs of Troy,

Support your fellow-servant, once your queen  
 Bear me along, uphold my tottering frame,  
 And take me by this aged hand ; your arm  
 Shall be my staff to lean on, while I strive  
 My tardy pace to quicken. O ye lightnings  
 Of Jove, O Night in tenfold darkness wrapt,  
 By such terrific phantoms from my couch  
 Why am I scared? Thou venerable earth,  
 Parent of dreams that flit on raven wing ;  
 The vision I abhor, which I in sleep  
 This night have seen, relating to my son,  
 Who here is fostered in the Thracian realm,  
 And to Polyxena my dearest daughter ;  
 For I too clearly saw and understood  
 The meaning of that dreadful apparition ;  
 Ye tutelary gods of this domain,  
 Preserve the only anchor of our house,  
 My son, who dwells in Thracian fields, o'erspread  
 With snow, protected by his father's friend,  
 Some fresh event awaits us, and ere long  
 By accents most unwelcome shall the ear  
 Of wretchedness be wounded : till this hour,  
 By such incessant horrors, such alarms,  
 My soul was never seized. Where shall I view  
 The soul of Helenus, on whom the god  
 Bestowed prophetic gifts, ye Phrygian maids ?  
 Where my Cassandra to unfold the dream ?  
 With bloody fangs I saw a wolf, who slew  
 A dappled hind, which forcibly he tore  
 From these reluctant arms, and what increased  
 My fears, was this—Achilles' spectre stalked  
 Upon the summit of his tomb, and claimed  
 A gift, some miserable Trojan captive.  
 You therefore I implore, ye gods, avert  
 Such doom from my loved daughter,

## CHORUS, HECUBA.

CHOR. I to thee,  
 To thee, O Hecuba, with breathless speed,  
 Fly from the tents of our imperious lords,  
 Where I by lot have been assigned, and doomed  
 To be a slave, driven by the pointed spear  
 From Troy ; by their victorious arms the Greeks  
 Have made me captive : nothing can I bring,  
 Thy sorrows to alleviate ; but to thee  
 Laden with heaviest tidings am I come  
 The herald of affliction. For 'tis said,  
 Greece in full council hath resolved thy daughter  
 A victim to Achilles shall be given.

The warrior mounting on his tomb, thou know'st,  
 Appeared in golden armour, and restrained  
 The fleet just ready to unfurl its sails,  
 Exclaiming, " Whither would ye steer your course,  
 Ye Greeks, and leave no offering on my grave ?"  
 A storm of violent contention rose,  
 And two opinions in the martial synod  
 Of Greece went forth ; the victim, some maintained,  
 Ought on the sepulchre to bleed, and some  
 Such offering disapproved. But Agamemnon,  
 Who shares the bed of the Prophetic Dame,  
 Espoused thy interest ; while the sons of Theseus,  
 Branches from the Athenian root, discussed  
 The question largely in each point of view,  
 But in the same opinion both concurred,  
 And said that never should Cassandra's love  
 To great Achilles' valour be preferred :  
 Equally balanced the debate still hung,  
 When he, that crafty orator, endued  
 With sweetest voice, the favourite of the crowd,  
 Laertes' son, persuaded all the host,  
 Not to reject the first of Grecian chiefs,  
 And yield the preference to a victim slave :  
 Lest some vindictive ghost, before the throne  
 Of Proserpine arising, might relate  
 How Greece, unmindful of her generous sons,  
 Who nobly perished for their native land,  
 From Ilion's fields departed. In a moment  
 Ulysses will come hither, from thy breast,  
 And aged arms to drag the tender maid.  
 But to the temples, to the altars, go,  
 In suppliant posture clasp Atrides' knees,  
 Invoke the gods of heaven and hell beneath,  
 For either thou wilt by thy prayers avert  
 Thy daughter's fate, else must thou at the tomb  
 Behold the virgin fall distained with gore,  
 And gushing from her neck a crimson stream.

HEC. Wretch that I am ! ah me ! what clamorous sounds,  
 What words, what plaints, what dirges shall I find,  
 Expressive of the anguish which I feel ?  
 Opprest by miserable old age, bowed down  
 Under a load of servitude too heavy  
 To be endured : what sanctuary remains,  
 What valiant race, what city will protect me ?  
 The hoary Priam is no more, my sons  
 Are now no more. Or to this path, or that,  
 Shall I direct my steps ? or whither go ?  
 Where shall I find some tutelary god ?  
 Ye Phrygian captives, messengers of ill,



O ye who with unwelcome tidings fraught,  
 Come hither, ye have ruined me. The orb  
 Of day shall never rise to fill this breast  
 With any comfort more. Ye luckless feet,  
 Bear an infirm old woman to the tent  
 Of our captivity. Come forth, my daughter,  
 Come forth and listen to thy mother's voice,  
 That thou may'st know the rumour I have heard,  
 In which thy life is interested.

POLYXENA, HECUBA, CHORUS.

POLYX. O mother,  
 What mean you by those shrieks? what fresh event  
 Proclaiming, from my chamber, like a bird,  
 Have you constrained me, urged by fear, to speed  
 My flight?

HEC. Ah, daughter!

POLYX. With foreboding voice,  
 Why do you call me? these are evil omens.

HEC. Alas! thy life, Polyxena.

POLYX. Speak out,  
 Nor aggravate the horrors yet untold  
 By long suspense. I fear, O mother, much  
 I fear. What mean those oft repeated groans?

HEC. Thou child of a most miserable mother!

POLYX. Why speak you thus?

HEC. The Greeks, with one consent,  
 Resolve that on the tomb of Peleus' son  
 Thou shalt be sacrificed.

POLYX. What boundless woes  
 Are these which to your daughter you announce!  
 Yet, O my mother, with the tale proceed.

HEC. Of a most horrible report I speak,  
 Which says, that, by the suffrage of the Greeks,  
 It is resolved to take away thy life.

POLYX. O, my unhappy mother, doomed to suffer  
 Wrongs the most dreadful, doomed to lead a life  
 Of utter wretchedness: what grievous curse,  
 Such as no language can express, on you  
 Hath some malignant demon hurled! no more  
 Can I, your daughter, share the galling yoke  
 Of servitude with your forlorn old age;  
 For like some lion's whelp, or heifer bred  
 Upon the mountains, hurried from your arms  
 Shall you behold me, and with severed head  
 Consigned to Pluto's subterraneous realms  
 Of darkness, there among the silent dead,  
 Wretch that I am, shall I be laid. These tears  
 Of bitter lamentation I for you,

For you, O mother, shed ; but my own life  
I heed not, nor the shame, nor fatal stroke,  
For I in death a happier lot obtain.

CHOR. To thee, O Hecuba, with hasty step  
Behold Ulysses some new message brings.

ULYSSES, HECUBA, POLYXENA, CHORUS,

ULY. Though I presume the counsels of our troops  
And their decision are already known  
To thee, O woman, yet must I repeat  
Th' unwelcome tidings ; at Achilles' tomb,  
Polyxena, thy daughter, have the Greeks  
Resolved to slay ; me to attend the virgin  
Have they commanded : but Achilles' son  
Is at the altar destined to preside,  
And be the priest. Know'st thou thy duty then ?  
Constrain us not to drag her from those arms  
With violence, nor strive with me ; but learn  
The force of thy inevitable woes :  
For there is wisdom, e'en when we are wretched,  
In following reason's dictates.

HEC. Now, alas !  
It seems a dreadful struggle is at hand,  
With groans abounding and unnumbered tears.  
I died not at the time I ought to die,  
Neither did Jove destroy me ; he still spares  
My life, that I may view fresh woes, yet greater,  
Wretch that I am, than all my former woes.  
But if a slave, who not with bitter taunt,  
Or keen reproach, her questions doth propose,  
Might speak to freemen, now 'tis time for you  
To cease, and give me audience while I ask——

ULY. Allowed, proceed ; for I without reluctance  
Will grant thee time.

HEC. Remember you when erst  
You came to Troy a spy, in tattered garb  
Disguised, and from your eyes upon your beard  
Fell tears extorted by the dread of death ?

ULY. I well remember : for by that event  
My inmost heart was touched.

HEC. But Helen knew you,  
And told me only.

ULY. I can ne'er forget  
Into what danger I was fallen.

HEC. My knees  
You in a lowly posture did embrace.

ULY. And to thy garment clung with faltering hand.

HEC. At length I saved and from our land dismissed you.

ULY. Hence I the solar beams yet view.

HEC. What language  
Did you then hold, when subject to my power?

ULY. Full many were the words which I devised  
To save my life.

HEC. Doth not your guilt appear  
From your own counsels? Though your tongue avows  
The generous treatment you from me received  
No benefit on me do you confer,  
But strive to harm me. O ungrateful race  
Of men, who aim at popular applause  
By your smooth speeches; would to Heaven I ne'er  
Had known you, for ye heed not how ye wound  
Your friends, whene'er ye can say ought to win  
The crowd. But what pretence could they devise  
For sentencing this virgin to be slain?  
Are they constrained by fate, with human victims,  
To drench the tomb on which they rather ought  
To sacrifice the steer? or doth Achilles  
Demand her life with justice, to retaliate  
Slaughter on them who slaughtered? But to him  
Hath she done nought injurious. He should claim  
Helen as victim at his tomb, for she  
His ruin caused by leading him to Troy.  
If it was needful that some chosen captive  
Distinguished by transcendent charms should die,  
We were not meant; for the perfidious daughter  
Of Tyndarus is most beauteous, and her crimes  
To ours at least are equal. Justice only  
In this debate supports me: hear how large  
The debt which 'tis your duty to repay  
On my petition: you confess you touched  
My hand, and these my aged cheeks, in dust  
Grovvelling a suppliant; yours I now embrace,  
From you the kindness which I erst bestowed  
Again implore, and sue to you: O tear not  
My daughter from these arms, nor slay the maid:  
Sufficient is the number of the slain. 280.  
In her I yet rejoice, in her forget  
My woes; she, for the loss of many children,  
Consoles me, I in her a country find,  
A nurse, a staff, a guide. The mighty ought not  
To issue lawless mandates, nor should they,  
On whom propitious fortunes now attend,  
Think that their triumphs will for ever last:  
For I was happy once, but am no more,  
My bliss all vanished in a single day.  
Yet, O my friend, revere and pity me,  
Go to the Grecian host, admonish them  
How horrible an action 'twere to slay

These captive women whom at first ye spared,  
 And pitied when ye dragged them from the altars.  
 For by your laws 'tis equally forbidden  
 To spill the blood of freemen, or of slave.  
 Although you weakly argue, will your rank  
 Convince them : for the self-same speech, when uttered  
 By the ignoble, and men well esteemed,  
 Comes not with equal force.

CHOR.   The human soul  
 Is not so flinty as to hear the woes  
 And plaintive strains thou lengthen'st out, nor shed  
 The sympathizing tear.

ULY.   To me attend,  
 O Hecuba, nor through resentment deem  
 That from a foe such counsels can proceed :  
 I am disposed to save thee, and now hold  
 No other language : but will not deny  
 What I to all have said ; since Troy is taken,  
 On the first warrior of the host who asks  
 A victim, should thy daughter be bestowed.  
 The cause why many cities are diseased  
 Is this : the brave and generous man obtains  
 No honourable distinction to exalt him  
 Above the coward. But from us, O woman,  
 Achilles claims such homage, who for Greece  
 Died nobly. Is not this a foul reproach,  
 If, while our friends yet live, we seek their aid,  
 But after death ungratefully forget  
 Past services ? Should armed bands once more  
 Assemble, and renew the bloody strife,  
 Will not some hardy veteran thus exclaim :  
 " Shall we go forth to battle, or indulge  
 The love of life, now we have seen the dead  
 Obtain no honours ? " While from day to day  
 I live, though I have little, yet that little  
 For every needful purpose will suffice.  
 But may conspicuous trophies o'er my grave  
 Be planted, for such tribute to my name  
 Will last to after-ages. If thou call  
 Thy sufferings piteous, hear what in reply  
 We have to urge ; amidst the Grecian camp  
 Are many aged dames, as miserable  
 As thou art, with full many a hoary sire,  
 And weeping bride, torn from her valiant lord,  
 O'er whose remains hath Ida's dust been strewn.  
 Support thy woes : if with mistaken zeal  
 We have resolved to honour the deceased,  
 Our crime is ignorance : but ye barbarians,  
 Pay no distinction to your friends, no homage

To the illustrious dead ; hence Greece prevails ;  
 But ye from your pernicious counsels reap  
 The bitter fruits they merit.

CHOR. Ah, what ills  
 Ever attend the captive state, subdued  
 By brutal violence, and forced t' endure  
 Unseemly wrongs.

HEC. Those words I vainly spoke  
 Thy slaughter to avert, in air were lavished ;  
 But, O my daughter, if thy power exceed  
 Thy mother's, like the nightingale send forth  
 Each warbled note, to save thy life, excite,  
 By falling at his knees, Ulysses' pity,  
 And on this ground, because he too hath children,  
 Entreat him to compassionate thy doom. †

POLYX. I see thee, O Ulysses, thy right hand  
 Beneath thy robe concealing, see thee turn  
 Thy face away, lest I should touch thy beard.  
 Be of good cheer ; I'll not call down the wrath  
 Of Jove who guards the suppliant, but will follow  
 Thy steps, because necessity ordains  
 And 'tis my wish to die ; if I were loth,  
 I should appear to be an abject woman,  
 And fond of life : but what could lengthened life  
 Avail to me, whose father erst was lord  
 Of the whole Phrygian realm ? Thus first I drew  
 My breath beneath the roofs of regal domes ;  
 Then was I nurtured with the flattering hope  
 That I should wed a monarch, and arrive  
 At the proud mansion of some happy youth.  
 Ill-fated princess, thus I stood conspicuous  
 Amid the dames and brightest nymphs of Troy,  
 In all but immortality a goddess ;  
 But now am I a slave, and the first cause  
 Which makes me wish to die, is that abhorred  
 Unwonted name ; else some inhuman lord  
 With gold perchance might purchase me, the sister  
 Of Hector, and full many a valiant chief,  
 Might make me knead the bread, and sweep the floor,  
 And ply the loom, and pass my abject days  
 In bitterness of woe : some servile mate  
 Might bring dishonour to my bed, though erst  
 I was deemed worthy of a sceptred king :  
 Not thus. These eyes shall to the last behold  
 The light of freedom. O ye shades receive  
 A princess. Lead me on then, O Ulysses,  
 And as thou lead'st despatch me, for no hope,  
 No ground for thinking, I shall e'er be happy,  
 Can I discern : yet hinder not by word

Or deed the steadfast purpose I have formed ;  
 But, O my mother, in this wish concur  
 With me, that I may die ere I endure  
 Such wrongs as suit not my exalted rank.  
 For whosoe'er hath not been used to taste  
 Of sorrow, bears indeed the galling yoke,  
 Yet is he grieved, when he to such constraint  
 Submits his neck : but they who die may find  
 A bliss beyond the living ; for to live  
 Ignobly were the utmost pitch of shame.

CHOR. A great distinction, and among mankind  
 The most conspicuous, is to spring from sires  
 Renowned for virtue ; generous souls hence raise  
 To heights sublimer an ennobled name.

2.3.2  
 HEC. Thou, O my daughter, well indeed hast spoken ;  
 Yet these exalted sentiments of thine  
 To me will cause fresh grief ; but, if the son  
 Of Peleus must be gratified, and Greece  
 Avoid reproach, Ulysses, slay not her,  
 But me, conducting to Achilles' tomb,  
 Transpierce with unrelenting hand. I bore  
 Paris, whose shafts the son of Thetis slew.

ULY. Not thee for victim, O thou aged dame,  
 But her, Achilles' spectre hath demanded.

HEC. Yet slay me with my daughter ; so shall earth,  
 And the deceased who claims these hateful rites,  
 A twofold portion drink of human gore.

ULY. Enough in her of victims ; let no more  
 Be added : would to Heaven we were not bound  
 To offer up 'this one !

HEC. The dread behests  
 Of absolute necessity require,  
 That with my daughter I should die.

ULY. What mean'st thou ?  
 I know no lord to counteract my will.

HEC. Her, as the ivy clings around the oak,  
 Will I embrace.

ULY. Not if to wiser counsels  
 Thou yield just deference.

HEC. I will ne'er consent  
 My daughter to release.

ULY. Nor will I go,  
 And leave her here.

POLYX. Attend to me, my mother,  
 And, O thou offspring of Laertes, treat  
 The just emotions of parental wrath  
 With greater mildness. But, O hapless woman,  
 Contend not with our conquerors. Would you fall  
 Upon the earth and wound your aged limbs,

Thrust from me forcibly, by youthful arms  
Torn with disgrace away? Provoke not wrongs  
Unseemly; O, my dearest mother, give  
That much-loved hand, and let me join my cheek  
To yours; for I no longer shall behold  
The radiant orb of yonder sun. Now take  
A last farewell, O you who gave me birth;  
I to the shades descend.

417 HEC. But I the light  
Am doomed to view, and still remain a slave.

POLYX. Unwedded, reft of promised bridal joys.

HEC. Thou, O my daughter, claim'st the pitying tear:  
But I am a most miserable woman.

POLYX. There shall I sleep among the realms beneath,  
From you secluded.

HEC. What resource, alas!  
For me, the wretched Hecuba is left?  
Where shall I finish this detested life?

POLYX. Born free, I die a slave.

HEC. I too, bereft  
Of all my children.

POLYX. What commands to Hector,  
Or to your aged husband, shall I bear?

HEC. Tell them I of all women am most wretched.

POLYX. Ye paps which sweetly nourished me——

HEC. Alas!

My child's untimely miserable fate.

POLYX. Farewell, my mother, and my dear Cassandra.

HEC. To others in that language speak; be theirs  
The happiness thy mother cannot taste.

POLYX. And thou, my brother Polydore, who dweli'st  
Among the Thracians, famed for generous steeds——

HEC. If yet he live; but this I greatly doubt,  
Because I am in all respects so wretched.

POLYX. He lives, and when the hour of death is come,  
Will close your eyes.

HEC. I'm prematurely dead  
While yet alive, bowed down to earth by woe.

POLYX. Now bear me hence, Ulysses, o'er my face  
Casting a veil: for ere I at the altar

Am slain, this heart is melted by the plaints  
Of my dear mother, and my tears augment

Her sorrows. O thou radiant light; for still  
Am I permitted to invoke thy name,

But can enjoy thee only till I meet  
The lifted sword, and reach Achilles' tomb.

[*Exeunt* ULYSSES and POLYXENA.]

HEC. I faint, my limbs are all unnerved; return,  
My daughter, let me touch that hand once more,

Leave me not childless. O, my friends, I perish ;  
 Ah, would to Heaven I could see Spartan Helen,  
 In the same state, that sister to the sons  
 Of Jove, for by her beautiful eyes was Troy,  
 That prosperous city, with disgrace o'erthrown.

## CHORUS.

## ODE.

## I. 1.

Ye breezes, who the ships convey,  
 That long becalmed at anchor lay,  
     Nor dared to quit the strand ;  
 As the swift keel divides the wave,  
 Say whither am I borne a slave,  
 Ordained to tread the Doric land,  
 Or Phthia, where beset with reeds,  
 Apidanus, the sire of limpid rills,  
 Winding a-down the channelled hills,  
     Waters the fruitful meads ?

## I. 2.

Or to that isle, with dashing oar  
 Impelled, shall I my woes deplore,  
     And on the sacred earth,  
 Where first the palm and laurel rose,  
 Memorials of Latona's throes,  
 Which to the twins divine gave birth,  
 Teach the harmonious strain to flow ;  
 With Delos' nymphs Diana's praise resound,  
 Her hair with golden fillet bound,  
     And never-erring bow ?

## II. 1.

Or, pent in some Athenian tower,  
 Devoted to Minerva's power,  
     On the robe's tissued ground  
 While, shadowed by my needle, spread  
 Expressive forms, in vivid thread,  
 Picture the goddess whirling round  
 Her chariot with unrivalled speed ;  
 Or represent the Titan's impious crew,  
 Whom Jove's red lightnings overthrew,  
     Those monsters doomed to bleed ?

## II. 2.

Alas ! my sons, a valiant band,  
 My fathers, and my native land,



Ye shared the general fate.  
 Sacked by the Greeks, Troy's bulwarks smoke,  
 But I, constrained to bear the yoke,  
 Shall soon behold some foreign state,  
 To ignominious bondage led ;  
 And leaving vanquished Asia Europe's slave,  
 Debarred an honourable grave,  
 Ascend the victor's bed.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TAL. Where, O ye Phrygian damsels, shall I find  
 The wretched Hecuba, who erst was queen  
 Of Ilium ?

CHOR. Prostrate near you on the ground,  
 Wrapt in her mantle, there she lies.

TAL. Great Jove !  
 What shall I say ? that thou from Heaven look'st down  
 Upon mankind, or have they rashly formed  
 A vain opinion, deeming that the race  
 Of gods exist, though fortune governs all ?  
 Ha ! was not this the queen of wealthy Phrygia,  
 And was not she the happy Priam's wife ?  
 But her whole city by the hostile spear  
 Is now destroyed, while she a slave, bowed down  
 By age, and childless, stretched upon the ground,  
 Defiles with dust her miserable head.  
 Old as I am, yet gladly would I die  
 Rather than sink into abhorred disgrace.  
 Arise, unhappy woman, O lift up  
 That feeble body, and that hoary head.

HEC. Away ! O suffer this decrepit frame  
 To rest. Why move me ! Whosoe'er thou art,  
 What mean'st thou ? why dost thou molest th' afflicted ?

TAL. Talthybius : me, the herald of the Greeks,  
 O woman, Agamemnon hath despatched  
 To fetch you.

HEC. Com'st thou, by the Greeks ordained,  
 My friend, to slay me also at the tomb ?  
 How welcome were such tidings ; let us go,  
 With speed conduct me thither.

TAL. To inter  
 Your daughter, I invite you ; both the sons  
 Of Atreus, and the assembled Grecian host,  
 Have sent me for that purpose.

HEC. Ah ! what say'st thou ?  
 Thou com'st not to inform me I must die,  
 But to unfold the most disastrous tidings.  
 Then art thou lost, my daughter, from the arms  
 Of thy fond mother torn ; of thee, my child

Am I bereft. But how did ye destroy her,  
Respectfully, or with the ruthless hand  
Of hostile rage? Speak, though it wound my soul.

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TAL. A second time, in pity to your daughter,  
You make me weep; for now while I relate  
Her sufferings, tears bedew these swimming eyes,  
Such as I shed when at the tomb she perished.  
To view the sacrifice the Grecian host  
Were all assembled: taking by the hand  
Polyxena, on the sepulchral hillock  
Achilles' son then placed her: I drew near,  
Attended by the chosen youths of Greece,  
To hold the tender victim, and prevent  
Her struggles. But Achilles' son, uplifting  
With both his hands a cup of massive gold,  
Poured forth libations to his breathless sire;  
And gave a sign to me, through the whole camp  
Strict silence to proclaim. I in the midst  
Stood up and cried: "Be mute, ye Greeks, let none  
Presume to speak, observe a general silence."  
The troops obeyed, and through their crowded ranks  
Not e'en a breath was heard, while in these words  
The chief expressed his purpose: "Son of Peleus,  
My father, the propitiatory drops  
Of these libations which invite the dead  
Accept; O come and quaff the crimson blood  
Of this pure virgin, whom to thee all Greece  
And I devote; be thou benign, O grant us  
Securely to weigh anchor, to unbind  
Our halsers, and on all of us bestow  
A happy voyage to our native land  
From vanquished Troy." He ceased, and in his prayer  
Joined the whole army, when the chief unsheathed  
His golden-hilted sword, and gave a sign  
To chosen youths of Greece to hold the virgin,  
Which she perceived, and in these words addressed  
The warriors: "O ye Argives, who laid waste  
My city, willingly I die, let no man  
Confine these arms, I with undaunted breast  
Will meet the stroke. I by the gods conjure you  
Release, and slay me as my rank demands  
Like one born free; for I from mighty kings  
Descend, and in the shades beneath should blush  
To be accounted an ignoble slave."  
Through all the host ran murmurs of assent,  
And royal Agamemnon bade the youths  
Release the virgin; they their monarch's voice,  
Soon as they heard, obeyed; our lord's behests  
The princess too revering, from her shoulder

Down to her waist rent off the purple robe,  
 Displayed her bosom like some statue formed  
 In exquisite proportion, and to earth  
 Bending her knee, in these affecting words  
 Expressed herself: "If at my breast thou aim  
 The wound, strike here; if at my neck, that neck  
 Is ready bared." Half willing, and half loth,  
 Through pity for the maid, he with keen steel  
 Severed the arteries; streams of blood gushed forth;  
 Yet even thus, though at her latest gasp,  
 She showed a strong solicitude to fall  
 With decency, while stood the gazing host  
 Around her: soon as through the ghastly wound  
 Her soul had issued, every Greek was busied  
 In various labours; o'er the corpse some strewed  
 The verdant foliage, others reared a pyre  
 With trunks of fir: but he who nothing brought,  
 From him who with funereal ornament  
 Was laden, heard these taunts: "O slothful wretch,  
 Bear'st thou no robe, no garland, hast thou nought  
 To give in honour of this generous maid?"  
 Such their encomiums on thy breathless daughter.  
 You, of all women, who in such a child  
 Were happiest, now most wretched I behold.

CHOR. Fate, the behests of the immortal gods  
 Accomplishing, with tenfold weight hath caused  
 This dreadful curse to fall on Priam's house,  
 And on our city.

HEC. X 'Midst unnumbered ills  
 I know not, O my daughter, whither first  
 To turn my eyes, for if on one I touch,  
 Another hinders me, and I again,  
 By a long train of woes succeeding woes,  
 To some fresh object am from thence called off;  
 Nor can I from my tortured soul efface  
 The grief thy fate occasions; yet the tale  
 Of thy exalted courage checks my groans,  
 Which else had been immoderate. No just cause  
 Have we for wonder, if the barren land  
 Cheered by Heaven's influence, with benignant suns  
 Yields plenteous harvests, while a richer soil  
 Deprived of every necessary aid  
 Bears weeds alone. But 'midst the human race  
 The wicked man is uniformly wicked,  
 The good still virtuous, nor doth evil fortune  
 Corrupt his soul; the same unsullied worth  
 He still retains. Is this great difference owing  
 To birth, or education? We are taught  
 What virtue is, by being nurtured well,

And he who thoroughly hath learnt this lesson,  
 Guided by the unerring rule of right,  
 Can thence discern what's base.—My soul in vain  
 Hath hazarded these incoherent thoughts.  
 But, O Talthybius, to the Greeks repair,  
 And strict injunctions give, that no man touch  
 My daughter's corse, but let the gazing crowd  
 Be driven away. For in a numerous host  
 Its multitudes break loose from all restraints,  
 The outrages of mariners exceed  
 Devouring flame, and whosoe'er abstains  
 From mischief, by his comrades is despised.  
 But, O my aged servant, take and dip  
 That urn in ocean's waves, and hither bring,  
 Filled with its water, that the last sad rites  
 To my departed daughter I may pay,  
 And lave the corse of that unwedded bride,  
 Of that affianced virgin : but alas !  
 Whence with such costly gifts as she deserves,  
 Her tomb can I adorn? My present state  
 Affords them not, but what it doth afford  
 Will I bestow, and from the captive dames  
 Appointed to attend me, who reside  
 Within these tents, some ornaments collect,  
 If, unobserved by their new masters, aught  
 They have secreted. O ye splendid domes,  
 Ye palaces once happy, which contained  
 All that was rich and fair ; O Priam thou  
 The sire, and I who was the aged mother  
 Of an illustrious race, how are we dwindled  
 To nothing, stripped of all our ancient pride !  
 Yet do we glory, some in mansions stored  
 With gold abundant, others when distinguished  
 Among the citizens by sounding titles.  
 Vain are the schemes which with incessant care  
 We frame, and all our boastful words are vain.  
 The happiest man is he who, by no ill  
 O'ertaken, passes through life's fleeting day.

[Exit HECUBA.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

By Heaven was my devoted head  
 Menaced with impending ill,  
 What time the pines, whose branches spread  
 Their tutelary shade o'er Ida's hill,

Were laid by Phrygian Paris low,  
That his adventurous bark might stem the tide,  
From Sparta's coast to waft the fairest bride  
On whom the solar beams their golden radiance throw.

## II.

Surrounding labours were at hand  
Leagued with the behests of fate ;  
Then did such madness seize the land,  
As called down vengeance from a foreign state.  
The royal swain with dazzled eyes  
Gave that decree, the source of all our woes,  
When from three rival goddesses he chose  
Bright Venus, and pronounced that she deserved the prize.

## III.

The spear and death hence raged around,  
Hence were my mansions levelled with the ground ;  
Staining with tears Eurotas' tide,  
Too deeply grieved to share the victor's pride,  
The Spartan virgin too in vain  
Bewails her favoured youth untimely slain,  
While, sprinkling ashes o'er their vest  
And hoary head, the matrons bend  
O'er their sons' urns ; their groans to Heaven ascend,  
They tear their cheeks, and beat their miserable breast.

## ATTENDANT, CHORUS.

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ATT. Where is the wretched Hecuba, my friends,  
Who in her woes surpasses all, or male,  
Or of the female race ? her none can rob  
Of her just claim, pre-eminence in grief.

CHOR. With the harsh sounds of that ill-boding tongue,  
O wretch, what mean'st thou ? wilt thou never cease  
To be th' unwelcome herald of affliction ?

ATT. Most grievous are the tidings which I bring  
To Hecuba, nor easy were the task  
In words auspicious to make known to mortals  
Such dire calamities.

CHOR. From her apartment  
She seasonably comes forth to give thee audience.

## HECUBA, ATTENDANT, CHORUS.

ATT. O most unfortunate, whose woes exceed  
All that the power of language can express,  
My queen, you perish, doomed no more to view  
The blessed light ; of children, husband, city,  
Bereft and ruined.

HEC. Nothing hast thou told

But what I knew, thou only com'st t' insult me :  
 Yet wherefore dost thou bring to me this corse  
 Of my Polyxena, o'er whom 'twas said  
 The Grecian host with pious zeal all vied  
 To heap a tomb ?

ATT. She knows not, but laments  
 For the deceased Polyxena alone,  
 And to her recent woes is yet a stranger.

HEC. Ah, bring'st thou the inspired prophetic head,  
 And the dishevelled tresses of Cassandra ?

ATT. You speak of one yet living, but bewail not  
 This the deceased : survey the naked corse  
 Of him whose death to you will seem most strange  
 And most unlooked for.

HEC. Ha, I see my son,  
 My dearest Polydore, whom he of Thrace  
 Beneath his roof protected. I am ruined ;  
 Now utterly I perish. O my son,  
 For thee, for thee I wake the frantic dirge,  
 By that malignant demon which assumed  
 Thy voice, thy semblance, recently apprized  
 Of this calamity.

ATT. O wretched mother,  
 Know you then what was your son's fate ?

HEC. A sight  
 Incredible and new to me is that  
 Which I behold : for from my former woes  
 Spring woes in long succession, and the day  
 When I shall cease to weep, shall cease to groan,  
 Will never come.

CHOR. The woes which we endure  
 Alas ! are dreadful.

HEC. O my son, thou son  
 Of an ill fated mother, by what death  
 Didst thou expire ? through what disastrous cause  
 Here liest thou prostrate ? ah, what bloody hand—

ATT. I know not : on the shore his corse I found.

HEC. Cast up by the impetuous waves, or pierced  
 With murderous spear ?

ATT. The surges of the deep  
 Had thrown it on the sand.

HEC. Alas !, too well  
 I comprehend the meaning of the dream  
 Which to these eyes appeared : the spectre borne  
 On sable pinions no illusion proved,  
 When, O my son, thee, thee it represented  
 No longer dwelling in the realms of light.

CHOR. Instructed by that vision, canst thou name  
 The murderer ?

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 HEC. 'Twas my friend, the Thracian king,  
 With whom in secrecy his aged sire  
 Had placed him.

CHOR. Ha ! what mean'st thou ? to possess  
 That gold by slaying him ?

HEC. O, 'twas a deed  
 Unutterable, a deed without a name,  
 Surpassing all astonishment, unholy,  
 And not to be endured. Where now the laws  
 Of hospitality ? Accursed man,  
 How cruelly hast thou with reeking sword  
 Transpierced this unresisting boy, nor heard  
 The gentle voice of pity !

CHOR. Hapless queen,  
 How hath some demon, thy malignant foe,  
 Rendered thee of all mortals the most wretched :  
 But I behold great Agamemnon come,  
 And therefore, O my friends, let us be silent.

AGAMEMNON, HECUBA, CHORUS.

720  
 AGA. Whence this delay ? why go you not t' inter,  
 O Hecuba, your daughter, whom Talthybius  
 Directed that no Greek might be allowed  
 To touch ? We therefore have with your request  
 Complied, nor moved the corse. But you remain  
 Inactive, which I wonder at, and come  
 To fetch you, for each previous solemn rite  
 That best might please, if aught such rites can please,  
 Have we performed. But ah, what Trojan youth  
 Do I behold lie breathless in the tent ?  
 For that he was no Greek, the garb informs me  
 In which he's clad.

HEC. Thou wretch, for of myself  
 I speak, when thee, O Hecuba, I name ;  
 What shall I do, at Agamemnon's knees  
 Fall prostrate, or in silence bear my woes ?

AGA. Why weep, with face averted, yet refuse  
 T' inform me what hath happened ? who is he ?

HEC. But from his knees, if, deeming me a slave  
 And enemy, the monarch should repel me,  
 This would but make my sorrows yet more poignant.

AGA. I am no seer, nor can I uninformed  
 Trace out the secret purpose of your soul.

745  
 HEC. Am I mistaken then, while I suppose  
 A foe in him who doth not mean me ill ?

AGA. If 'tis your wish I should not be apprized,  
 We both are of one mind ; you will not speak,  
 And I as little am disposed to hear.

HEC. Without his aid no vengeance for my child

Can I obtain : yet why deliberate thus ?  
 Prosper or fail I must take courage now.  
 O royal Agamemnon, by those knees  
 A suppliant I conjure you, by that beard,  
 And that right hand, victorious o'er your foes.

AGA. What do you wish for ? To obtain your freedom ?  
 This were not difficult.

HEC. No, give me vengeance  
 On yonder guilty wretch, and I am willing  
 To linger out the remnant of my life  
 In servitude.

AGA. Then why implore our aid ?

HEC. For reasons you suspect not. Do you see  
 That breathless corse o'er which my tears I shed ?

AGA. The corse I see ; but cannot comprehend  
 What follows next.

HEC. Him erst I bore and nurtured.

AGA. Is the deceased, O miserable dame,  
 One of your children ?

HEC. Not of those who fell  
 Beneath Troy's walls.

AGA. What ! had you other sons ?

HEC. Yes, him you see, born in an evil hour.

AGA. But where was he when Ilium was destroyed ?

HEC. His father, apprehensive of his death,  
 Conveyed him thence.

AGA. From all the other children  
 Which then he had, where placed he this apart ?

HEC. In this same region where his corse was found.

AGA. With Polymestor, sovereign of the land ?

HEC. He, to preserve that execrable gold,  
 Was hither sent.

AGA. But, by what ruthless hand,  
 And how, was he despatched ?

HEC. By whom beside ?  
 The murderer was his friend, the Thracian king.

AGA. Was he thus eager ? O abandoned wretch,  
 To seize the gold !

HEC. E'en thus : soon as he knew  
 Troy was o'erthrown.

AGA. But where did you discover  
 The body, or who brought it ?

HEC. On the shore  
 This servant found it.

AGA. Or in quest of him  
 Or other task then busied ?

HEC. To fetch water  
 To lave Polyxena's remains she went.



AGA. When he had slain him, it appears, his friend  
Did cast him forth.

HEC. He to the waves consigned  
The stripling's mangled corse.

AGA. O wretched woman,  
Surrounded by immeasurable woes.

HEC. I am undone ; no farther ill remains  
For me t' experience.

AGA. Ah ! what woman e'er  
Was born to such calamities ?

HEC. Not one  
Exists, whose sorrows equal mine, unless  
You of Calamity herself would speak.  
Yet hear the motive why I clasp your knees.  
If I appear to merit what I suffer,  
I must be patient ; but if not, avenge  
My wrongs upon the man who 'gainst his guest  
Such treachery could commit, who, nor the gods  
Of Erebus beneath, nor those who rule  
In Heaven above regarding, this vile deed,  
Did perpetrate, e'en he with whom I oft  
Partook the feast, on whom I showered each bounty,  
Esteeming him the first of all my friends ;  
Yet, when at Ilium's palace with respect  
He had been treated, a deliberate scheme  
Of murder forming, he destroyed my sor,  
On whom he deigned not to bestow a tomb,  
But threw his corse into the briny deep.  
Though I indeed am feeble, and a slave,  
Yet mighty are the gods, and by their law  
The world is ruled : for by that law we learn  
That there are gods, and can mark out the bounds  
Of justice and injustice ; if such law  
To you transmitted, be infringed, if they  
Who kill their guests, or dare with impious hand  
To violate the altars of the gods,  
Unpunished 'scape, no equity is left  
Among mankind. Deeming such base connivance  
Unworthy of yourself, revere my woes,  
Have pity on me, like a painter take  
Your stand to view me, and observe the number  
Of my afflictions ; once was I a queen,  
But now am I a slave ; in many a son  
I once was rich, but now am I both old  
And of my children reft, without a city,  
Forlorn, and of all mortals the most wretched.  
But whither would you go ? With you I seem  
To have no interest. Miserable me !

Why do we mortals by assiduous toil,  
 And such a painful search as their importance  
 Makes requisite, all other arts attain,  
 Yet not enough intent on the due knowledge  
 Of that sole empress of the human soul  
 Persuasion, no rewards bestow on those  
 Who teach us by insinuating words  
 How to procure our wishes? who can trust  
 Hereafter in prosperity? That band  
 Of my heroic sons is now no more.  
 Myself a captive, am led forth to tasks  
 Unseemly, and e'en now these eyes behold  
 The air obscured by Iliion's rising smoke.  
 It might be vain perhaps, were I to found  
 A claim to your assistance on your love :  
 Yet must I speak : my daughter, who in Troy  
 Was called Cassandra, the prophetic dame,  
 Partakes your bed ; and how those rapturous nights  
 Will you acknowledge, or to her how show  
 Your gratitude for all the fond embraces  
 Which she bestows, O king, or in her stead  
 To me her mother? In the soul of man  
 Th' endearments of the night, by darkness veiled,  
 Create the strongest interest. To my tale  
 Now listen : do you see that breathless corse?  
 Each act of kindness which to him is shown,  
 Upon a kinsman of the dame you love  
 Will be conferred. But, in one point my speech  
 Is yet deficient. By the wondrous arts  
 Of Dædalus, or some benignant god,  
 Could I give voice to each arm, hand, and hair,  
 And each extremest joint, they round your knees  
 Should cling together, and together weep,  
 At once combining with a thousand tongues.  
 O monarch, O thou light of Greece, comply,  
 And stretch forth that avenging arm to aid  
 An aged woman, though she be a thing  
 Of nought, O succour : for the good man's duty  
 Is to obey the dread behests of justice,  
 And ever punish those who act amiss.

CHOR. 'Tis wonderful, indeed, how all events  
 Happen to mortals, and the dread behests  
 Of fate, uncircumscribed by human laws,  
 Constrain us to form amities with those  
 To whom the most inveterate hate we bore,  
 And into foes convert our former friends.

AGA. To you, O Hecuba, your son, your fortunes,  
 And your entreaties, is my pity due.  
 I in obedience to the gods and justice

Wish to avenge you on this impious friend,  
 Could I appear your interests to espouse,  
 Without the troops suspecting that I slay  
 The Thracian monarch for Cassandra's sake :  
 My terrors hence arise ; the host esteem  
 Him our ally, and the deceased a foe :  
 What though you held him dear, his fate, the loss  
 Of you alone, affects not the whole camp.  
 Reflect too, that you find me well disposed  
 To share your toils, and in your cause exert  
 My utmost vigour ; but, what makes me slow,  
 Is a well-grounded fear of blame from Greece.

866  
 HEC. Alas ! there's no man free : for some are slaves  
 To gold, to fortune others, and the rest,  
 The multitude or written laws restrain  
 From acting as their better judgment dictates.  
 But since you are alarmed, and to the rabble  
 Yield an implicit deference, from that fear  
 I will release you ; only to my schemes  
 Be privy, if some mischief I contrive  
 Against the murderer of my son : but take  
 No active part. If, when the Thracian suffers,  
 As he shall suffer, 'mongst the Greeks a tumult  
 Break forth, or they attempt to succour him,  
 Restrain them, without seeming to befriend  
 My interests. As for what remains, rely  
 On me, and I will manage all things well.

AGA. How then ? what mean you ? With that aged hand  
 To wield a sword, and take away the life  
 Of that barbarian, or by drugs endued  
 With magic power ? the help you need, what arts  
 Can furnish ? what strong arm have you to fight  
 Your battles ? whence will you procure allies ?

HEC. These tents conceal a group of Trojan dames.

AGA. Mean you those captives whom the Greeks have  
 seized.

HEC. With them I on the murderer will inflict  
 Due punishment.

AGA. How can the female sex  
 O'er men obtain a conquest ?

HEC. Numbers strike  
 A foe with terror, and the wiles of women  
 Are hard to be withstood.

AGA. They may strike terror,  
 But in their courage I no trust can place.

HEC. What ? did not women slay Ægyptus' sons,  
 And in their rage exterminate each male  
 From Lemnos ? But leave me to find out means  
 How to effect my purpose. Through the camp

In safety this my faithful servant send ;  
 And thou, when to my Thracian friend thou com'st,  
 Say, " Hecuba, erst Queen of Troy, invites  
 Thee and thy children, on thy own account,  
 No less than hers, because she to thy sons  
 And thee the self-same message must deliver."  
 The newly slain Polyxena's interment  
 Defer, O Agamemnon ; in one flame  
 That when their kindred corsés are consumed ;  
 The brother with the sister, who demand  
 A twofold portion of their mother's grief  
 Together may be buried in one grave.

AGA. These rites shall be performed, which could the  
 troops

Set sail, I needs must have denied : but now,  
 Since Neptune sends not an auspicious breeze,  
 Expecting a more seasonable voyage,  
 Here must we wait. But may success attend you ;  
 For 'tis the common interest of mankind,  
 Of every individual, every state,  
 That he who hath transgressed should suffer ill,  
 And fortune crown the efforts of the virtuous.

[Exit AGAMEMNON.]

CHORUS.

I. 1.

905'  
 No more, O Troy, thy dreaded name  
 Conspicuous in the lists of fame,  
 'Midst fortresses impregnable shall stand,  
 In such thick clouds an armed host  
 Pours terrors from the Grecian coast,  
 And wastes thy vanquished land :  
 Shorn from thy rampired brow the crown  
 Of turrets fell ; thy palaces o'erspread  
 With smoke lie waste, no more I tread  
 Thy wonted streets, my native town.

I. 2.

I perished at the midnight hour,  
 When, aided by the banquet's power,  
 Sleep o'er my eyes his earliest influence shed ;  
 Retiring from the choral song,  
 The sacrifice and festive throng,  
 Stretched on the downy bed  
 The bridegroom indolently lay,  
 His massive spear suspended on the beam,  
 No more he saw the helmets gleam,  
 Or nautic troops in dread array.

## II. 1.

While me the golden mirror's aid,  
 My flowing tresses taught to braid  
 In graceful ringlets with a fillet bound,  
 Just as I cast my robe aside,  
 And sought the couch ; extending wide  
 Through every street this sound  
 Was heard ; " O when, ye sons of Greece,  
 This nest of robbers levelled with the plain,  
 Will ye behold your homes again ?  
 When shall these tedious labours cease ? "

## II. 2.

Then from my couch up starting, drest  
 Like Spartan nymph in zoneless vest,  
 At Dian's shrine an ineffectual prayer  
 Did I address ; for hither led,  
 First having viewed my husband dead,  
 Full oft I in despair,  
 As the proud vessel sailed from land,  
 Looked back, and saw my native walls laid low,  
 Then fainting with excess of woe  
 At length lost sight of Ilion's strand.

## III.

Helen that sister to the sons of Jove,  
 And Paris Ida's swain,  
 With my curses still pursuing,  
 For to them I owe my ruin,  
 Me they from my country drove,  
 Never to return again,  
 By that detested spousal rite  
 On which Hymen never smiled,  
 No, 'twas some demon who with lewd delight  
 Their frantic souls beguiled :  
 Her may ocean's waves no more  
 Waft to her paternal shore.

## POLYMESTOR, HECUBA, CHORUS.

950  
 POLYM. For thee, O Priam, my unhappy friend,  
 And you, my dearest Hecuba, I weep,  
 Beholding your distress, your city taken,  
 Your daughter newly slain : alas ! there's nought  
 To be relied on ; fame is insecure,  
 Nor can the prosperous their enjoyments guard  
 Against a change of Fortune, for the gods  
 Backward and forward turn her wavering wheel,  
 And introduce confusion in the world,  
 That we, because we know not will happen,

May worship them. But of what use are plaints  
 Which have no virtue to remove our woes?  
 If you my absence censure, be appeas'd,  
 For in the midst of Thracia's wide domains  
 I from these coasts was distant at the time  
 Of your arrival: soon as I returned,  
 When from the palace I was issuing forth,  
 This your attendant met me, and deliver'd  
 The message, hearing which, I hither came.

HEC. O Polymestor, wretched as I am,  
 I blush to see thy face; because thou erst  
 In happier days didst know me, I with shame  
 Appear before thee in my present fortunes.  
 Nor can I look at thee with steadfast eyes:  
 But this thou wilt not deem to be a mark  
 Of enmity: the cause of such behaviour  
 Is only custom, which forbids our sex  
 To gaze on men.

POLYM. No wonder you thus act  
 Under such circumstances. But what need  
 Have you of me, and wherefore did you send  
 To fetch me from the palace?

HEC. I in private  
 A secret of importance would disclose  
 To thee and to thy children. From these tents  
 Give orders for thy followers to depart. 980

POLYM. [*to his attendants, who retire.*]  
 Withdraw; this solitary spot is safe.  
 For you and the confederate Grecian host  
 Are all attached to me. But 'tis incumbent  
 On you t' inform me what my prosperous fortunes  
 Can yield to succour my unhappy friends!  
 For this is what I wish to do.

HEC. Say first,  
 If he, my son, whom this maternal hand  
 And his fond father in thy mansions placed,  
 My Polydore, yet live. I'll then pursue  
 My questions.

POLYM. Yes, in him you still are blest.

HEC. How kind, how worthy of thyself that speech,  
 My dearest friend!

POLYM. What farther would you know?

HEC. If haply yet the youth remember aught  
 Of me his mother.

POLYM. Much he wished to come  
 And visit you in private.

HEC. Is the gold  
 He brought from Troy preserved?

POLYM. I keep it safe  
 In my own palace.  
 HEC. Keep it if thou wilt :  
 But covet not the treasures of thy friends.  
 POLYM. I do not covet them ; my utmost wish  
 Is to enjoy, O woman, what I have.  
 HEC. Know'st thou then, what to thee and to thy sons  
 I want to say ?  
 POLYM. I know not ; till in words  
 Your thoughts are signified.  
 HEC. Bestow such love  
 On Polydore as thou receiv'st from me.  
 POLYM. What is it that to me and to my children  
 You would disclose ?  
 HEC. The spot, where deep in earth,  
 The ancient treasures of all Priam's house  
 Lie buried.  
 POLYM. Is this secret what you wish  
 Should to your son be mentioned ?  
 HEC. Yes, by thee,  
 Because thou art a virtuous man !  
 POLYM. But wherefore  
 Did you require these children should be present ?  
 HEC. For them to know the secret, if thou die,  
 Will be of great advantage.  
 POLYM. You have spoken  
 Well and discreetly.  
 HEC. Know'st thou where at Troy  
 Minerva's temple stands ?  
 POLYM. Is the gold there ?  
 But by what mark shall I the spot distinguish ?  
 HEC. Above the surface rises a black stone.  
 POLYM. Will you describe the place yet more minutely ?  
 HEC. The gold I in thy custody would place,  
 Which I from Ilion hither bring.  
 POLYM. Where is it ?  
 Concealed beneath your garment ?  
 HEC. 'Midst a heap  
 Of spoils laid up within yon tents.  
 POLYM. Where mean you ?  
 These are the Grecian mariners' abode.  
 HEC. In separate dwellings have they placed the captives ?  
 POLYM. But how can we rely upon the faith  
 Of those within ? doth no man thither come ?  
 HEC. There's not a Greek within ; we are alone :  
 But enter thou these doors : for now the host,  
 Impatient to weigh anchor, would return  
 From Ilion to their homes. Thou with thy children

T' accomplish all the dread behests of fate,  
Shalt thither go where thou hast lodged my son.

[*Exeunt* HECUBA and POLYMESTOR.]

1023  
CHOR. Thou hast not yet received the blow,  
But justice sure will lay thee low.  
Like him who headlong from on high  
Falls where no friendly haven's nigh,  
Into the ocean's stormy wave,  
Here shalt thou find a certain grave:  
For twofold ruin doth impend  
O'er him who human laws pursue,  
And righteous gods indignant view:  
Thee shall the hope of gain mislead,  
Which prompts thee to advance with speed,  
And Pluto's loathed abode descend:  
Soon shalt thou press th' ensanguined strand,  
Slain by a woman's feeble hand.

POLYM. [*within.*] Ah me, the light that visited these eyes  
Is darkened.

SEMICHOR. Heard ye, O my friends, the shriek  
Of yonder Thracian?

POLYM. [*within.*] Yet again, alas,  
My children's foul and execrable murder!

SEMICHOR. My friends, some recent mischief hath within  
Been perpetrated.

POLYM. [*within.*] Though your feet are swift,  
Ye shall not 'scape, for through the walls I'll burst  
My passage.

SEMICHOR. With a forceful hand, behold  
He brandishes the javelin. Shall we rush  
To seize him? This important crisis bids us  
Assist our queen and Phrygia's valiant dames.

HEC. Now do thy worst, and from their hinges rend  
Yon massive gates; no more canst thou impart  
To those lost eyes their visual orbs, nor see  
Thy sons, whom I have slain, to life restored.

HECUBA, CHORUS.

1050  
CHOR. Hast thou, my honoured mistress, caught the Thracian,  
Over this treacherous friend hast thou prevailed,  
And all thy threats accomplished?

HEC. Ye shall see him  
Before the tent, without delay, deprived  
Of sight, advancing with unsteady foot,  
And the two breathless corpses of his sons,  
Whom I, assisted by the noblest matrons  
Of Troy, have slain. Th' atonement he hath paid  
To my revenge, is just. But now behold



He issues forth : I will retire and shun  
The Thracian chief's unconquerable rage.

POLYMESTOR, HECUBA, CHORUS.

1056 POLYM. Ah, whither am I going? wretched me!  
Where am I? what supports me? With these hands  
Groping my way like some four-footed beast,  
How shall I turn me, to the right or left,  
That I those murderous Phrygian dames may seize  
Who have destroyed me? Impious and accurst  
Daughters of Ilium, in what dark recess  
Do they escape me? Would to heaven, O Sun,  
Thou to these bleeding eyeballs could'st afford  
A cure, that thou my blindness could'st remove.  
But hush, I hear those women's cautious tread.  
How shall I leap upon them? with their flesh  
How shall I glut my rage, and for a feast  
To hungry tigers cast their mangled bones,  
In just requital of the horrid wrongs,  
Which I from them, ah wretched me, have suffered?  
But whither, by what impulse am I borne,  
Leaving the corpses of my sons exposed  
To hellish Bacchanalians, as they lie  
Torn by the dogs, and on the mountain's ridge  
Cast forth unburied! Where shall I stand still?  
Or whither shall I go? Like some proud bark  
Towed into harbour, which contracts its sails;  
I to that fatal chamber which contains  
The corpses of my murdered sons rush onward  
With speed involuntary.

CHOR.

Hapless man,  
How art thou visited by woes too grievous  
To be endured! but by dread Jove thy foe,  
On him whose deeds are base, it is ordained  
That the severest punishments await.

POLYM. Rouse, O ye Thracians, armed with ponderous  
spears,

1094  
Arrayed in mail, for generous steeds renowned,  
A hardy race, whom Mars himself inspires.  
To you, O Grecian troops, and both the sons  
Of Atreus, I with clamorous voice appeal:  
Come hither, I implore you by the gods.  
Do any of you hear me? Is there none  
Who will assist? Why loiter ye? Those women,  
Those captives have destroyed me. Horrid wrongs  
Have I endured; ah me, the foul reproach!  
But whither shall I turn, or whither go?  
Through the ærial regions shall I wing  
My swift career to that sublime abode.

Where Sirius or Orion from his eyes  
Darts radiant flames? or, to perdition doomed,  
Shall I descend to Pluto's sable flood?

CHOR. He merits pardon, whosoe'er assailed  
By ills too grievous to be borne, shakes off  
The loathed encumbrance of a wretched life.

AGAMEMNON, POLYMESTOR, HECUBA, CHORUS.

AGA. Hearing thy shrieks I came. For Echo, child  
Of craggy mountains, in no gentle note  
Wafted those sounds tumultuous through the host.  
Had we not known that by the Grecian spear  
The towers of vanquished Phrygia are o'erthrown,  
Such uproar would have caused no small alarm.

POLYM. My dearest friend, soon as I heard your voice,  
I instantly perceived 'twas Agamemnon.  
See you my sufferings?

AGA. Wretched Polymestor!  
Who hath destroyed thee? who bereaved of sight  
Thy bleeding orbs, and those thy children slew?  
Whoe'er the author of such deeds, his rage  
Was dreadful sure 'gainst thee and 'gainst thy sons.

POLYM. With the assistance of those captive dames,  
Me Hecuba hath murdered, more than murdered.

AGA. What mean'st thou? Are you guilty of the crime  
With which he charges you? and have you dared  
To perpetrate an action thus audacious?

POLYM. Ah me! what said you? Is she near at hand?  
Inform me where to find, that I may seize her,  
And scatter wide to all the fowls of heaven  
Her mangled corse.

AGA. Ha! what is thy design?

POLYM. Allow me, I conjure you by the gods,  
To grasp her with this frantic arm.

AGA. Desist,  
And casting forth all rancour from thy heart,  
Now plead thy cause; that, hearing both apart,  
I with unbiassed justice may decide,  
If thou these sufferings merit'st.

1136  
POLYM. I will speak.  
There was one Polydore, the youngest son  
Of those whom Hecuba to Priam bore;  
Him erst removing from the Phrygian realm,  
His sire to me consigned, that in my palace  
He might be nurtured, when that hoary king  
The fall of Troy suspected: him I slew:  
But hear my motives for the deed, to prove  
How justly and how prudently I acted,

Your enemy, that boy, if he survived  
 The ruin of his country, might, I feared,  
 Collect the scattered citizens of Troy,  
 And there again reside. I also feared,  
 That when the Greeks knew one of Priam's line  
 Was living, with a second fleet invading  
 The shores of Phrygia, they again might drain  
 Of their inhabitants our Thracian fields,  
 Involving us, their neighbours, in the vengeance,  
 They on their foes at Ilion wreak. To us  
 Already hath such neighbourhood, O king,  
 Proved baneful. But, apprized of her son's fate,  
 Hecuba drew me hither, on pretence  
 She would inform me where in massive gold  
 The hidden treasures of old Priam's race  
 Beneath Troy's ruins were secured. Alone,  
 She with my children brought me to this tent,  
 That none beside might know. With bended knee,  
 While on a couch I sat, some on my left,  
 And others on my right, as with a friend,  
 Full many of the Trojan damsels took  
 Their places, holding up against the sun  
 My robe, the woof of an Edonian loom:  
 Some feigned t' admire it, others viewed my spear,  
 And stripped me of them both. From hand to hand  
 The matrons, seeming to caress my children,  
 Removed them far from their unhappy sire:  
 And after their fond speeches, in an instant,  
 (Could you believe it?) snatching up the swords,  
 Which they beneath their garments had concealed,  
 They stabbed my sons, whom while I strove to aid,  
 In hostile guise their comrades held my arms  
 And feet: if I looked up, they by the hair  
 Confined me; if I moved my hands, my struggles  
 Proved ineffectual, through the numerous band  
 Of women who assailed me, and to close  
 The scene of my calamity, accomplished  
 A deed with more than common horror fraught,  
 For they tore out my bleeding eyes, and fled.  
 But, like a tiger starting up, I chased  
 These ruthless fiends, and with a hunter's speed  
 Each wall examined, dashing to the ground,  
 And breaking what I seized. These cruel wrongs,  
 While I your interests study to maintain,  
 O Agamemnon, and despatch your foe,  
 Have I endured. To spare a long harangue,  
 The whole of what 'gainst woman hath been said  
 By those of ancient times, is saying now,  
 Or shall be said hereafter, in few words

1187  
Will I comprise ; nor ocean's waves, nor earth,  
Nurture so vile a race, as he who most  
Hath with the sex conversed, but knows too well.

CHOR. Curb that audacious virulence of speech,  
Nor, by thy woes embittered, thus revile  
All womankind ; the number of our sex  
Is great, and some there are, whom as a mark  
To envy, their distinguished worth holds forth,  
Though some are justly numbered with the wicked.

1200  
HEC. O Agamemnon, never ought the tongue  
To have a greater influence o'er mankind  
Than actions ; but whoever hath done well,  
Ought to speak well ; and he, whose deeds are base,  
To use unseemly language, nor find means  
By specious words to colour o'er injustice.  
Full wise indeed are they to whom such art  
Is most familiar : but to stand the test  
Of time not wise enough ; for they all perish,  
Not one of them e'er 'scapes. These previous thoughts  
To you, O mighty king, have I addressed.  
But now to him I turn, and will refute  
The fallacies he uttered. What pretence  
Hast thou for saying, that to free the Greeks  
From such a second war, and for the sake  
Of Agamemnon, thou didst slay my son ?  
For first, O villain, the barbarian race  
With Greece, nor will, nor ever can be friends.  
What interest roused thy zeal ? Didst thou expect  
To form a nuptial union ? Wert thou moved  
By kindred ties, or any secret cause ?  
Greece with a fleet forsooth would have returned  
To lay thy country waste. Who, canst thou think,  
Will credit such assertions ? If the truth  
Thou wilt confess, gold and thy thirst of gain  
Were my son's murderers. Why, when Troy yet flourished,  
Why, when the city was on every side  
Fenced by strong bulwarks, why, when Priam lived,  
And Hector wielded a victorious spear,  
Didst thou not, if thou hadst designed to act  
In Agamemnon's favour, at the time  
When thou didst nurture my unhappy son,  
And in thy palace shelter, either slay,  
Or to the Greeks surrender up the youth  
A living prisoner ? But when Ilion's light  
Was utterly extinguished, when the smoke  
Declared the city subject to our foes,  
The stranger thou didst murder, at thy hearth  
Who sought protection. To confirm thy guilt,  
Now hear this farther charge : if thou to Greece

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 Hadst been a friend indeed, thou should'st have given  
 The gold thou say'st thou keep'st, not for thine own,  
 But Agamemnon's sake, among the troops  
 Who suffer want, and from their native land  
 Have for a tedious season been detained.  
 But thou from those rapacious hands e'en now  
 Canst not endure to part with it, but hoard'st it  
 Still buried in thy coffers: as became thee,  
 Hadst thou trained up my son, hadst thou to him  
 Been a protector, great is the renown  
 Thou would'st have gained; for in distress the good  
 Are steadfast; but our prosperous fortunes swarm  
 With friends unbidden. Hadst thou been in want,  
 And Polydore abounded, a sure treasure  
 To thee would he have proved: but now no longer  
 In him hast thou a friend; thou of thy gold  
 Hast lost th' enjoyment, thou thy sons hast lost,  
 And art thyself thus wretched. But to you,  
 O Agamemnon, now again I speak:  
 If you assist him, you will seem corrupt;  
 For you will benefit a man devoid  
 Of honour, justice, piety, or truth;  
 It might be said that you delight in evil;  
 But, I presume not to reproach my lords.

CHOR. How doth a virtuous cause inspire the tongue  
 With virtuous language!

AGA. On a stranger's woes  
 Reluctant I pronounce, but am constrained;  
 For shame attends the man who takes in hand  
 Some great affair, and leaves it undecided.  
 Know then, to me thou seem'st not to have slain  
 Thy guest through an attachment to my cause,  
 Nor yet to that of Greece, but that his gold  
 Thou might'st retain: though in this wretched state  
 Thou speak to serve thy interests. Among you  
 Perhaps the murder of your guests seems light;  
 We Greeks esteem it base. If I acquit thee  
 How shall I 'scape reproach? Indeed I cannot:  
 Since thou hast dared to perpetrate the crime,  
 Endure the consequence.

POLYM. Too plain it seems,  
 Ah me! that, vanquished by a female slave,  
 Here shall I perish by ignoble hands.

HEC. Is not this just for the atrocious deed  
 Which thou hast wrought?

POLYM. My children, wretched me!  
 And these quenched orbs.

HEC. Griev'st thou, yet think'st thou not  
 That I lament my son?

- POLYM. Malignant woman,  
Do you rejoice in taunting my distress ?
- HEC. In such revenge have not I cause for joy ?
- 1650 POLYM. Yet not so hastily, when ocean's wave—
- HEC. Shall in a bark convey me to the shores  
Of Greece ?
- POLYM. Shall whelm you in its vast abyss  
Fall'n from the shrouds.
- HEC. Raised thither by what impulse ?
- POLYM. Up the tall mast you with swift foot shall climb.
- HEC. On feathered pinions borne, or how ?
- POLYM. With form  
Canine endued, and eyeballs glaring fire.
- HEC. Whence didst thou learn that I such wondrous change  
Shall undergo ?
- POLYM. Bacchus, the Thracian seer,  
Gave this response.
- HEC. To thee did he unfold  
Nought of the grievous sufferings thou endur'st ?
- POLYM. Then could you ne'er have caught me by your wiles.
- HEC. But on this change of being, after death,  
Or while I yet am living, shall I enter ?
- POLYM. After your death, and men shall call your tomb—
- HEC. By my new form, or what is it thou mean'st ?
- POLYM. The sepulchre of that vile brute, an object  
Conspicuous to the mariner.
- HEC. I care not ;  
My vengeance is complete.
- POLYM. Cassandra too,  
Your daughter, must inevitably bleed.
- HEC. Abomination ! On thy guilty head  
These curses I retort.
- POLYM. Her shall the wife  
Of Agamemnon slay, who sternly guards  
His royal mansion.
- HEC. Such a frantic deed  
As this may Tyndarus' daughter ne'er commit !
- POLYM. She next uplifting the remorseless axe  
Shall smite her lord.
- AGA. Ha ! madman, dost thou court  
Thy ruin ?
- POLYM. Slay me ; for the murderous bath  
Awaits you, when to Argos you return.
- AGA. Will ye not drag him from my sight by force ?
- POLYM. Hear you with grief what I announce ?
- AGA. My followers,  
Why stop ye not the miscreant's boding mouth ?
- POLYM. This mouth be closed for ever : I have spoken.
- AGA. Will ye not cast him with the utmost speed

Upon some desert island, since he dares  
To speak with such licentiousness? Depart,  
O wretched Hecuba, and both those corpses  
Deposit in the grave. But, as for you,  
Ye to your lord's pavilions must repair,  
O Phrygian dames : for I perceive the gales  
Rising to waft us homeward ; may success  
Attend the voyage to our native land !  
And in our mansions may we find all well,  
Freed from these dangers !

CHOR.                      To the haven go,  
And to the tents, my friends, t' endure the toils  
Our lords impose : for thus harsh fate enjoins.





# HERCULES DISTRACTED.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

AMPHITRYON.  
MEGARA.  
CHORUS OF THEBAN OLD  
MEN.  
HERCULES.

LYCUS.  
IRIS.  
A FIEND.  
MESSENGER.  
THESEUS.

SCENE.—BEFORE THE ALTAR OF JUPITER, AT THE ENTRANCE  
OF THE HOUSE OF HERCULES IN THEBES.

### AMPHITRYON, MEGARA.

AMP. Is there on earth, a stranger to the man  
Who shared the same auspicious nuptial bed  
With Jove, Amphitryon born at Argos, sprung  
From Perseus' son Alcæus, me the sire  
Of Hercules? He in these regions dwelt,  
Where from the soil a helmed crop arose;  
Mars, a small number of that race, preserved,  
Whose children's children people Cadmus' city.  
Hence Creon king of Thebes, Menæceus' son,  
Derives his birth, and Creon is the sire  
Of this unhappy Megara, to grace  
Whose hymeneal pomp, each Theban erst  
Attuned the jocund lute, into my house  
When Hercules conducted her. But leaving  
This realm where I resided, and his consort  
And kindred, my son chose to fix his seat  
Within the walls of Argos, of that city  
Erected by the Cyclops, whence I fled  
Stained with Electryon's gore: but to alleviate  
My woes, and in his native land obtain  
A quiet residence, this great reward  
He on Eurystheus promised to bestow,  
That he would rid the world of every pest:  
Harassed by Juno's stings, or envious fate,  
With her conspiring: but, his other labours  
Accomplished, he through Tænarus' jaws at length

Went to the house of Pluto, to drag forth  
 Into the realms of day hell's triple hound :  
 He thence returns not. But an old tradition  
 Among the race of Cadmus hath prevailed,  
 That Lycus, Dirce's husband, erst bore rule  
 Over this city, till Jove's sons, Amphion  
 And Zethus, who on milk-white coursers rode,  
 Became its sovereigns. Lycus' son who bears  
 His father's name, no Theban, but arriving  
 From the Eubœan state, slew royal Creon,  
 And having slain him, seized the throne, invading  
 The city with tumultuous broils convulsed.  
 But the affinity which we have formed  
 With Creon, seems to be my greatest curse :  
 For while my son stays in the realms beneath,  
 Lycus th' egregious monarch of this land  
 Would with the children of Alcides kill  
 His consort, by fresh murders to extinguish  
 The past, and kill me too (if one through age  
 So useless may be numbered among men),  
 Lest when the boys attain maturer age,  
 They should avenge their grandsire Creon's death.  
 But I (for my son left me here to tend  
 His children, and direct the house, since he  
 Entered the subterraneous realms of night),  
 With their afflicted mother, lest the race  
 Of Hercules should bleed, for an asylum  
 Have chosen this altar of protecting Jove,  
 Which my illustrious son for a memorial  
 Of his victorious arms did here erect,  
 When he in battle had subdued the Minyans.  
 But we, though destitute of every comfort,  
 Of food, drink, clothing, though constrained to lie  
 On the bare pavement, here maintain our seat,  
 For every hospitable door is barred  
 Against us, and we have no other hope  
 Of being saved. Some of our friends I see  
 Are faithless, and the few who prove sincere,  
 Too weak to aid us. Such is the effect  
 Of adverse fortune o'er the race of men ;  
 May he to whom I bear the least attachment,  
 Never experience that unerring test  
 Of friendship.

MEG.                   Thou old man, who erst didst storm  
 The Taphian ramparts, when thou with renown  
 Didst lead the host of Thebes ; the secret will  
 Of Heaven, how little can frail mortals know !  
 For to me too of no avail have proved  
 The fortunes of my father, who elate

With wealth and regal power (whence at the breasts  
 Of its possessors spears are hurled by those  
 Whose souls the lust of mad ambition fires),  
 And having children, gave me to thy son,  
 Joining a noble consort in the bonds  
 Of wedlock with Alcides, through whose death  
 These blessings are all fled. Now I, and thou,  
 Old man, are doomed to perish with the sons  
 Of Hercules, whom, as the bird extends  
 Her sheltering wings over her callow brood,  
 I guard. By turns they come and question me :  
 " O mother, whither is my father gone ?  
 What is he doing ? when will he return ?"  
 Though now too young sufficiently to feel  
 How great their loss, thus ask they for their sire.  
 I change the theme, and forge a soothing tale,  
 But am with wonder smitten when the doors  
 Creak on their massive hinges, and at once  
 They all start up, that at their father's knees  
 They may fall prostrate. But what hope hast thou  
 Of saving us, or what support, old man ?  
 For I to thee look up. We from the bounds  
 Of these domains unnoticed cannot 'scape ;  
 Mightier than us, a watchful guard is placed  
 At every avenue, and in our friends  
 No longer for protection can we trust.  
 Explain thyself, if thou hast any scheme,  
 By which thou from impending death canst save us ;  
 But let us strive to lengthen out the time,  
 Since we are feeble.

AMP. 'Tis no easy task

In such a situation, O my daughter,  
 To form a sure and instantaneous judgment.

MEG. What is there wanting to complete thy woes,  
 Or why art thou so fond of life ?

AMP. That blessing

I still enjoy, still cherish pleasing hopes.

MEG. I also hope, old man : but it is folly  
 To look for what we never can attain.

AMP. We by delaying might avert our fate.

MEG. But I in this sad interval of time  
 Feel piercing anguish.

AMP. The auspicious gales

Of fortune, O my daughter, yet may waft  
 Both you and me out of our present troubles,

If e'er my son your valiant lord return.

But O be pacified yourself, and cause

Your children to dry up their streaming tears ;  
 With gentle language and delusive tales

Beguile them, though all fraudulent arts are wretched.  
 For the disasters which afflict mankind  
 Are wearied out ; the stormy winds retain not  
 Their undiminished force ; nor are the blest  
 Perpetually blest : for all things change,  
 And widely differ from their former state.  
 The valiant man is he who still holds fast  
 His hopes ; but to despair bespeaks the coward.

CHORUS, AMPHITRYON, MEGARA.

CHOR. Propped on my faithful staff, from home,  
 And from the couch of palsied age,  
 In melancholy guise I roam,  
 Constrained to chaunt funereal strains,  
 As the expiring swan complains,  
 A war of words alone I wage,  
 In semblance, but a flitting sprite,  
 An airy vision of the night.  
 I totter ; yet doth active zeal  
 This faithful bosom still inspire.  
 Ye children who have lost your sire,  
 Thou veteran, and thou aged dame,  
 Doomed for thy lord these griefs to feel,  
 Whose Pluto's dreary mansions claim ;  
 O weary not your tender feet.  
 Like steeds by galling harness bound,  
 To turn the ponderous mill around,  
 I would advance my friends to meet,  
 Yet are my utmost efforts vain,  
 This shattered frame I scarce sustain :  
 Draw near, O take this trembling hand,  
 And holding fast my robe, support  
 My steps, thy needful aid I court,  
 Because I am too weak to stand.  
 Lead on the chief, though now by years  
 Bowed down, who marshalled on the strand,  
 His comrades erst a hardy band ;  
 With him in youth we launched our spears,  
 Nor then belied our native land.  
 See how their eyes dart liquid fire,  
 Those children emulate their sire ;  
 But still hereditary fate,  
 Pursues with unrelenting hate  
 Their tender years, nor can their charms  
 Redeem them from impending harms.  
 What valiant champions of thy cause,  
 O Greece, thy violated laws,  
 When these thy great supports shall fail,  
 Torn from thy fostering land wilt thou bewail.

But I behold the monarch of the realm,  
Tyrannic Lycus, who these doors approaches.

LYCUS, AMPHITRYON, MEGARA, CHORUS.

LYC. This question (if I may) I to the sire  
And consort of Alcides would propose  
(But, as your king, I have a right to make  
Any inquiries I think fit): How long  
Seek ye to spin out life? What farther hope  
Have ye in view, what succour to ward off  
The stroke of death? Expect ye that the father  
Of these deserted children, who lies stretched  
Amid the realms beneath will thence return,  
That ye bely your rank, and meanly utter  
These clamorous plaints on being doomed to die?  
Through Greece hast *thou* diffused an idle boast,  
That Jove enjoyed thy consort, and begot  
An offspring like himself; while *you* exulted  
In being called wife to the first of heroes.  
But what great action hath your lord performed,  
In having slain that hydra at the lake,  
Or the Nemæan lion whom with snares  
He caught, and then did arrogantly boast  
That he had strangled in his nervous arms?  
Will these exploits enable you to vie  
With me? and for such merit am I bound  
To spare the sons of Hercules, who gained  
A name which he deserved not? He was brave  
In waging war with beasts, in nought beside,  
With his left hand he never did sustain  
The shield, nor faced he the pretended spear,  
But with his bow, that weapon of a dastard,  
Was still prepared for flight: such arms afford  
No proof of courage; but the truly brave  
Is he who in the ranks where he is stationed  
Maintains his ground, and sees with steadfast eye  
Those ghastly wounds the missile javelin gives.  
Old man, I act not thus through cruelty,  
But caution; for I know that I have slain  
Creon *her* father, and possess his throne.  
These children therefore will not I allow  
To live till they attain maturer years,  
Lest they should punish me for such a deed.

AMP. Jove will assert the cause of his own son  
But as for me, O Hercules, my care  
Shall be to prove the folly of this tyrant:  
For thy illustrious name I will not suffer  
To be reproached. First from a hateful charge

(And that of cowardice I deem most hateful),  
 Calling the gods to witness, am I bound  
 To vindicate thy honour. I appeal  
 To Jove's own thunder, and th' impetuous steeds,  
 Which drew Alcides' chariot when he sped  
 Those winged arrows to transpierce the flanks  
 Of earth-born giants, and among the gods  
 Triumphant revelled at the genial board.  
 Go next to Pholoe's realm, thou worst of kings,  
 And ask the Centaurs' monstrous brood, what man  
 They judge to be most brave, whether that title  
 Belongs not to my son, who only bears,  
 As you assert, the semblance of a hero?  
 But should you question the Eubœan mount  
 Of Dirphys, where your infancy was nurtured,  
 It cannot sound your praise: you have performed  
 No glorious action for your native land  
 To testify, yet scorn that wise invention  
 The quiver fraught with shafts: attend to me  
 And I will teach you wisdom. By his arms  
 Encumbered, stands the warrior who is sheathed  
 In ponderous mail, and through the fears of those  
 Who fight in the same rank, if they want courage,  
 Loses his life; nor, if his spear be broken,  
 Furnished with nought but courage, from his breast  
 Can he repel the wound; but he who bends  
 With skilful hand the bow, hath this advantage,  
 Which never fails him: with a thousand shafts  
 He smites the foe, no danger to himself  
 Incurring, but securely stands aloof,  
 And wreaks his vengeance while they gaze around,  
 Without perceiving whence the weapon comes:  
 His person he exposes not, but takes  
 A guarded post: for what in war displays  
 The greatest prudence, is to vex the foe,  
 Nor rush at random on their pointed spears.  
 Such reasoning on the subject in debate  
 With yours indeed agrees not: but what cause  
 Have you for wishing to destroy these children?  
 How have they injured you? In one respect  
 I deem you wise, because you dread the race  
 Of valiant men, and feel yourself a coward:  
 Yet is it hard on us, if we must bleed  
 Your apprehensions to remove; you ought  
 To suffer all we would inflict, from us  
 Whose merit is superior far to yours,  
 Were Jove impartial. Would you therefore wield  
 The sceptre of this land, let us depart  
 As exiles from the realm, or you shall meet

With strict retaliation, when the gales  
 Of wavering fortune alter. O thou land  
 Of Cadmus (for to thee I now will speak,  
 But in reproachful accents), such protection  
 Afford'st thou to the sons of Hercules,  
 Who singly warring with the numerous host  
 Of Minyæ, caused the Thebans to lift up  
 Their free-born eyes undaunted? I on Greece  
 No praises can bestow, nor will pass over  
 In silence its base treatment of my son,  
 For 'twas its duty in these children's cause,  
 Bearing flames, pointed spears, and glittering mail,  
 To have marched forth, and recompensed the toils  
 Of their great father, who hath purged the sea  
 And land from all its monsters. Such protection  
 Nor doth the Theban city, O my children,  
 Nor Greece afford you ; but ye now look up  
 To me a feeble friend who can do nought,  
 But plead for you with unavailing words.  
 For all the vigour which I once possessed  
 Hath now deserted me ; old age assails  
 My trembling limbs and this decrepit frame.  
 Were I again endued with youthful strength,  
 I would snatch up my javelin, and defile  
 With gore the yellow ringlets on the head  
 Of that oppressor, whom his fear should drive  
 Beyond the most remote Atlantic bounds.

CHOR. Are there not causes such as may provoke  
 Those who are virtuous to express their thoughts,  
 Though destitute of eloquence?

LYC. 'Gainst me  
 Speak what thou wilt, for thou art armed with words,  
 But for injurious language by my deeds  
 Will I requite thee. Go, send woodmen, some  
 To Helicon, some to Parnassus' vale,  
 Bid them fell knotted oaks, and having borne them  
 Into the city, heap their ponderous trunks  
 Around the altar, and with kindled flames  
 Consume the bodies of this hated race ;  
 So shall they learn that Creon the deceased  
 No longer is the ruler of this land,  
 But that I wield the sceptre. As for you  
 Who thwart my counsels, O ye aged men,  
 Not for the sons of Hercules alone  
 Shall ye lament, but for those evil fortunes  
 Which ye and your own house are doomed to suffer :  
 But this shall ye remember, that to me,  
 Your monarch, ye are slaves.

CHOR.

O ye the race

Of earth, whom Mars erst sowed, when he had torn  
 From the huge dragon's jaws th' envenomed teeth,  
 With those right hands why will ye not uplift  
 The staves on which ye lean, and with his gore  
 Defile the head of this unrighteous man,  
 Not born at Thebes, but in a foreign realm,  
 From inconsiderate youths who gains that homage  
 Which he deserves not? but in evil hour  
 O'er me shalt thou bear rule, nor shall my wealth  
 Acquired by many toils be ever thine :  
 Go, act the tyrant in Eubœa's land,  
 From whence thou hither cam'st : for while I live,  
 The sons of Hercules thou ne'er shalt slay,  
 Nor is their mighty father plunged so deep  
 Beneath earth's surface, that he cannot hear  
 His children's outcries. Thou to whom this land  
 Owes its destruction dost possess the throne :  
 But he its benefactor is deprived  
 Of the rewards he merits. Me thou deem'st  
 Officious, for protecting those I love  
 E'en in the grave, where friends are needed most.  
 O my right arm, how dost thou wish to wield  
 The spear, but through enfeebling age hast lost  
 Thy vigour : else would I have quelled thy pride  
 Who dar'st to call me slave, and in this Thebes,  
 Where thou exult'st, with glory dwelt. A city  
 Diseased through mutiny and evil counsels  
 Is void of wisdom, or would ne'er have chosen  
 Thee for its lord.

MEG. Ye veterans, I applaud  
 Your zeal ; for indignation at the wrongs  
 His friends endure becomes the virtuous friend.  
 But let not anger 'gainst your lord expose you  
 To suffer in our cause. My judgment hear,  
 Amphitryon, if to thee in aught I seem  
 To speak discreetly. I these children love  
 (And how can I help loving those I bore?)  
 For whom I have endured the painful throes  
 Of childbirth. And to die is what I think of  
 As of a thing most dreadful ; but the man  
 Who with necessity contends I hold  
 An idiot. But let us, since die we must,  
 Not perish in the flames to furnish scope  
 Of laughter to our foes, which I esteem  
 An ill beyond e'en death : for much is due  
 To the unsullied honour of our house,  
 For thee who erst in arms hast gained renown,  
 To die with cowardice, were a reproach  
 Not to be borne. My lord, though I forbear



To dwell on his just praises, is so noble,  
 He would not wish these children saved, to bear  
 The imputation of an evil name :  
 For through the conduct of degenerate sons  
 Reproach oft falls on their illustrious sires ;  
 And the examples which my husband gave me,  
 I ought not to reject. But view what grounds  
 Thou hast for hope, that I of these may form  
 A proper estimate. Dost thou expect  
 Thy son to issue from the realms beneath ?  
 What chief deceased from Pluto's loathed abode  
 Did e'er return ? Can we by gentle words  
 Appease this tyrant ? No : we ought to fly  
 From fools who are our foes : but to the wise  
 And generous yield ; for we with greater ease  
 May make a friend of him in whom we find  
 A sense of virtuous shame. But to my soul  
 This thought occurs, that we, the children's sentence,  
 By our entreaties, haply might obtain  
 Converted into exile : yet this too  
 Is wretched, at th' expense of piteous need  
 To compass our deliverance. For their friends  
 Avoid the face of guests like these, and look  
 No longer kindly on the banished man  
 After one day is over. Rouse thy courage,  
 And bleed with us, thee too, since death awaits.  
 By thy great soul, O veteran, I conjure thee.  
 Although the man who labours to repel  
 Evils inflicted by Heaven's wrath, is brave,  
 Yet doth such courage border upon frenzy :  
 For what the fates ordain, no god can frustrate.

CHOR. While yet these arms retained their youthful strength,  
 Had any one insulted thee, with ease  
 Could I have quelled him ; but I now am nothing :  
 On thee, Amphityron, therefore 'tis incumbent  
 To think how best thou may'st henceforth ward off  
 Th' assaults of fortune.

AMP. No unmanly fear,  
 No wish to lengthen out this life, prevents  
 My voluntary death : but I would save  
 The children of my son, though I appear  
 To grasp at things impossible. Behold  
 I bear my bosom to the sword ; pierce, slay,  
 Or cast me from the rock. But I, O king,  
 For this one favour sue to you ; despatch  
 Me and this hapless dame before the children,  
 Lest them we view, most execrable sight,  
 In death's convulsive pangs, to her who bore them,  
 And me their grandsire, shrieking out for aid.

But as for all beside, do what you list,  
For we have now no bulwark which from death  
Can save us.

MEG. I entreat one favour more,  
Which to us both will equally be grateful.  
Permit me in funereal robes to dress  
My children ; for that purpose be the gates  
Thrown open (for the palace now is closed  
Against us) that they from their father's house  
This small advantage may obtain.

LYC. Your wishes  
Shall be complied with. I my servants bid  
Unbar the gates. Go in, bedeck yourselves ;  
The costly robes I grudge not : but no sooner  
Shall ye have put them on, than I to you  
Will come, and plunge you in the shades beneath.

[Exit LYCUS.]

MEG. Follow your hapless mother, O my children,  
To your paternal house, where, though our wealth  
Be in the hands of others, our great name  
We still preserve.

AMP. O Jove, 'twas then in vain  
That thou didst deign to share my nuptial couch,  
In vain too, of thy son have I been styled  
The father, for thou hast not proved the friend  
Thou didst appear to be. I, though a man,  
Exceed in virtue thee a mighty god ;  
Because I to their foes have not betrayed  
The sons of Hercules : but thou, by stealth,  
Entering my chamber, to another's wife  
Without permission cam'st ; yet know'st not how  
To save thy friends ; thou surely art a god  
Either devoid of wisdom, or unjust.

[Exeunt AMPHITRYON and MEGARA.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. I.

For Linus' death, by all the tuneful Nine  
Bewailed, doth Phœbus' self complain,  
And loudly uttering his auspicious strain,  
Smite with a golden quill the lyre ; but mine  
Shall be the task, while songs of praise  
I chaunt and twine the laureate wreath,  
His matchless fortitude t' emblaze,  
Who sought hell's inmost gloom, the dreary shades beneath ;

Whether I call the hero son of Jove,  
 Or of Amphitryon ; for the fame  
 To which his labours have so just a claim,  
 Must e'en in death attract the public love :  
 In the Nemæan forest first he slew  
     That lion huge, whose tawny hide  
 And grinning jaws extended wide,  
 He o'er his shoulders threw.

## I. 2.

The winged arrows whizzing from his bow,  
 Did on their native hills confound  
 The Centaurs' race with many a deadly wound :  
 Alcides' matchless strength doth Peneus know,  
     Distinguished by his limpid waves,  
 The fields laid waste of wide extent,  
 With Pelion, and the neighbouring caves  
 Of Homole, uprooting from whose steep ascent,  
 Tall pines that cast a venerable shade,  
 The monsters armed their forceful hands,  
 And strode terrific o'er Thessalia's lands :  
 Then breathless on th' ensanguined plain he laid  
 That hind distinguished by her golden horns,  
 And still in Dian's temple seen  
 His prize, to glad the huntress queen,  
 Oenöe's walls adorns.

## II. I.

The chariot with triumphal ensigns graded  
 Ascending, to his stronger yoke  
 He Diomedes' furious coursers broke,  
 Scorning the bit, in hateful stalls who placed  
     By their fell lord, the flesh of man  
 Raging devoured, accursed food ;  
 A stream from their foul mangers ran,  
 Filled with unholy gore, and many a gobbet crude.  
 O'er Hebrus' silver tide at the command  
 Of Argos' unrelenting king  
 Eurystheus, he these captive steeds did bring,  
 Close to Anauros' mouth on Pelion's strand.  
 Inhuman Cycnus, son of Mars, next felt  
     The force of his resounding bow,  
 Unsocial wretch, the stranger's foe,  
 Who in Amphanea dwelt.

## II. 2.

Then came he to th' harmonious nymphs, that band  
 Who in Hesperian gardens hold  
 Their station, where the vegetative gold  
 Glows in the fruitage ; with resistless hand

To snatch the apple from its height ;  
 The dragon wreathed his folds around  
 The tree's huge trunk, portentous sight,  
 In vain ; that monster fell transfixed with many a wound.  
 Into those straits of the unfathomed main  
 He entered, with auspicious gales,  
 Where feared the mariner t' unfurl his sails,  
 And fixing limits to the watery plain  
 His columns reared: then from the heavens' huge load  
 The wearied Atlas he relieved,  
 His arm the starry realms upheaved,  
 And propped the gods' abode.

## III. 1.

Foe to the Amazons' equestrian race  
 He crossed the boisterous Euxine tide,  
 And gave them battle by Mæotis' side.  
 What friends through Greece collected he to face  
 Hippolita, th' intrepid maid,  
 That he the belt of Mars might gain,  
 And tissued robe with golden braid.  
 Still doth exulting Greece the virgin's spoils retain,  
 Lodged in Mycene's shrine, with gore imbrued,  
 The dog of Lerna's marshy plain,  
 Who unresisting multitudes had slain,  
 The hundred-headed hydra, he subdued,  
 Aided by fire, and winged shafts combined,  
 These from his well-stored quiver flew,  
 And triple-formed Geryon slew,  
 Fierce Erythræa's hind.

## III. 2.

But having finished each adventurous strife,  
 At length in evil hour he steers  
 To Pluto's mansion, to the house of tears,  
 The goal of labour, there to end his life,  
 Thence never, never to return ;  
 His friends dismayed forsake these gates,  
 In hopeless solitude we mourn.  
 Hell's stern award is passed, the boat of Charon waits  
 To their eternal home his sons to bear,  
 Most impious lawless homicide !  
 For thee, O Hercules, thee erst his pride,  
 Thy sire now looks with impotent despair.  
 Had I the strength which I possessed of yore,  
 I with my Theban friends, arrayed  
 In brazen arms, thy sons would aid :  
 But youth's blest days are o'er.

Clad in funereal vestments I behold  
 The children of Alcides erst the great,  
 With his loved wife and his decrepit sire  
 Conducting them. O wretched me ! no longer  
 Can I restrain the fountain of these tears  
 Which gush incessant from my aged eyes.

MEGARA, AMPHITRYON, CHORUS.

MEG. Come on. What priest, what butcher is at hand  
 To slay these wretched children, or transpierce  
 My bosom ? Now the victims stand prepared  
 For their descent to Pluto's loathed abode.  
 By force, my children, are we borne along  
 United in th' unseemly bands of death ;  
 Decrepit age with helpless infancy  
 And intermingled matrons. O dire fate  
 Of me and of my sons, whom these sad eyes  
 Shall never more behold ! Alas ! I bore,  
 I nurtured you, to be the scorn, the sport,  
 Of our inveterate foes, and by their hands  
 To perish. Each fond hope, which from the words  
 Of your departed father erst I formed,  
 Hath proved fallacious. The deceased to *thee*  
 Allotted Argos, in Eurystheus' palace  
 Wert *thou* to dwell a mighty king, and wield  
 The sceptre of Pelasgia's fruitful land,  
 Then with the lion's hide himself had worn  
 Thy front he covered : *you* were to ascend  
 The throne of Thebes for brazen chariots famed,  
 Possessing my hereditary fields,  
 Such were the hopes of your exulting sire,  
 Who to *your* hand consigned that ponderous mace  
 Deceitful gift of Dædalus : on *thee*,  
 Thou little one, he promised to bestow  
 Oecalia, which his shafts had erst laid waste :  
 To you all three, these realms in threefold portions  
 Did he distribute ; for your father's views  
 Were all magnanimous : but I marked out  
 Selected consorts for you, and formed schemes  
 Of new affinities, from the domains  
 Of Athens, Sparta, and the Theban city ;  
 That binding up your cables, and secure  
 From the tempestuous deep, ye might enjoy  
 A happy life : these prospects now are vanished :  
 For to your arms hath changeful Fortune given  
 The Destinies to be your brides, while tears  
 Are your unhappy mother's lustral drops.  
 Your grandsire celebrates the nuptial feast,

O'er which he summons Pluto to preside,  
 The father of your consorts. But, alas!  
 Whom first of you my children, or whom last  
 To this foud bosom shall I clasp, on whom  
 Bestow a kiss, whom in my arms sustain?  
 How like the bee with variegated wings  
 Shall I collect the sorrows of you all,  
 And blend the whole together in a flood  
 Of tears exhaustless? O my dearest lord,  
 If any of those spirits who reside  
 In Pluto's realms beneath, can hear the voice  
 Of mortals, in these words to thee I speak:  
 O Hercules, thy father and thy sons  
 Are doomed to bleed; I perish too who erst  
 On thy account was by the world called happy.  
 Protect us, come, and to these eyes appear,  
 Though but a ghost; thy presence will suffice:  
 For these thy children's murderers, when with thee  
 Compared, are dastards.

AMP. To appease the powers  
 Of hell beneath, O woman, be thy care.  
 But lifting to the skies my suppliant hands,  
 I call on thee, O Jove, that, if thou mean  
 To be a friend to these deserted children,  
 Thou interpose without delay and save them,  
 For soon 'twill be no longer in thy power:  
 Thou oft hast been invoked; but all my prayers  
 Are ineffectual; die, it seems, we must.  
 But, O ye aged men, the bliss which life  
 Can yield is small, contrive then how to pass  
 As sweetly as is possible the hours  
 Which fate allots you, e'en from morn till night  
 Shaking off every grief: for Time preserves not  
 Our hopes entire, but on his own pursuits  
 Intent, deserts us, borne on rapid wings.  
 Look but on me, amid the sons of men  
 Conspicuous erst performing glorious deeds;  
 And yet hath Fortune in one single day  
 Taken all from me, like a feather wafted  
 Into the trackless air. I know not him  
 To whom collected stores of wealth or fame  
 Are durable. Farewell, for this, my comrades,  
 Is the last time ye shall behold your friend.

HERCULES, MEGARA, AMPHITRYON, CHORUS.

MEG. Ha! O thou aged man, do I behold  
 My dearest husband? How shall I find utterance?

AMP. I know not, O my daughter; for I too  
 Am with amazement seized.

MEG. This sure is he  
 Who as we heard was in the realms beneath ;  
 Else doth some vision in the noontide glare  
 Delude our senses. But what frantic words  
 Were those I spoke as if 'twas all a dream ?  
 This is no other than thy real son,  
 Thou aged man. Come hither, O my children,  
 Cling to your father's robe, with speed advance,  
 Quit not your hold, for ye in him shall find  
 An equal to our great protector Jove.

HER. All hail, thou mansion, and thou vestibule  
 Of my abode ; thee with what joy once more  
 Do I behold, revisiting the light.  
 Ha ! what hath happened ? I my children see  
 With garlands on their temples, and my wife  
 Amidst a throng of men, my father too  
 Weeping for some mischance. I'll go to them,  
 And ask the cause. What recent ill, O woman,  
 Hath happened to this house ?

MEG. My dearest lord,  
 O thou who to thy aged father com'st  
 A radiant light, in safety hast thou reached,  
 At this important crisis, the abodes  
 Of those thou lov'st.

HER. What mean you by these words ?  
 What tumults, O my sire, are we involved in ?

MEG. We are undone ; but, O thou aged man,  
 Forgive, if I've anticipated that  
 Thou would'st have said to him : for in some points  
 Our sex are greater objects of compassion  
 Than males. I deem my children dead ; I too  
 Am perishing.

HER. O Phœbus ! with what preludes  
 Do you begin your speech ?

MEG. My valiant brothers,  
 And aged sire, alas ! are now no more.

HER. Who slew them, how, or with what weapon ?

MEG. Lycus,  
 The monarch of this city, was their murderer.

HER. With arms did he oppose them, or prevail,  
 When foul sedition through the land diffused  
 Its pestilent contagion ?

MEG. By revolt  
 He holds the sceptre of the Theban realm.

HER. But wherefore hath this sudden panic reached  
 You and my aged sire ?

MEG. He would have slain  
 Thy father, me, and these defenceless children.

HER. What mean you ? could he fear my orphan race ?

MEG. Lest they hereafter might avenge the death  
Of Creon.

HER. But what garb is this they wear,  
Which suits some corse?

MEG. Already in these vestments  
For our funereal rites are we arrayed.

HER. And were ye on the point of perishing  
By violence? Ah me!

MEG. Our friends desert us;  
For we have heard that thou wert dead.

HER. Whence rose  
This comfortless depression of the soul?

MEG. Eurystheus' heralds the sad tidings bore.

HER. But for what cause did ye forsake my house,  
My sacred Lares?

MEG. From his bed thy sire  
Was forcibly dragged forth.

HER. So void of shame  
Was Lycus as to treat his age with scorn?

MEG. Shame dwells not near the shrine of brutal force.

HER. Were we thus destitute of friends when absent?

MEG. What friends abide with him who is unhappy?

HER. But did they scorn the battles which I fought  
Against the Minyans?

MEG. I to thee repeat it,  
Calamity is friendless and forlorn.

HER. Will ye not cast from your dishevelled hair  
These wreaths of Pluto? will ye not look up  
To yon bright sun, and ope your eyes to view  
Scenes far more pleasing than the loathsome shades  
Of hell beneath? But I, for wrongs like these  
Demand my vengeful arm, with speed will go  
And overturn the house of that new king,  
His impious head I to the ravenous hounds  
Lopped from his trunk will cast, and each base Theban  
Who with ingratitude repays my kindness  
With this victorious weapon smite: my shafts  
The rest shall scatter, till Ismenos' channel  
Be choked up with the corpses of the slain,  
And Dirce's limpid fountain stream with gore.  
For whom, in preference to my wife, my children,  
And aged father, shall I aid? Farewell,  
Ye labours which unwittingly I strove  
To accomplish, mindless of these dearest pledges;  
In their defence I equally am bound  
To yield up life, if for their father they  
Were doomed to bleed. What! shall we call it noble  
To war against the hydra or the lion,  
And execute the mandates of Eurystheus,



If I avert not my own children's death?  
 No longer else shall I, as erst, be styled  
 Alcides the victorious.

CHOR.

It is just  
 Parents should aid their sons, their aged sire,  
 And the dear partner of the nuptial bed.

AMP. My son, this mighty privilege is yours,  
 To be the best of friends to those you love,  
 And a determined foe to those you hate.  
 But be not too impetuous.

HER.

In what instance  
 Have I been hastier, O my honoured sire,  
 Than it becomes me?

AMP.

To support his cause,  
 The king hath many, who in fact are poor,  
 Though fame accounts them rich; they raised a tumult,  
 And caused the ruin of the state, to plunder  
 Their neighbours; for the fortunes they possessed  
 Are through their own extravagance and sloth  
 Reduced to nothing. As the gates you entered,  
 These could not fail to see you: O beware  
 Lest since you by your foes have been perceived,  
 You perish when you least foresee your danger,  
 Oppressed by numbers.

HER.

Though all Thebes beheld me,  
 I care not. But when I descried a bird  
 Of evil omen perched aloof, I knew  
 That there had some calamity befallen  
 My house, and therefore with presaging soul  
 In secrecy I entered these domains.

AMP. Draw near with pious awe, my son, salute  
 The Lares, and display that welcome face  
 In your paternal mansions. For to drag  
 Your wife and children forth, with me your sire  
 To murder us, the king himself will come.  
 But all will prosper, if you here remain,  
 And a secure asylum will you find,  
 Nor through the city spread a loud alarm  
 Ere your designs succeed.

HER.

Thus will I act,  
 For thou hast rightly spoken; I am entering  
 The palace. From the sunless caves beneath  
 Of Proserpine, after a long delay  
 Returning, first to our domestic gods  
 Will I be mindful to address my vows.

AMP. Have you indeed then visited the house  
 Of Pluto, O my son?

HER.

And thence the dog  
 With triple-head brought to these realms of light.

AMP. Conquered in battle, or on you bestowed  
By hell's indulgent goddess ?

HER. I prevailed  
O'er him in combat, and have been so happy  
As to behold the far-famed mystic orgies.

AMP. But is the beast lodged in Eurystheus' palace ?

HER. Him Cthonia's groves and Hermion's walls  
confine.

AMP. Knows not Eurystheus that you are returned  
Into this upper world ?

HER. He doth not know :  
For I came first to learn what passes here.

AMP. But wherefore in the realms beneath, so long  
Did you remain ?

HER. I there prolonged may stay,  
My sire, to bring back Theseus from the shades.

AMP. And where is he, gone to his native land ?

HER. He went to Athens, pleased with his escape  
From the infernal regions. But attend  
Your father to the palace, O my sons,  
Which now ye enter in a happier state  
Than when ye left it : but take courage, cease  
To pour forth floods of tears ; and, O my wife,  
Collect thyself, let all thy terrors cease,  
And loose my garments ; for I have not wings,  
Nor would I vanish from my friends. Alas !  
Their hold they quit not, but cling faster still,  
And faster to my vest. Because ye stand  
Upon the verge of ruin, I will take  
And bear you hence, as by the ship light boats  
Are guided o'er the deep : for I refuse not  
The care my children claim. Here all mankind  
Are on a level, they of nobler rank  
And mean condition, to their progeny  
Bear equal love. The gifts of fortune vary,  
Some have abundant wealth, and some are poor ;  
But the whole human race feels this attachment.

[*Exeunt* HERCULES and MEGARA, with the children.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

Youth is light, and free from care  
But now a burden on my head  
Heavier than *Ætna's* rock, old age, I bear,  
Before these eyes its sable veil is spread,

Not for the wealth of Asiatic kings,  
 Or heaps of gold that touched yon roof sublime,  
 Ere would I barter life's enchanting prime ;  
     Hence wealth a brighter radiance flings,  
     And poverty itself can charm :  
     But thou, curst dotage, art the sum  
 Of every fancied, every real harm ;  
 May'st thou be plunged beneath the deep, nor come  
 To peopled town, or civilized abode,  
 Go wing thy distant flight along th' aërial road.

## I. 2.

Did the gods with sapient care  
 Mete out their bounty to manking,  
 The good, the gift of twofold youth should share  
 Unquestioned token of a virtuous mind,  
 Behold life's son its blest career renew,  
 While the degenerate sleep to wake no more.  
 We by these means distinctly might explore  
     Their merits with as clear a view,  
     As sailors, who each starry spark  
     Enumerate that adorns the skies.  
 But now the gods have by no certain mark  
 Directed whom we for their worth should prize,  
 Whom shun as wicked : uninformed we live,  
 Revolving time hath nought but plenteous wealth to give.

## II. I.

Mindful of its ancient themes,  
 This faltering tongue shall ne'er refuse,  
 Oft as I wander by their haunted streams,  
 To blend each gentle grace and tuneful muse :  
 O may I dwell among the harmonious choirs,  
 My brows still circled with a laureate wreath !  
 Still shall the bard, a hoary veteran, breathe  
     The strains Mnemosuné inspires :  
     While memory wakes, I ne'er will cease  
     Th' exploits of Hercules to sing ;  
 Where Bromius yields the purple vine's increase,  
 Where Libyan pipes and the lute's sevenfold string  
 Are heard in dulcet unison ; to praise  
 The Nine who aid the dance, I'll wake my choral lays.

## II. 2.

Delian virgins at the gate  
 Assembled, festive pæans sing,  
 The triumphs of Latona's son relate,  
 And nimbly vaulting form their beauteous ring.

Into thy temple, by devotion led,  
 O Phæbus, will I raise my parting breath ;  
 The swan thus warbles at the hour of death :  
     Though hoary hairs my checks o'erspread.  
     How great the hero's generous love,  
     Whose merits aid our votive song,  
 Alcides the resistless son of Jove ;  
 Those trophies, which to noble birth belong  
 By him are all surpassed, his forceful hand  
 Restoring peace, hath cleansed this monster-teeming land.

LYCUS, AMPHITRYON, CHORUS.

LYC. Forth from the portals at due season comes  
 Amphitryon ; for 'tis long since ye were decked  
 In robes and trappings such as suit the dead.  
 But go, command the children and the wife  
 Of Hercules without these gates t'appear,  
 Because ye have engaged that ye will die  
 By your own hands.

AMP.                     You persecute, O king,  
 Me whom already fortune hath made wretched,  
 And with sharp taunts insult my dying race :  
 Although in power supreme, you ought to act  
 With moderation ; but since you impose  
 This harsh necessity, we must submit,  
 And execute your will.

LYC.                     Where's Megara ?  
 Where are the children of Alcmena's son ?

AMP. To me she seems, as far as I can guess,  
 From looking through the door——

LYC.                     What grounds hast thou  
 For this opinion ?

AMP.                     In a suppliant posture  
 To sit before the Lares.

LYC.                     And implore them  
 With unavailing plaints to save her life.

AMP. In vain too calls she on her lord deceased.

LYC. But he is absent, he can ne'er return.

AMP. Unless some god should raise him up again.

LYC. Go thou, and from the palace lead her hither.

AMP. 'Twould make me an accomplice in the murder,  
 If this I acted.

LYC.                     Since thy soul recoils,  
 I, whom such idle scruples cannot move,  
 Will with their mother bring the children forth.  
 Follow my steps, my servants, that at length  
 We may behold sweet peace succeed our toils.

[Exit LYCUS.

AMP. Depart : for to that place the Fates ordain  
 You now are on the road ; perhaps the sequel  
 Will be another's province : but expect,  
 Since you have done amiss, to suffer vengeance.  
 He, O ye veterans, at a lucky hour  
 Enters the palace, for on ambushed swords  
 His feet will stumble, while the villain hopes  
 Those he would murder are too near at hand  
 To 'scape : but I will go to see him fall  
 A breathless corse : for when our foe endures  
 The just requital of his impious deeds,  
 There is a joy resulting from his death.

[Exit AMPHITRYON.]

CHOR. Changed are our evil fortunes. To the shades  
 He who was erst a mighty king descends.  
 O justice, and ye dread vicissitudes  
 Of fate, ordained by Heaven !

1st SEMICHOR. Thou art at length  
 Gone thither, where by death thou for those taunts,  
 With which thou o'er the virtuous didst exult,  
 Shalt make atonement.

2nd SEMICHOR. My delight bursts forth  
 In floods of tears : for now is come that day  
 The tyrant deemed would never visit him.

1st SEMICHOR. But let us also look into the palace,  
 My aged friend, and mark if yonder miscreant  
 Be punished as I wish.

LYC. [within.] Ah me ! ah me !

CHOR. That melody most grateful to mine ear  
 Beneath yon roofs commences ; nor is death  
 Far distant ; for these cries the monarch utters  
 Are but a prelude to the fatal stroke.

LYC. [within.] Ye realms of Cadmus, I through treachery  
 perish !

2nd SEMICHOR. Others have perished by that bloody  
 hand.

Since then the retribution thou endur'st  
 Is just, endure it bravely.

1st SEMICHOR. Where is he  
 Who uttered 'gainst the blest immortal powers  
 His foolish blasphemies, and called the gods  
 Too weak to punish him ?

2nd SEMICHOR. That impious man  
 Is now no more. Yon vaulted roofs are silent,  
 Let us begin the harmonious choral lay ;  
 For, as I wished, our comrades prove victorious.

## CHORUS.

## ODE.

## I. 1.

The sumptuous banquet, with th' enlivening dance  
 Now every Theban shall employ ;  
 Dried are our tears, and past mischance  
 Yields to the lyre abundant themes of joy :  
 Stretched low in dust the tyrant lies ;  
 But he, who by an ancient right  
 Obtains the sceptre, is our king ;  
 From Acheron's loathed stream behold him rise,  
 Revisiting the cheerful realms of light,  
 And hope, unlooked for, doth fresh transports bring.

## I. 2.

The gods take cognizance of broken trust,  
 Nor are they deaf to holy prayer.  
 On gold and fortune, power unjust  
 Attends ; man's reason is too weak to bear  
 The joint temptations. Heaven at length,  
 Whose kind protection we invoke,  
 Deigning with pity to behold  
 Our woes, to the neglected laws their strength  
 Restoring, with vindictive fury broke  
 The sable car which bore the god of gold.

## II. 1.

Now let the flowery wreath, the victor's pride,  
 Adorn Ismenos ; let each street employ  
 The hours in dance and social joy ;  
 Let Dirce from the silver wave arise,  
 And old Asopus' daughters by her side,  
 Forsaking their paternal stream,  
 Conspire to aid our rapturous theme,  
 And for Alcides claim the victor's prize.  
 Ye Pythian rocks, with waving forests crowned,  
 And seats of Helicon's melodious choir,  
 Come every nymph, with cheerful sound,  
 Visit these walls which to the clouds aspire ;  
 In helmed crop here warriors filled the plains.  
 Whose lineage undecayed from age to age remains.

## II. 2.

O ye, the partners of one nuptial bed,  
 Happy Amphitryon, sprung from mortal race,  
 And Jove, who rushed to the embrace

Of bright Alcmena ; for of thee aright,  
 Though erst, O Jove, I doubted, was it said  
     Thou didst enjoy that beauteous dame ;  
     With the renown his triumphs claim,  
 Time through the world displays Alcides' might,  
 Emerged from grisly Pluto's realms abhorred,  
 Who quits the darksome caverns of the earth,  
     To me a far more welcome lord,  
 Than yon vile tyrant of ignoble birth.  
 Now to the bloody strife we lift our eyes ;  
 The vengeful sword is bared, if Justice haunt the skies.  
 SEMICHOR. Ha ! are we all by the same panic seized ?  
 My aged friends, what spectre, hovering o'er  
 The palace, do I see ? Those tardy feet  
 Raise from the ground, precipitate thy flight,  
 Be gone.—From me, O Pæan, mighty king,  
 Avert these evils.

## IRIS, A FIEND, CHORUS.

IRIS. O, ye aged men,  
 Be not dismayed : the fiend whom ye behold  
 Is daughter of old Night, and I am Iris,  
 The gods' ambassadress. We are not come  
 To harm your city ; for we only war  
 Against one man, who, sprung 'tis said from Jove  
 And from Alcmena : till he had performed  
 Severest labours, fate preserved his life ;  
 Nor did his father Jove permit, or me,  
 Or Juno, e'er to hurt him : but, each toil  
 Eurystheus' hate enjoined, now he hath finished,  
 Those oft-polluted hands with recent gore  
 Will Juno stain, by urging him to slay  
 His children : in this scheme I too conspire.  
 Come on then, armed with a relentless heart,  
 Unwedded daughter of the pitchy Night ;  
 Instil into that hero's breast such frenzy  
 As shall o'erturn his reason, and constrain him  
 To perpetrate this murder ; his wild steps  
 Goad onward, throw the bloody cable forth,  
 That having sent this band of graceful sons,  
 Slain by their father's arm, adown the gulf  
 Of Acheron, th' effects of Juno's wrath  
 And mine, he may experience ; for the gods  
 Would be mere things of no account, but great  
 Would be the power of man, if he escaped  
 Unpunished.

FIEND. I from noble parents spring,  
 Night is my mother ; and that blood which streamed  
 From the foul wound of Ouranus, my sire :

To me belongs this praise, I 'gainst my friend  
 No envious rancour feel, nor with delight  
 Invade them; but this counsel would suggest  
 To you and Juno, ere I see you rush  
 Into a fatal error, if my words  
 Can move you: he into whose house you send me  
 Is not obscure, or in the realms beneath,  
 Or yet among the gods: for when o'er lands,  
 Impervious erst, and o'er the stormy waves,  
 He had established peace, he to the gods  
 Their ancient honours, which by impious men  
 Had been abolished, singly did restore.  
 I therefore would dissuade you from contriving  
 'Gainst him these mischiefs.

IRIS.   Blame not thou the schemes  
 Devised by Juno and by me.

FIEND.   Your steps  
 Into a better path, from that which leads  
 To evil, would I turn.

IRIS.   The wife of Jove  
 Sent thee not hither to act thus discreetly.

FIEND. Witness, thou sun, reluctant I obey.  
 But if constrained to be the instrument  
 Of Juno's wrath and yours, I with such speed  
 As when the hounds obey the huntsman's voice,  
 Your signal will attend; nor shall the deep  
 Upheaving with a groan its troubled waves,  
 The earthquake, or the thunderbolt, whose blast  
 Is winged with fate, outstrip me, when I rush  
 Into the breast of Hercules: the gates  
 Will I burst open, and assail the house,  
 First causing his devoted sons to bleed;  
 Nor shall their murderer know that his own hand  
 Slew those whom he begot, till he is rescued  
 From the distraction I inspire. Behold  
 He at the barrier stands, and shakes his head,  
 And rolls in silence his distorted eyes,  
 Flaming with anger. To contain his breath  
 No longer able, like a bull, prepared  
 To make the terrible assault, he bellows,  
 And calls the Furies from the dire abyss  
 Of Tartarus. Thee I to a greater height  
 Of frenzy soon will rouse, and through thy soul  
 Cause my terrific clarion to resound.  
 O noble Iris, to Olympus' height  
 Now wing your swift career, while I, unseen,  
 Will enter the abodes of Hercules.

[*Exeunt* IRIS and the FIEND.]



CHOR. Thou city, groan ; thy choicest flower,  
The son of Jove, is cropped : O Greece,  
Thy benefactor's fatal hour  
Impends. To thee for ever lost,  
Assailed by that infernal pest,  
The dauntless chief, deprived of peace,  
Shall feel his agonizing breast  
With horrible distraction tossed.  
Hence in her brazen chariot went  
The raging fiend, on mischief bent ;  
She urges with a scorpion goad  
Her steeds along th' ethereal road.  
That hundred-headed child of Night,  
With all those hissing snakes around,  
From her envenomed eyeballs bright  
The Gorgon thus directs the wound.  
Soon changed by Heaven's supreme decree,  
Is man's short-lived felicity.  
Ye infants, soon shall ye expire,  
Slain by your own distracted sire.  
Ah me ! thy son, without delay,  
Shall be left childless, mighty Jove ;  
For on his tortured soul shall prey  
Yon fiend, and by the powers above  
Vengeance commissioned to destroy.  
O mansion erst the scene of joy !  
To form a prelude to this dance,  
Neither the cheering timbrel's sound,  
Nor sportive Menades advance ;  
Here human gore shall stream around,  
Instead of that refreshing juice,  
Which Bacchus' purple grapes produce.  
Away, ye children, danger's nigh,  
For he who wakes this hostile strain,  
Traces your footsteps as ye fly ;  
Nor will the fiend with fruitless rage,  
A war beneath those mansions wage.  
Alas ! we sink o'erwhelmed with woe,  
My tears shall never cease to flow.  
I wail the grandsire hoar with age,  
The mother too who bore that train  
Of lovely children, but in vain.  
Lo, what a tempest shakes the wall,  
And makes th' uprooted mansion fall !  
What mean'st thou, frantic son of Jove?  
The hellish uproar thou dost raise,  
Filling the palace with amaze,  
Is such as vexed the realms above,

Tid issuing with victorious might,  
 Pallas invincible in fight  
 The huge Enceladus oppressed,  
 And piled all Ætna on his breast.

## MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MES. O ye whose heads are whitened o'er with age !

CHOR. Why dost thou call me with so loud a voice ?

MES. Atrocious are the mischiefs which have happened  
 Within the palace.

CHOR. I need now call in  
 No other seer. The boys are slain. Ah me !

MES. Indulge your groans, for such events as these  
 Demand them.

CHOR. By a foe, e'en by the hand  
 Of their own sire, in whom that foe they found.

MES. No tongue can utter woes beyond what we  
 Have suffered.

CHOR. What account hast thou to give  
 Of the dire fate the father on his sons  
 Inflicted ? Sent by the avenging gods,  
 Say why such mischiefs visited this house,  
 And how the children miserably fell.

MES. To purify the house were victims brought  
 Before Jove's altar, after Hercules  
 Had slain and cast the monarch of this land  
 Forth from these doors. Beside the victor stood  
 His band of graceful children, with his sire  
 And Megara. The sacred vase was borne  
 Around the altar : from ill-omened words  
 We all abstained. But while Alcmena's son  
 In his right hand a kindled torch sustained,  
 Ready to dip it in the lustral water,  
 He made a silent stand ; on this delay  
 The children steadfastly observed their sire,  
 But he no longer was the same ; his eyes  
 Were seized with strong convulsions, from their fibres  
 Blood started forth, his bearded cheeks with foam  
 Were covered : he midst bursts of laughter wild  
 Cried : " Wherefore need I kindle, O my father,  
 The fire for sacrifice, ere I have slain  
 Eurystheus, in a double toil engaged,  
 When I at once might better finish all ?  
 Soon as I hither bring Eurystheus' head,  
 These hands which reek already with the gore  
 of Lycus, will I cleanse. Pour forth those waters  
 Upon the ground, and cast your urns away.  
 Who brings my bow, my club ? I to Mycene  
 Will go : let spades and levers be prepared,

That I from their foundations may o'erturn  
Those walls which with the plummet and the line  
The Cyclops reared." Then eager to depart,  
Although he had no chariot, yet he talked  
As if he had one, fancying that he mounted  
The seat, and with his hand as with a thong  
Drove the ideal steeds. His servants laughed,  
And at the same time trembled; till one cried  
(As on each other they with eager eyes  
Were gazing), "Doth my master sport with us,  
Or is he frantic?" Meanwhile through the palace  
Backward and forward he with hasty step  
Was walking: but no sooner did he reach  
That spacious hall, where at the genial board  
The men are wont t' assemble, than he said  
That he was come to Nisus' ancient city,  
And to th' imperial dome: and on the floor,  
As if reclining at the genial board,  
Bade us set forth the banquet. But the pause  
Which intervened was short, ere he exclaimed,  
That he was traversing the Isthmian rocks  
O'ergrown with woods; then casting off his mantle  
He strove though there was no antagonist  
With whom to strive, proclaimed himself the victor,  
The name of that imaginary foe  
Announcing, over whom he had prevailed:  
But 'gainst Eurystheus he anon did utter  
Menaces the most horrible, and talk  
As if he at Mycene had been present.  
His father strove to hold his vigorous arm,  
And said to him; "What mean you, O my son?  
What wanderings into distant realms are these?  
Hath not the blood of him you have just slain  
Distracted you?" Then for Eurystheus' sire  
Mistaking his own father, as he strove  
To touch his hand, repelled the trembling suppliant:  
Against his sons, the quiver and the bow,  
Thinking to slay the children of Eurystheus,  
He next made ready; they with terror smitten  
Ran different ways; the first beneath the robes  
Of his unhappy mother skulked; a second  
Flew to the shade the lofty column formed:  
Under the altar quivering like a bird,  
The last concealed himself: their mother cried,  
"What mean'st thou, O thou father, would'st thou slay  
Thy sons?" Aphitryon too, that aged man,  
And all the servants shrieked. But round the pillar  
The boy pursuing, he at length turned short,  
And meeting him, as foot to foot they stood,

Transfixed his liver with a deadly shaft ;  
 Supine he fell, and with his streaming gore  
 Distained the sculptured pillars, at whose base  
 He breathed his last. But, with a shout, Alcides  
 Uttered these boasts : " One of Eurystheus' brood  
 Slain by this arm, for the inveterate hate  
 His father bore me, to atone, here lies  
 A breathless corse." Against another then,  
 Who to the basis of the altar fled,  
 And hoped to 'scape unseen, he bent his bow ;  
 But ere he gave the wound, the wretched youth  
 Fell at his father's knees, stretched forth his hands  
 To touch his chin, or twine around his neck,  
 And cried : " O spare my life, my dearest sire,  
 Yours, I am yours indeed ; nor will you slay  
 Eurystheus' son." But he with glaring eyes  
 Looked like a Gorgon, while the boy pressed on  
 So close, he had no scope to aim the shaft,  
 But as the smith the glowing anvil smites,  
 Full on his auburn tresses he discharged  
 The ponderous mace, the crashing bones gave way.  
 Scarce had he slain the second, when he ran  
 To butcher his third son o'er both their corse :  
 But the unhappy mother in her arms  
 Caught up, into an inner chamber bore  
 The child, and closed the doors : but he, as if  
 He had indeed been at the Cyclops' city,  
 With levers from their hinges forced them, pierced  
 His wife and offspring with a single shaft,  
 And then to slay his aged father rushed  
 With speed impetuous : but a spectre came,  
 Which to our eyes the awful semblance bore  
 Of Pallas brandishing her pointed spear,  
 And threw a rocky fragment at the breast  
 Of Hercules, which checked his murderous frenzy,  
 And plunged him into sleep. Upon the ground  
 Headlong he fell, where 'midst the ruins lay,  
 Rent from its pedestal a broken column :  
 But rallying from our flight, we, by his sire  
 Assisted, to the pillar bound him fast  
 With thongs, that on his wakening from this trance  
 He might commit no more atrocious deeds.  
 There doth he taste an inauspicious sleep,  
 First having slain his children and his consort.  
 I know no mortal more completely wretched.

[Exit MESSENGER.]

CHOR. There was a murder in the Argive land  
 Most wondrous and unparalleled through Greece  
 In days of yore, which the confederate daughters

Of Danaus perpetrated ; but their crimes  
 By the dire fate of Progne's only son  
 Were far surpassed. I of a bloody deed  
 Now speak which they committed, they whose voice  
 Equals the Muses' choir ; but thou who spring'st  
 From Jove himself, hast in thy frenzy slain  
 All thy three sons ; for them what groans, what tears,  
 What invocations to the shades beneath,  
 Or songs shall I prepare to soothe the rage  
 Of grisly Pluto ? Shivered on the ground  
 The portals of that lofty mansion view,  
 Behold the corse of the children stretcht  
 Before their miserable sire, whose senses,  
 Since he hath slain them, in profoundest sleep  
 Are buried. Mark those knotty cords around  
 The brawny limbs of Hercules, entwined  
 And to the columns in the palace fixed.  
 But old Amphitryon, like a bird who wails  
 Over its callow brood, with tardy step  
 Comes hither in the bitterness of grief.

## AMPHITRYON, CHORUS.

*The Palace gates thrown open, discover HERCULES stretched on  
 the ground and sleeping.*

AMP. Ye aged Thebans, will ye not be silent,  
 Will ye not suffer him dissolved in sleep  
 His miseries to forget ?

CHOR. These tears, these groans,  
 To you, O venerable man, I pay,  
 To those slain children, and the chief renowned  
 For his victorious conflicts.

AMP. Farther still  
 Retire ; forbear, forbear those clamorous sounds,  
 Lest his repose ye break, and from a trance  
 The sleeper rouse.

CHOR. How dreadful was this slaughter !

AMP. Ha ! ha ! begone, for he in wild confusion  
 Is starting up. Why will ye not lament,  
 Ye aged men, in a more gentle tone ?  
 Lest roused from sleep he burst his chains, destroy  
 The city, smite his sire, and with the ground  
 Lay these proud mansions level.

CHOR. This I hold  
 Impossible.

AMP. Be silent, I will mark  
 Whether he breathe : O let me place my ear  
 Still closer.

CHOR. Sleeps he ?

AMP. An accursed repose,  
Alas ! he tastes, who hath his consort slain,  
And slain his sons with that resounding bow.

CHOR. Now wail.

AMP. I wail those children's fate.

CHOR. Your son,  
Alas ! old man, our equal pity claims.

AMP. Observe strict silence, for again he rises  
And turns around : I will conceal myself  
Beneath that roof.

CHOR. Be of good cheer : night seals  
The eyelids of your son.

AMP. Mark, mark me well,  
I am so wretched that without reluctance  
I can bid life adieu : but if he kill  
Me too who am his father, guilt on guilt  
Shall he accumulate, and join the stings  
Of parricide to those which from the Furies  
Who haunt him, he already doth endure.

CHOR. Better you then had died, when you prepared  
T' avenge the slaughtered brothers of Alcmena,  
And stormed the fortress of the Taphian isle.

AMP. Fly, leave the palace instantly ; avoid  
That frantic man, who from his sleep is roused,  
For adding soon fresh slaughter to the past,  
With Bacchanalian transport shall he range  
Through Cadmus' city.

CHOR. Why hast thou, O Jove,  
Hated thy son so bitterly, and plunged him  
Into this sea of troubles ?

HER. [*waking.*] Ha ! I breathe,  
And view each wonted object, air, and earth,  
And these bright solar beams. Into what storm,  
What dreadful perturbation of the soul  
Have I been plunged ! all heated I transpire,  
Not from my lungs, but from my feverish heart.  
Behold me ! wherefore am I bound with chains,  
Like a disabled ship towed into haven,  
And by this youthful chest and nervous arm  
Joined to a broken pillar ? Here I sit  
Contiguous to the corpses of the slain ;  
My winged shafts lie scattered on the ground,  
With that unerring bow which erst I bore  
In war to guard me, and with care preserved.  
Sent by Eurystheus, am I then arrived  
A second time at the drear shades beneath ?  
Neither the rock of Sisyphus, nor Pluto,  
Nor Ceres' sceptred daughter, do I see.  
I sure am stricken senseless with amazement,

And know not where I am. But ho! what friend  
Is near, or at a distance, who will come  
To give me information? For each object  
Which I was erst acquainted with seems strange.

AMP. Shall I approach this scene of my afflictions  
Ye aged men?

CHOR. I will attend your steps,  
Nor meanly in calamity betray you.

HER. Why dost thou weep, my sire, and veil those  
eyes,

Retiring far from thy beloved son?

AMP. My son—for though unhappy, you are mine.

HER. But what calamity do I endure  
That causes thee to shed these tears?

AMP. Your woes  
Are such, that any god, if he endured  
The same, would groan.

HER. This hath a dreadful sound:  
But you, my fortunes have not yet explained.

AMP. Because if you your senses have recovered,  
Yourself behold them.

HER. Tell me what thou mean'st—  
If to my charge thou lay'st some recent crime.

AMP. If you no longer to the powers of hell  
Are subjected, the truth will I unfold.

HER. Alas! how darkly thou again allud'st  
To what my soul suspects.

AMP. Your looks I watch  
To see if reason wholly be restored.

HER. I recollect not that I e'er was frantic.

AMP. [*to the CHORUS.*]  
Shall I unbind the shackles of my son,  
Or how must we proceed?

HER. Say who was he  
That bound me? for with scorn have I been treated.

AMP. Thus much of your afflictions may you know:  
Forbear all farther questions.

HER. Is thy silence  
Sufficient then to teach me what I wish  
To learn?

AMP. O Jove, dost thou behold the curses  
Hurl'd on thy son from envious Juno's throne?

HER. What dire effects of her inveterate rage  
Have I endured?

AMP. Of that vindictive goddess  
No longer think: but to your own afflictions  
Attend.

HER. Alas! I utterly am ruined!  
What farther ill wouldst thou disclose?

- AMP. See there  
The curses of your murdered children lie.
- HER. Alas! what dreadful objects strike these eyes!
- AMP. My son, against your progeny you waged  
An inauspicious war.
- HER. Why talk of war?  
Who slew them?
- AMP. You, your arrows, and the cause  
Of all these mischiefs, that remorseless goddess.
- HER. What mean'st thou, or what crime have I committed,  
My father, O thou messenger of ill?
- AMP. By frenzy urged. But you such questions ask,  
As I with grief must answer.
- HER. Have I murdered  
My consort also?
- AMP. All these deeds of horror  
That single arm did perpetrate.
- HER. Alas!  
A cloud of griefs surrounds me.
- AMP. For this cause  
Your fortunes I lament.
- HER. Have I demolished  
My own house too, with Bacchanalian rage  
Inspired?
- AMP. The whole of what I know amounts  
To this, that you are most completely wretched.
- HER. Where did this fatal madness seize me first?
- AMP. As round the altar, you, a flaming brand,  
To expiate the foul murder which distains  
Your hands, were bearing.
- HER. Ah! why lengthen out  
A guilty life, when of my dearest children  
I am become the murderer? Why delay  
To leap from the high rock, or with a sword  
Transpierce this bosom, on myself their blood  
Avenging? or t' avert that infamy  
Which waits me, shall I rush into the flames?  
But Theseus comes to bar these desperate counsels,  
My kinsman and my friend; in a true light  
To him shall I appear, and the pollution  
I have incurred by slaying my own sons  
Will be conspicuous to my dearest comrade.  
What shall I do? or where can I find out  
A solitude impervious to my woes?  
On rapid wings, O could I mount, or plunge  
Into the nether regions of the earth?  
Give me a veil to darken o'er my head.  
For 'tis with shame I think on the offence  
Caused by this deed: but to myself alone



Ascribing the defilement of their blood,  
I wish not to contaminate the guiltless.

THESEUS, AMPHITRYON, HERCULES, CHORUS.

THE. An armed squadron of Athenian youths  
I hither bring, who near Asopus' stream  
Are stationed to assist your son in battle.  
For to the city of Erectheus' race  
A rumour came, that Lycus, having seized  
The sceptre of this land, is waging war  
'Gainst you. O aged man, I to repay  
The benefits which Hercules conferred  
On me, whom from the deary shades beneath  
In safety he redeemed, on your behalf  
Attend, if of this arm, or of my troops,  
Ye need the help. But, ha, what means the floor  
With weltering corses heaped? hath my design  
Proved ineffectual? am I then arrived  
Too late to remedy the dreadful mischiefs  
Which have already ta'en effect? who slew  
Those children, or whose consort was the dame  
Whom I behold? for where the boys are laid,  
No signs appear of any battle fought:  
But sure I of some other recent ill  
Now make discovery.

AMP. O thou goddess, throned  
Upon that hill where verdant olives spring.

THE. Why speak you to me in this piteous tone,  
And with such prelude?

AMP. Grievous are the ills  
Which we endure through Heaven's severe behest.

THE. What boys are they o'er whose remains you weep?

AMP. Them did my miserable son beget,  
And when begotten slay, this impious murder  
He dared to perpetrate.

THE. Express yourself  
In more auspicious terms.

AMP. I wish t' obey  
Th' injunctions thou hast given.

THE. What dreadful words  
Are these which you have uttered!

AMP. In a moment  
Were we undone.

THE. What mean you, what hath happened?

AMP. This frenzy seized him sprinkled with the venom,  
Which from the hundred-headed hydra flowed.

THE. Such Juno's wrath. But who, O aged man,  
Stands 'mong the dead?

AMP. My son, my valiant son,  
 Inured to many toils, who in that war  
 Where earth's gigantic brood were slain, advanced  
 Among the gods to the Phlegræan field  
 Armed with his buckler.

THE. Ah, what mighty chief  
 Was e'er so wretched?

AMP. Scarcely shalt thou know  
 A man with greater labours vexed, and doomed  
 To wander through more regions.

THE. But why veils he  
 Beneath that robe his miserable head?

AMP. Because thy presence, friendship's sacred ties  
 Added to those of kindred, and the gore  
 Of his slain children, fill his soul with shame.

THE. I with his griefs am come to sympathize;  
 Uncover him.

AMP. That garment from your eyes  
 Remove, display your visage to the sun.  
 It ill becomes my dignity to weep:  
 Yet I a suppliant strive to touch your beard,  
 Your knees, your hand, and shed these hoary tears.  
 O curb your soul, my son, whose fierceness equals  
 That of the lion, else 'twill hurry you  
 To bloody impious rage, and make you add  
 Mischiefs to mischiefs.

THE. Ho! on thee I call,  
 On thee, who to that seat of misery seem'st  
 Fast riveted; permit thy friends to see  
 Thy face: for darkness hath no cloud so black  
 As to conceal thy woes. Why dost thou wave  
 Thy hand and point to those whom thou hast slain,  
 Lest by this converse I pollute myself?  
 I am not loth to share thy woes; I erst  
 Was happy (which my soul is ever bound  
 To recollect with gratitude) when thou  
 From hell's loathed gloom, the mansion of the dead,  
 Didst safely bear me to the realms of light.  
 For I abhor th' attachment of those friends  
 Which time impairs, him too who would enjoy  
 Their better fortunes, but refuse to sail  
 In the same bark with those who prove unblest.  
 Rise up, unveil thy miserable head  
 And look on me. A noble mind sustains  
 Without reluctance what the gods inflict.

HER. Did you, O Theseus, see me slay my children?

THE. I heard, and now behold the ills thou speak'st of.

HER. Then why didst thou uncover to the sun  
 My guilty head?

THE. Why not? canst thou, a man,  
Pollute the gods?

HER. Avaunt, O wretch, avaunt,  
For I am all contagion.

THE. To a friend  
No mischief from his friend can be transmitted.

HER. Your conduct I applaud, nor will deny  
That I have served you.

THE. I who erst received  
Those favours at thy hands, now pity thee.

HER. I am indeed an object of your pity,  
From having slain my sons.

THE. For thee I weep,  
Because to me thou heretofore wert kind  
When vexed by other ills.

HER. Did you e'er meet  
With those who were more wretched?

THE. Thy afflictions  
Are of such giant bulk, that they to heaven  
Reach from this nether world.

HER. Hence am I ready  
For instant death.

THE. Canst thou suppose the gods  
Regard thy threats?

HER. Self-willed are they and cruel,  
And I defy the gods.

THE. Restrain thy tongue,  
Lest thou by uttering such presumptuous words  
Increase thy sufferings.

HER. I with woes am fraught  
Already, nor remains there space for more.

THE. But what design'st thou? whither art thou borne  
With frantic rage?

HER. In death will I return  
To those abodes beneath, whence late I came.

THE. Thou speak'st the language of a vulgar man.

HER. Exempt from all calamity yourself,  
On me these admonitions you bestow.

THE. Are these fit words for Hercules to use,  
Who many toils endured?

HER. I had not suffered  
Thus much, if any bounds had circumscribed  
My labours.

THE. Benefactor of mankind,  
And their great friend?

HER. From them no aid I find;  
But Juno triumphs.

THE. Greece will not permit thee  
To perish unregarded.

HER.                                 Hear me now,  
 That I with reason your advice may combat ;  
 To you will I explain both why it is  
 And long hath been impossible for me  
 To live; and first, because from him, I spring,  
 Who, having slain the father of Alcmena,  
 Defiled with murder, wedded her who bore me.  
 When thus the basis of a family  
 Is laid in guilt, the children must be wretched.  
 But Jove (or some one who assumed the name  
 Of Jove) begot me; hence to Juno's hate  
 Was I obnoxious. Yet, O let not this  
 Offend thine ear, old man, for thee, not Jove,  
 I deem my real sire. While yet I hung  
 An infant at the breast, Jove's wife by stealth  
 Sent snakes into my cradle to destroy me.  
 But after I attained the bloom of manhood,  
 Of what avail were it, should I recount  
 The various labours I endured, what lions,  
 What typhons with a triple form, what giants,  
 Or what four-footed centaurs, who in crowds  
 Rushed to the battle, by this arm were slain?  
 How I despatched the hydra too, that monster  
 With heads surrounded, branching out anew,  
 And having suffered many toils beside,  
 Went to the mansions of the dead, to bring  
 Hell's triple-headed dog into the realms  
 Of light, for thus Eurystheus had enjoined?  
 But I at last, wretch that I am, this murder  
 Did perpetrate, and my own children slay,  
 That to their utmost summit I might raise  
 The miseries of this house. My fate is such  
 That in my native Thebes I must not dwell:  
 But if I here continue, to what temple  
 Or friends can I repair? for by such curses  
 I now am visited, that none will dare  
 To speak to me. To Argos shall I go?  
 How can I, when my country drives me forth?  
 To any other city should I fly,  
 The consequence were this: with looks askance  
 I should be viewed as one well known, and harassed  
 With these reproaches by malignant tongues:  
 "Is not this he, the son of Jove, who murdered  
 His children and his consort? from this land  
 Shall not th' accursed miscreant be expelled?"  
 To him who was called happy once, such change  
 Is bitterness indeed: as for the man  
 Whose sufferings are perpetual, him, when wretched,  
 No kinsman pities. I to such a pitch  
 Of woe shall come, I deem, at length, that earth,

Uttering a voice indignant, will forbid me  
 To touch its surface, ocean, o'er its waves,  
 And every river, o'er its streams, to pass.  
 I shall be like Ixion then, with chains  
 Fixed to the wheel. 'Twere better that no Greek  
 With whom I in my happier days conversed  
 Should see me more. What motive can I have  
 For living? or to me of what avail  
 Were it to keep possession of this useless  
 And this unholy being? flushed with joy,  
 Let Jove's illustrious consort, in the dance,  
 Strike with her sandals the resplendent floor  
 Of high Olympus: for she now hath gained  
 Her utmost wish, and from his basis torn  
 The first of Grecian warriors. Who can pray  
 To such a goddess, who, with envy stung,  
 Because Jove loved a woman, hath destroyed  
 The benefactors of the Grecian realm,  
 Those blameless objects of her hate?

THE.

This mischief

Springs from no god except the wife of Jove.  
 Well dost thou judge, in saying that 'tis easier  
 To give thee wholesome counsel, than endure  
 Such agonies. But no man 'scapes unwounded  
 By fortune, and no god; unless the songs  
 Of ancient bards mislead. Have not the gods  
 Among themselves formed lawless marriages?  
 Have they not bound in ignominious chains  
 Their fathers, to obtain a throne? In heaven  
 Yet dwell they, and bear up beneath the load  
 Of all their crimes. But what canst thou allege,  
 If thou, frail mortal as thou art, those ills  
 Immoderately bewail'st to which the gods  
 Without reluctance yield? from Thebes retire,  
 Since thus the laws ordain; and follow me  
 To Pallas' city: when thy hands are there  
 Cleansed from pollution, I to thee will give  
 A palace, and with thee divide my wealth.  
 The presents which the citizens to me  
 Appropriated, when twice seven blooming victims  
 I by the slaughter of the Cretan bull  
 Redeemed, on thee will I bestow. For portions  
 Of land are through the realm to me assigned:  
 These, while thou liv'st henceforth shall by thy name  
 Be called: but after death, when to the shades  
 Of Pluto thou descend'st, with sacrifice  
 And with the sculptured tomb, shall Athens grace  
 Thy memory. For her citizens have gained  
 This fairest wreath from every Grecian state,

By yielding succour to the virtuous man  
 Their glories are augmented : and to thee  
 Will I repay with gratitude the kindness  
 Which thou deserv'st for saving me ; for thou  
 Hast need of friends at present : but no friend  
 Is wanted when the gods confer renown ;  
 For, if he wills, Jove's aid is all-sufficient.

HER. You hold a language foreign to my griefs.  
 But I suppose not that the gods delight  
 In lawless nuptials, that their hands are bound  
 With galling chains, nor did I e'er believe,  
 Nor can I be convinced, that one bears rule  
 Over another. For a deity  
 If he be truly such, can stand in need  
 Of no support. But by some lying bard  
 Those miserable fables were devised.  
 Although I am most wretched, yet I thought  
 I might be charged with cowardice for leaving  
 These realms of light. For he who bears not up  
 'Gainst adverse fortune, never can withstand  
 The weapon of his foe. I am resolved  
 To wait for death with firmness : to your city  
 Meantime will I retreat, and am most grateful  
 For your unnumbered gifts. Unnumbered labours  
 Have I been erst acquainted with ; from none  
 Did I e'er shrink, these eyes did never stream  
 With tears, nor thought I that I e'er should come  
 To such a pitch of meanness as to weep :  
 But now, it seems, must Fortune be obeyed.  
 I am content. Thou, O my aged sire,  
 Behold'st my exile, thou in me behold'st  
 The murderer of my children : to the tomb  
 \* Consign their corse with funereal pomp,  
 And o'er them shed the tributary tear :  
 For me the laws allow not to perform  
 This office. Let their mother, e'en in death,  
 Clasp to her breast, and in her arms sustain,  
 Our wretched offspring, whom in evil hour  
 I slew reluctant. But when thou with earth  
 Hast covered them, thy residence still keep  
 Here in this city, miserably indeed,  
 Yet on thy soul lay this constraint, to bear  
 With me the woes which I most deeply feel.  
 The very sire, ye children, who begot,  
 Murdered you ; no advantage ye derive  
 From what this arm by all my labours gained,  
 And from your father's triumphs no renown.  
 Have not I slain thee too who didst preserve  
 My bed inviolate, and o'er my house  
 Long watch with patient care ? Ah me ! my wife,

My sons : but how much more to be lamented  
 Am I myself, from them for ever torn ?  
 Ye melancholy joys of kisses lavished  
 On their remains, and ye my loathed companions,  
 The weapons which I still retain, but doubt  
 Whether to keep or dash them to the ground ;  
 For they, while at my side they hang, will seem  
 To utter these reproachful words : " With us  
 Thy consort and thy children hast thou slain,  
 Yet thou the very instruments preserv'st  
 Which were their murderers." After such a charge  
 Can I still bear them ? what can I allege ?  
 But stripping off those arms with which through Greece  
 I have achieved full many glorious deeds,  
 Shall I expose myself to those who hate me,  
 And die ignobly ? I must not abandon  
 But keep them still, though sorrowing. Aid me, Theseus,  
 In this one enterprise ; to Argos go  
 And for your friend obtain the great reward  
 Promised for dragging from the shades of hell  
 That execrable hound : lest if by you  
 Deserted, I through grief for my slain children  
 Should come to some calamitous end. Thou realm  
 Of Cadmus, and ye citizens of Thebes,  
 With tresses shorn, in concert weep ; the tomb  
 Of my slain children visit, there bewail,  
 In one funereal dirge, the dead, and me ;  
 For smitten with the same dire scourge of fate  
 By Juno, we all perish.

THE. Hapless man,  
 Arise ; enough of tears.

HER. I cannot rise,  
 These limbs are now grown stiff.

THE. Calamity  
 Subdues the valiant.

HER. Would I were a stone,  
 Insensible to sufferings !

THE. Cease these plaints ;  
 And to the friend who comes to serve thee, give  
 Thy hand.

HER. But let me not wipe off the blood  
 Upon your garments.

THE. Wipe it off, nor scruple,  
 For I object not.

HER. Of my sons bereft,  
 In you the likeness of a son I find.

THE. Fling round my neck thine arm : I'll lead the way.

HER. A pair of friends : though one of us be wretched.  
 Such, O my aged father, is the man  
 We ought to make a friend.

- THE. His native realm  
Produces an illustrious progeny.
- HER. Turn me around, that I may see my sons.
- THE. Hoping such philtre may thy griefs appease.
- HER. This earnestly I wish for, and would clasp  
My father to this bosom.
- AMP. Here, lo, here !  
For what my son desires, to me is grateful.
- THE. Of all the labours thou didst erst achieve,  
Hast thou thus lost the memory ?
- HER. All those ills  
Were less severe than what I now experience.
- THE. Should any one behold thee grown unmanly,  
He could not praise thee.
- HER. Though to you I seem  
Degraded to an abject life, I trust  
That I my former courage shall resume.
- THE. Where now is the illustrious Hercules ?
- HER. What had you been, if still you in the shades  
Had miserably dwelt ?
- THE. Then sunk my courage  
Beneath the meanest of the human race.
- HER. Why then persist in saying that my woes  
Have quite subdued me ?
- THE. Onward !
- HER. Good old man,  
Farewell.
- AMP. Farewell too, O my son.
- HER. My children  
Inter as I directed.
- AMP. O, my son,  
But who will bury me ?
- HER. I.
- AMP. When will you  
Come hither ?
- HER. After thou hast for my children  
Performed that pious office.
- AMP. How ?
- HER. I'll fetch thee  
From Thebes to Athens.—Bear into the palace  
My children's corpses which pollute the ground.  
But as for me, who have disgraced and plunged  
My house in ruin, I will follow Theseus,  
Towed like a battered skiff. Whoe'er prefers  
Wealth or dominion to a steadfast friend,  
Judges amiss.
- CHOR. Most wretched, drowned in tears,  
Reft of our great protector, we depart.



# THE CHILDREN OF HERCULES.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

IOLAUS.  
COPREUS.  
CHORUS OF ATHENIAN  
OLD MEN.

DEMOPHOON.  
MACARIA.  
ALCMENA.  
MESSENGER.

EURYSTHEUS.

SCENE.—BEFORE THE ALTAR OF JUPITER, IN THE FORUM AT  
MARATHON, A CITY IN THE ATHENIAN DOMINIONS.

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IOLAUS.

LONG have I held this sentiment : the just  
Are born the streams of bounty to diffuse  
On all around them ; while the man whose soul  
Is warped by interest, useless in the State,  
Untractable and harsh to every friend,  
Lives only for himself ; in words alone  
This doctrine I imbibed not. Through a sense  
Of virtuous shame and reverence for my kindred  
When I in peace at Argos might have dwelt,  
I singly shared the toils of Hercules,  
While he on earth remained ; but now he dwells  
In heaven, I guard his children, though protection  
Be what I need myself. For when their sire  
Forsook this nether world, Eurystheus strove  
Immediately to slay us ; but I 'scaped  
From that oppressor's fangs, and though to me  
Lost is my country, I have saved my life.  
But we poor vagabonds, from city fly  
To some fresh city, ever forced to change  
Our dwelling ; for Eurystheus deems it meet  
To add this wrong to former wrongs, he sends  
His heralds wheresoe'er he hears we settle,  
And claims and drives us forth from every land ;  
No slight resentment from the Argive realm  
Against our friends denouncing, he reminds them  
Of his own prosperous fortunes ; when they see

My weakness, and these little ones bereft  
 Of their great father, to superior might  
 They crouch, and force the suppliant to depart.  
 But with the exiled race of Hercules  
 A voluntary exile, I partake  
 Their evil fortunes, steadfastly resolved  
 Not to betray them; by malignant tongues  
 It never shall be said, "Oh, mark these orphans!  
 Since their sire's death their kinsman Iolaus  
 Protects them not." But, exiled from all Greece,  
 On reaching Marathon and the domain  
 Subject to the same rulers, here we sit  
 Before the altars of the gods, and sue  
 For their assistance. In this region dwell  
 Two sons of Theseus, I am told, by lot  
 Who portion out this realm, they from Pandion  
 Descend, and to these children are allied.  
 We therefore undertook our present journey  
 To the Athenian realm; two aged guides  
 Conduct the hapless wanderers; my attention  
 Is to the boys devoted; but Alcmena,  
 Entering the adjacent temple, in her arms  
 Tenderly clasps the female progeny  
 Of her departed son. Amid the crowd  
 We fear to introduce these tender virgins,  
 Or place them at the altars of the gods.  
 But Hyllus and his brothers, more mature  
 In years, inquire in what far distant land  
 A fortress for our future residence  
 We yet can find, if we from these domains  
 By force should be expelled. My sons, come hither,  
 Cling to this garment; for to us I see  
 Eurystheus' herald coming, by whose hate,  
 We wanderers, banished from each friendly realm,  
 Are still pursued. Thou, execrable miscreant,  
 Perish thyself, and perish he who sent thee:  
 For to the noble father of these children  
 Oft hath that tongue enjoined severest toils.

## COPREUS, IOLAUS.

COP. What, think'st thou unmolested to enjoy  
 This pleasant seat, and have thy vagrant steps  
 Entered at length a city prompt to fight  
 Thy battles? for the man who will prefer  
 Thy feeble arm to that of great Eurystheus,  
 Exists not. Hence! why in these useless toils  
 Dost thou persist? thou must return to Argos  
 Where they have doomed thee to be stoned.

IOL. Not thus :  
For in this altar shall I find protection,  
And this free country on whose soil we tread.

COP. Wilt thou constrain me then to have recourse  
To violence ?

IOL. With forceful hand, nor me  
Nor these poor children shalt thou hence expel.

COP. Ere long shalt thou perceive that thou hast uttered  
Erroneous prophesies.

IOL. This ne'er shall be  
Long as I live.

COP. Depart, for I will seize them  
'Gainst thy consent, and to Eurystheus' power  
Surrender up, for they to him belong.

IOL. Aid me, ye ancient citizens of Athens,  
For we, though suppliants, forcibly are torn  
E'en from Jove's public altar, and the wreaths  
Twined round our sacred branches are polluted ;  
Shame to your city, insult to the gods.

CHORUS, IOLAUS, COPREUS.

CHOR. What clamorous voices from you altars rise ?  
What mischiefs are impending ?

IOL. See a man  
Burdened with age, wretch that I am ! lie prostrate.

CHOR. Who threw thee down ? what execrable hand——

IOL. 'Tis he, O stranger, he who to your gods  
Yielding no reverence, strives with impious force  
E'en now, to drag me from this hallowed seat  
Before Jove's altar.

CHOR. He ! But from what land  
Cam'st thou, old man, to this confederate state  
Formed of four cities ? From the distant coast  
Of steep Eubœa did ye ply your oars ?

IOL. The life I lead, O stranger, is not that  
Of vagrant islanders ; but in your realm  
From famed Mycene's bulwarks I arrive.

CHOR. Among thy countrymen, old man, what name  
Thou bear'st, inform me.

IOL. Ye perchance knew somewhat  
Of Iolaus, great Alcides' comrade,  
A name not quite unnoticed by renown.

CHOR. I formerly have heard of him : but say  
Who is the father of that infant race,  
Whom with thy arm thou guid'st ?

IOL. These are the sons  
Of Hercules, O strangers, they, to you,  
And to your city, humble suppliants come.

CHOR. On what account, inform me ; to demand  
An audience of the state ?

IOL. That to their foes  
They may not be surrendered up, nor torn  
Forcibly from the altars of your gods,  
And carried back to Argos.

COP. But thy lords  
Who bear rule over thee, and hither trace  
Thy steps, will ne'er be satisfied with this.

CHOR. O stranger, 'tis our duty to revere  
The suppliants of the gods : with forceful hand  
Shall no man drag thee from this holy spot,  
This seat of the immortal powers ; dread justice  
Shall guard thee from the wrong.

COP. Out of your land  
The vagrant subjects of Eurystheus drive,  
As I admonish ; and this hand shall use  
No violence.

CHOR. How impious is that city  
Which disregards the helpless stranger's prayer !

COP. 'Twere best to interfere not in these broils,  
And to adopt some more expedient counsels.

CHOR. You, therefore, to the monarch of this realm  
Should have declared your errand, ere thus far  
You had proceeded : but with brutal force  
These strangers from the altars of the gods  
Presume not to convey, and to this land  
Of freedom yield due reverence.

COP. But what king  
Rules this domain and city ?

CHOR. Theseus' son,  
Renowned Demophoon.

COP. Better I with him  
This contest could decide : for all I yet  
Have spoken, is but a mere waste of words.

CHOR. Behold, he hither comes in haste, and with him,  
To hear this cause, his brother Acamas.

DEMOPHOON, IOLAUS, COPREUS, CHORUS.

DEM. Since by thy speed, old man, thou hast outstripped  
Thy juniors, and already reached the shrine  
Of Jove, inform me what event hath caused  
This multitude t' assemble.

CHOR. There the sons  
Of Hercules in suppliant posture sit,  
And with their wreaths, as you behold, O king,  
Adorn the altar ; that is Iolaus.  
The faithful comrade of their valiant sire.

DEM. How needed their distress these clamorous shrieks ?

CHOR. [*turning towards COPREUS.*]

He raised the uproar, when by force he strove  
To bear them hence, and on his knees, to earth  
Threw the old man, till I for pity wept

DEM. Although he in the habit which he wears  
Adopts the mode of Greece, such deeds as these  
Speak the barbarian. But without delay  
On thee it is incumbent now to tell me  
The country whence thou cam'st.

COP.

I am an Argive ;

Thus far to solve your question : but from whence  
I come, and on what errand, will I add ;  
Mycene's king, Eurystheus, sends me hither  
To fetch these vagrants home : yet I, O stranger,  
Will with abundant justice, in my actions,  
As well as words, proceed ; myself an Argive,  
I bear away these Argives, I but seize  
The fugitives who from my native land  
Escaped, when by the laws which there prevail  
They were ordained to bleed. We have a right,  
Because we are the rulers of the city,  
To execute the sentence we enact  
'Gainst our own subjects. To the sacred hearths  
Of many other states when they repaired,  
We urged the self-same reasons, and none ventured  
To be the authors of their own destruction.  
But haply they in you may have perceived  
A foolish tenderness, and hither come,  
Desperate themselves, you also to involve  
In the same perils, whether they succeed  
Or fail in the emprise : for they no hope  
Can cherish, while you yet retain your reason,  
That you alone, in all the wide extent  
Of Greece, whose various regions they have traversed,  
Should pity those calamities which rise  
But from their own imprudence. Now compare  
Th' alternative proposed ; by sheltering them  
In these dominions, or allowing us  
To bear them hence, what gain may you expect ?  
Side but with us, these benefits are yours :  
Eurystheus' self, and Argos' numerous troops,  
Will aid this city with their utmost might ;  
But if, by their seducing language moved,  
Ye harbour groundless pity for their woes,  
Arms must decide the strife. Nor vainly think  
We will desist till we have fully tried  
The temper of our swords. But what excuse  
Have ye to plead ? Of what domains bereft  
Are ye provoked to wage a desperate war

With the Tiryinthian Argives? What allies  
 Will aid you? What pretext can ye allege  
 To claim funereal honours for the slain?  
 The curses of your city will await  
 Such conduct; for the sake of that old man,  
 Whom I may justly call a tomb, a shadow,  
 And those unfriended children, should you step  
 Into the yawning gulf. Suppose the best  
 Which possibly can happen, that a prospect  
 Of future good hence rises; distant hopes  
 Fall short of present gain. In riper years  
 Ill can these youths be qualified to fight  
 Against the Argive host (if this elate  
 Your soul with hope), and ere that wished event  
 There is a length of intermediate time  
 In which ye may be ruined; but comply  
 With my advice; on me no gift bestow,  
 Let me but take what to ourselves belongs,  
 Mycene shall be yours. But oh, forbear  
 To act as ye are wont, nor form a league  
 With those of no account, when mightier friends  
 May be procured.

DEM. Who can decide a cause  
 Or ascertain its merits till he hear  
 Both sides distinctly?

IOL. In your land, O king,  
 This great advantage, freedom of reply  
 To the malignant charge against me urged,  
 I find, and no man, as from other cities,  
 Shall drive me hence. But we have nothing left  
 For which it now behoves us to contend  
 With him, nor aught, since that decree hath passed,  
 To do with Argos; from our native land  
 We are cast forth. In this distressful state,  
 How can he drag us back again with justice  
 As subjects of Mycene, to that realm  
 Which hath already banished us? We there  
 Are only foreigners. But why should he  
 Whom Argos dooms to exile, by all Greece  
 Be also exiled? Not by Athens sure;  
 For ne'er will Athens from its blest domains  
 Expel the race of Hercules, appalled  
 By Argos' menaced wrath. For neither Trachis,  
 Nor is that city of Achaia here,  
 Whence thou by boasting of the might of Argos  
 In words like those which thou hast uttered now,  
 These suppliants didst unjustly drive away  
 Though seated at the altars. If thy threats  
 Here too prevail, no longer shall we find

Freedom, not e'en in Athens ; but I know  
 Full well the generous temper of its sons,  
 And rather would they die. For to the brave  
 Shame is a load which renders life most hateful.  
 Enough of Athens—for immoderate praise  
 Becomes invidious ; I remember too  
 How oft I have been heretofore distressed  
 By overstrained encomiums. But on you  
 How greatly 'tis incumbent to protect  
 These children will I show, since o'er this land  
 You rule ; for Pitheus was the son of Pelops,  
 From Pitheus Æthra sprung, from Æthra Theseus  
 Your father ; from your ancestors to those  
 Of your unhappy suppliants I proceed ;  
 Alcides was the son of thundering Jove  
 And of Alcmena ; from Lysidice,  
 Daughter of Pelops, did Alcmena spring,  
 One common grandsire gave your grandame birth,  
 And theirs ; so near in blood are you to them ;  
 But, O Demophon, what beyond the ties  
 Of family you to these children owe  
 Will I inform you, and relate how erst  
 With Theseus in one bark I sailed, and bore  
 Their father's shield, when we that belt, the cause  
 Of dreadful slaughter, sought ; and from the caves  
 Of Pluto, Hercules led back your sire.  
 This truth all Greece attests. They in return  
 From you implore this boon, that to their foes  
 They may not be surrendered up, nor torn  
 By force from these your tutelary gods,  
 And banished from this realm. For to yourself  
 'Twere infamous and baneful to your city  
 Should suppliants, exiles, sprung from ancestors  
 The same with yours (ah, miserable me !  
 Behold, behold them !) with a forceful arm  
 Be dragged away. But to your hands, and beard,  
 Lifting these hallowed branches, I entreat you  
 Slight not Alcides' children, undertake  
 Their cause ; and, oh, to them become a kinsman,  
 Become a friend, a father, brother, lord,  
 For better were it to admit these claims,  
 Than suffer them to fall beneath the rage  
 Of Argive tyrants.

CHOR. I with pity heard  
 Their woes, O king, but now I clearly see  
 How noble birth to adverse fortune yields ;  
 For though they spring from an illustrious sire,  
 Yet meet they with afflictions they deserve not.

DEM. Three powerful motives urge me, while I view

The misery which attends you, not to spurn  
 These strangers ; first dread Jove, before whose altars  
 You with these children sit ; next kindred ties,  
 And services performed in ancient days,  
 Give them a claim to such relief from me  
 As from their godlike father mine obtained ;  
 And last of all that infamy which most  
 I ought to loathe ; for if I should permit  
 A foreigner this altar to despoil,  
 I in a land of freedom shall no longer  
 Appear to dwell, but to surrender up,  
 Through fear, the suppliants to their Argive lords,  
 In this extreme of danger. Would to heaven  
 You had arrived with happier auspices ;  
 But tremble not lest any brutal hand  
 Should from this hallowed altar force away  
 You and the children. Therefore go thou back  
 To Argos, and this message to Eurystheus  
 Deliver ; tell him too if there be aught  
 Which 'gainst our guests he can allege, the laws  
 Are open ; but thou shalt not drag them hence.

COP. Not if I prove that it is just, and bring  
 Prevailing reasons ?

DEM. How can it be just  
 To drive away the suppliant ?

COP. Hence no shame  
 Shall light on me, but ruin on your head.

DEM. Should I permit thee to convey them hence  
 In me 'twere base indeed.

COP. Let them be banished  
 From your domains, and I elsewhere will seize them.

DEM. Thou fool, who deem'st thyself more wise than  
 Jove !

COP. All villains may, it seems, take refuge here.

DEM. This altar of the gods, to all affords  
 A sure asylum.

COP. In a different light,  
 This to Mycene's rulers will appear.

DEM. Am not I then the monarch of this realm ?

COP. Offer no wrong to them, if you are wise.

DEM. Do ye then suffer wrong when I refuse  
 To violate the temples of the gods ?

COP. I would not have you enter on a war  
 Against the Argives.

DEM. Equally inclined  
 Am I to peace, yet will not I yield up  
 These suppliants.

COP. Hence am I resolved to drag  
 Those who belong to me.



DEM. Thou then to Argos  
Shalt not with ease return.

COP. Soon will I make  
Th' experiment and know.

DEM. If thou presume  
To touch them, thou immediately shalt rue it.

COP. I by the gods conjure you not to strike  
A herald.

DEM. Strike I will, unless that herald  
Learn to behave discreetly.

CHOR. Go. And you,  
O king, forbear to touch him.

COP. I retire :  
For weak in combat is a single arm.  
But I again shall hither come, and bring  
A host of Argives armed with brazen spears :  
Unnumbered warriors wait for my return.  
The king himself, Eurystheus, is their chief ;  
He on the borders of Alcathous' realm  
Waits for an answer. He in glittering mail,  
Soon as he hears your arrogant reply,  
To you, your subjects, this devoted realm,  
And all its wasted forests will appear,  
For we in vain at Argos should possess  
A band so numerous of heroic youths,  
If you chastised not your assuming pride. [*Exit COPREUS.*]

DEM. Away, detested miscreant ; for I fear not  
Thy Argos : and thou ne'er, by dragging hence  
These suppliants, shalt disgrace me : for this city  
As an appendage to the Argive realm  
I hold not, but its freedom will maintain.

CHOR. 'Tis time each sage precaution to exert,  
Ere to the confines of this land advance  
The troops of Argos : for Mycene's wrath  
Is terrible in combat, and more fierce  
Than heretofore will they invade us now.  
For to exaggerate facts beyond the truth  
Is every herald's custom. To his king,  
How many specious tales do you suppose  
Of the atrocious insults he endured,  
He will relate, and add how he the loss  
Of life endangered ?

IOL. To the sons devolve  
No honours which exceed the being born  
Of an illustrious and heroic sire,  
And wedding into virtuous families.  
But on that man no praise will I bestow,  
Who by his lusts impelled, among the wicked  
A nuptial union forms ; hence to his sons

Disgrace, instead of pleasure, he bequeaths.  
 For noble birth repels adversity  
 Better than abject parentage. When sinking  
 Under the utmost pressure of our woes,  
 We find these friends and kinsmen, who alone  
 Amid the populous extent of Greece  
 Stand forth in our behalf. Ye generous youths,  
 Now give them your right hands, and in return  
 Take those of your protectors : O my sons,  
 Draw near : we have made trial of our friends.  
 If ye again behold your native walls,  
 Possess the self-same mansions, and the honours  
 Which your illustrious father erst enjoyed ;  
 These deem your saviours and your friends, nor wield  
 Against their fostering land the hostile spear.  
 On your remembrance let these benefits  
 Be ever stamped, and hold this city dear ;  
 For they deserve your reverence, who from us  
 Repel so great a nation, such a swarm  
 Of fierce Pelasgian troops : and, though they see  
 Our poverty and exile, have refused  
 To yield us up, or banish from their realm.  
 Both while I live, and after the cold grave  
 Receives me at the destined hour, my friend,  
 I with loud voice your merits will applaud,  
 Approaching mighty Theseus, and my words  
 Shall soothe your father's ear when I recount  
 With what humanity you have received us,  
 And how protected the defenceless sons  
 Of Hercules : by your illustrious birth  
 Distinguished, you the glories of your sire  
 Through Greece maintain : sprung from a noble lineage,  
 Yet are you one among that chosen few  
 Who in no instance deviate from the virtues  
 Of your great ancestry : although 'mid thousands  
 Scarce is a single instance to be found  
 Of those who emulate their father's worth.

CHOR. This country, in a just and honest cause,  
 Is ever prompt to succour the distressed.  
 Hence in its friends' behalf hath it sustained  
 Unnumbered toils, and now another conflict  
 I see impending.

DEM. Rightly hast thou spoken,  
 And in such toils I feel a conscious pride.  
 These benefits shall never be forgotten ;  
 But an assembly of the citizens  
 I instantly will summon, and arrange  
 A numerous squadron, to receive the onset  
 Of fierce Mycene's host, first sending spies

To meet them, lest they unawares assail us.  
 For the bold warrior, who without delay  
 Goes forth to battle, keeps the foe aloof.  
 I also will collect the seers, and slay  
 The victims; but do you, old man, meanwhile  
 Enter the palace with these children, leaving  
 Jove's altar: for my menial train are there,  
 Who will with fond solicitude attend you,  
 Although I am not present: but go in.

IOL. I will not leave the altar; on this seat  
 We suppliants will remain, and pray to Jove,  
 That prosperous fortunes may attend your city.  
 But when you from this conflict are with glory  
 Released, we to your palace will repair;  
 Nor are the gods, who war on our behalf,  
 O king, inferior to the gods of Argos.  
 For o'er that city, Jove's majestic consort,  
 Juno, but here Minerva doth preside.  
 This I maintain, that nought ensures success  
 Beyond the aid of mightier deities,  
 Nor will imperial Pallas be subdued. [*Exit* DEMOPHOON.

## CHORUS.

## ODE.

## I.

Boast as thou wilt, and urge thy proud demand,  
 This nation disregards thy ire,  
 Thou stranger from the Argive land.  
 Nor can thy sounding words control  
 The steadfast purpose of my soul:  
 Great Athens, by her lovely choir  
 Distinguished, shall unstained preserve  
 Her ancient glory, nor from virtue swerve;  
 But thou, devoid of wisdom, dost obey  
 The son of Sthenelus, the tyrant's impious sway,

## II.

Who com'st amidst an independent state,  
 In nought inferior to the strength  
 Of Argos, and with brutal hate  
 Dar'st, though a foreigner, to seize  
 The exiles, who our deities  
 Implore, and in these realms at length  
 From their distress obtain a shield:  
 Thou e'en to sceptred monarchs will not yield,  
 Yet no just plea thy subtle tongue hath found.  
 How can such conduct warp the man whose judgment's  
 sound?

## III.

Peace is the object of my dear delight :

But thou, O tyrant, thou whose breast  
Well may I deem by frenzy is possest,  
If 'gainst this city thou exert thy might,  
Pant'st after trophies which thou ne'er shalt gain.  
Bearing targe and brazen lance  
Others with equal arms advance.

O thou, who fondly seek'st th' embattled plain,  
Shake not these turrets, spare the haunt  
Of every gentle grace.—Thou wretch, avaunt.

## DEMOPHOON, IOLAUS, CHORUS.

IOL. Why com'st thou hither, O my son, with eyes  
Expressive of affliction ? from the foe  
What recent information canst thou give ?  
Do they delay their march, are they at hand,  
Or bring'st thou any tidings ? for the threats  
That herald uttered sure will be accomplished.  
Blest in the favour of the gods, the tyrant  
Exults, I know, and arrogantly deems  
That he o'er Athens shall prevail ; but Jove  
Chastises the presumptuous.

DEM. Argos comes  
With numerous squadrons, and its king Eurystheus,  
Myself beheld him. It behoves the man  
Who claims the merit of an able chief,  
Not to depend upon his spies alone  
To mark the foe's approach. But with his host  
He hath not yet invaded these domains,  
But halting on yon mountain's topmost ridge  
Observes (I from conjecture speak) the road  
By which he may lead forth his troops to battle,  
And where he in this realm with greatest safety  
May station them. Already have I made  
Each preparation to repel their onset.  
The city is in arms, the victims stand  
Before the altars, with their blood t' appease  
The wrath of every god, and due lustrations  
Are sprinkled by the seers, that o'er our foes  
We may obtain a triumph, and preserve  
This country. Every prophet who expounds  
The oracles, convening, have I searched  
Into each sage response of ancient times,  
Or public or concealed, on which depends  
The welfare of the realm. In all beside  
Differ Heaven's mandates : but one dread behest

Runs through the several auspices, to Ceres  
 They bid me sacrifice some blooming maid  
 Who from a nobler sire derives her birth.  
 Zeal have I shown abundant in your cause,  
 But will not slay my daughter, nor constrain  
 Any Athenian citizen to make  
 Such an abhorred oblation: for the man  
 Exists not, who is so devoid of reason,  
 As willingly to yield his children up  
 With his own hands. But what afflicts me most  
 Is this: tumultuous crowds appear; some cry,  
 'Tis just that we the foreign suppliants aid,  
 But others blame my folly. If no means  
 Can be devised to satisfy them all,  
 Soon will a storm of civil war arise.  
 See thou to this, and think of some expedient,  
 How ye and how this country may be saved,  
 Without the citizens' calumnious tongues  
 My fame assailing. For I rule not here  
 With boundless power, like a barbarian king;  
 Let but my deeds be just, and in return  
 Shall I experience justice.

CHOR. Will not Jove  
 Suffer this city to exert its courage,  
 And aid these hapless strangers as we wish?  
 IOL. Our situation, O my sons, resembles  
 That of the mariners, who having 'scaped  
 The storm's relentless fury, when in sight  
 Of land, are from the coast by adverse winds  
 Driven back into the deep. Thus from this realm  
 Just as we reach the shore, like shipwrecked men,  
 Are we expelled. O inauspicious Hope,  
 Why didst thou soothe me with ideal joy,  
 Although it was ordained that thou should'st leave  
 Thy favours incomplete? The king deserves  
 At least to be excused, if he consent not  
 To slay his subjects' daughters; to this city  
 My praise is due, and if the gods would place me  
 In the same prosperous fortunes, from my soul  
 Your benefits should never be effaced.  
 But now, alas! no counsel can I give  
 To you, my children. Whither shall we turn?  
 What god have we neglected? To what land  
 Have we not fled for shelter? We must perish,  
 We shall be yielded up. My being doomed  
 To die, I heed but for this cause alone,  
 That by my death I shall afford delight  
 To our perfidious foes. But, O my sons,  
 For you I weep, I pity you, I pity

Alcmena, aged mother of your sire,  
 Oh, most unhappy in a life too long !  
 I too am wretched, who unnumbered toils  
 Have fruitlessly endured ; it was ordained,  
 It was ordained, alas ! that we should fall  
 Into the hands of our relentless foes,  
 And meet a shameful, miserable death.  
 Know you, what still remains for you to do,  
 On my behalf ? For all my hopes of saving  
 The children are not vanished. In their stead  
 Me to the Argive host surrender up,  
 O king, and rush not into needless danger,  
 Yet save these children. To retain a love  
 Of life becomes me not ; I yield it up  
 Without regret. It is Eurystheus' wish  
 The rather to seize me, and to expose  
 To infamy, because I was the comrade  
 Of Hercules ; for frenzy hath possessed  
 His soul. The wise man, e'en in those he hates,  
 Had rather find discretion than a want  
 Of understanding ; for a foe endued  
 With sense will pay due reverence to the vanquished.

CHOR. Forbear, old man, thus hastily to blame  
 This city ; for to us though it might prove  
 More advantageous, yet to our disgrace  
 Would it redound, should we betray our guests.

DEM. A generous, but impracticable, scheme  
 Is that thou hast proposed : for Argos' king  
 In quest of thee no squadrons hither leads.  
 What profit to Eurystheus from the death  
 Of one so old as thou art could arise ?  
 He wants to murder *these* : for to their foes  
 The rising blossoms of a noble race,  
 To whom the memory of their father's wrongs  
 Is present, must be dreadful : for all this  
 He cannot but foresee. But if thou know  
 Of any other counsel more expedient,  
 Adopt it ; for my soul hath been perplexed,  
 Since that oracular response I heard  
 Which fills me with unwelcome apprehensions.

[Exit DEMOPHOON.]

MACARIA, IOLAUS, CHORUS.

MAC. Deem not that I, O strangers, am too bold  
 Because I from my chamber venture forth ;  
 This is my first request : for silence, joined  
 With modesty and a domestic life,  
 Is woman's best accomplishment. I heard  
 Your groans, O Iolaus, and advanced

Though not appointed by our house to act  
 As their ambassadress ; in some degree  
 Yet am I qualified for such an office,  
 I have so great an interest in the weal  
 Of these my brothers ; on my own account  
 I also wish to hear if any ill,  
 Added to those you have already suffered,  
 Torture your soul.

IOL. Not now for the first time,  
 On thee, O daughter, most of all the children  
 Of Hercules my praise can I bestow :  
 But our ill-fated house, just as it seemed  
 Emerging from its past disgraces, sinks  
 Afresh into inextricable ruin.  
 The king informs us, that the seers, whose voice  
 Expounds the will of heaven, have signified  
 No bull nor heifer, but some blooming maid  
 Who from a noble sire derives her birth,  
 Must be the victim, if we would redeem  
 The city and ourselves from utter ruin ;  
 Here then are we perplexed : for his own children  
 He says he will not sacrifice, nor those  
 Of any of his subjects. Though to me  
 Indeed he speaks not plainly, in some sort  
 He intimates, that if we by no means  
 Can extricate ourselves from these distresses,  
 We must find out some other land to flee to,  
 For he this realm would from destruction save.

MAC. May we indulge the hope of our escape  
 Upon these terms ?

IOL. These only : in all else  
 With prosperous fortunes crowned.

MAC. No longer dread  
 The spear of Argos, for myself, old man,  
 Am ready, ere they doom me to be slain,  
 And here stand forth a voluntary victim.  
 For what could we allege on our behalf,  
 If Athens condescend to undergo  
 Dangers so great, while we who have imposed  
 These toils on others, though within our reach  
 Lie all the means of being saved, yet shrink  
 From death ? Not thus : we should provoke the laugh  
 Of universal scorn, if, with loud groans,  
 We suppliants, at the altars of the gods,  
 Should take our seats, and prove devoid of courage,  
 From that illustrious father though we spring.  
 How can the virtuous reconcile such conduct ?  
 This to our glory would forsooth redound  
 (O may it never happen !) when this city

Is taken, should we fall into the hands  
 Of our triumphant foes, when after all  
 Some noble maid reluctant must be dragged  
 To Pluto's loathed embrace. But from these realms  
 Cast forth, should I become an abject vagrant,  
 Must I not blush when any one inquires,  
 "Why came ye hither with your suppliant branches  
 Too fond of life? Retreat from these domains,  
 For we no aid to cowards will afford."  
 But if when these are dead, my single life  
 Be saved, I cannot entertain a hope  
 That I shall e'er be happy : through this motive  
 Have caused full many to betray their friends.  
 For who with a deserted maid will join,  
 Or in the bonds of wedlock, or desire  
 That I to him a race of sons should bear?  
 I therefore hold it better far to die,  
 Than to endure, without deserving them,  
 Such foul indignities, as can seem light  
 To her alone, who, from a noble race  
 Like mine, descends not : to the scene of death  
 Conduct, with garlands crown me, and prepare  
 If ye think fit, th' initiatory rites ;  
 Ye hence the foe shall conquer : for this soul  
 Shrinks not with mean reluctance. I engage  
 For these my brothers, and myself, to bleed  
 A willing victim ; for with ease detached  
 From life, I have imbibed this best of lessons,  
 To die with firmness in a glorious cause.

CHOR. Alas ! what language shall I find, t' express  
 My admiration of the lofty speech  
 I from this virgin hear, who for her brothers  
 Resolves to die ? What tongue can utter words  
 More truly generous ; or what man surpass  
 Such deeds as these ?

IOL. Thou art no spurious child,  
 But from the godlike seed of Hercules,  
 O daughter, dost indeed derive thy birth.  
 Although thy words are such as cannot shame,  
 Thy fate afflicts me. Yet will I propose  
 What may with greater justice be performed.  
 Together call the sisters of this maid,  
 And to atone for the whole race, let her  
 On whom th' impartial lot shall fall, be slain ;  
 But without such decision 'tis not just  
 That thou should'st die.

MAC. I will not die as chance  
 The lot dispenses ; for I hence should forfeit  
 All merit : name not such a scheme, old man.



If me ye will accept, and of my zeal  
 Avail yourselves, I gladly yield up life  
 Upon these terms, but stoop not to constraint.

IOL. The speech thou now hast uttered soars beyond  
 What thou at first didst say, though that was noble :  
 But thou thy former courage dost surpass  
 By this fresh instance of exalted courage,  
 The merit of thy former words, by words  
 More meritorious. Daughter, I command not,  
 Nor yet oppose thy death : for thou by dying  
 Wilt serve thy brothers.

MAC. You in cautious terms  
 Command me : fear not, lest on my account  
 You should contract pollution : for to die  
 Is my free choice. But follow me, old man,  
 For in your arms would I expire : attend,  
 And o'er my body cast the decent veil :  
 To dreadful slaughter dauntless I go forth,  
 Because I from that father spring, whose name  
 With pride I utter.

IOL. At the hour of death  
 I cannot stand beside thee.

MAC. Grant but this,  
 That when I breathe my last, I may be tended  
 By women, not by men.

IOL. It shall be thus,  
 O miserable virgin : for in me  
 'Twere base, if I neglected any rite  
 That decency enjoins, for many reasons ;  
 Because thy soul is great, because 'tis just,  
 And of all women I have ever seen,  
 Because thou art most wretched. But from these  
 And from thy aged kinsman, if thou wish  
 For aught, to me thy last behests address.

MAC. Adieu, my venerable friend, adieu !  
 Instruct these boys in every branch of wisdom,  
 And make them like yourself, they can attain  
 No higher pitch ; strive to protect them still,  
 And for their sake that valued life prolong ;  
 Your children we, to you our nurture owe.  
 Me you behold, mature for bridal joys,  
 Dying to save them. But may ye, my band  
 Of brothers who are here, be blest, and gain  
 All those advantages, which to procure  
 For you, the falchion shall transpierce my breast.  
 Revere this good old man, revere Alcmena :  
 Your father's aged mother, and these strangers.  
 Should ye be ever rescued from your woes,  
 Should gracious Heaven permit you to revisit

Your native land, forget not to inter,  
 With such magnificence as I deserve,  
 Your benefactress, for I have not proved  
 Deficient in attention to your welfare,  
 But die to save our family. To me  
 These monumental honours shall suffice  
 Instead of children, or the virgin state,  
 If there be aught amid the realms beneath,  
 But 'tis my wish there may not : for if grief  
 On us frail mortals also there attend,  
 I know not whither any one can turn :  
 For by the wise hath death been ever deemed  
 The most effectual cure for every ill.

IOL. O thou, distinguished by thy lofty soul,  
 Be well assured thy glory shall outshine  
 That of all other women ; both in life  
 And death, shalt thou be honoured by thy friends.  
 But ah, farewell ! for with ill-omened words  
 I tremble lest we should provoke the goddess,  
 Dread Proserpine, to whom thou now art sacred.

[*Exit* MACARIA.]

My sons I perish : grief unnerves my frame ;  
 Support and place me in the hallowed seat :  
 And, O my dearest children, o'er my face  
 Extend this garment : for I am not pleased  
 With what is done : yet, had not Heaven's response  
 Found this completion, we must all have died ;  
 For we must then have suffered greater ills  
 Than these, which are already most severe.

CHORUS.

ODE.

In just proportion, as the gods ordain,  
 Is bliss diffused through life's short span,  
 Or sorrow portioned out to man :  
 No favoured house can still maintain  
 From age to age its prosperous state,  
 For swift are the vicissitudes of fate,  
 Who now assails pride's towering crest,  
 Now makes the drooping exile blest.  
 From destiny we cannot fly ;  
 No wisdom can her shafts repel ;  
 But he who vainly dares her power defy  
 Compassed with endless toils shall dwell.  
 Ask not from Heaven with impious prayer,  
 Blessings it cannot grant to man,  
 Nor waste in misery life's short span  
 O'erwhelmed by querulous despair.

The nymph goes forth to meet a noble death,  
 Her brothers and this land to save,  
 And fame, with tributary breath  
 Shall sound her praises in the grave.  
 For dauntless virtue finds a way  
 Through labours which her progress would delay.  
 Such deeds as these, her father grace,  
 And add fresh splendour to her race,  
 But if with reverential awe thou shed  
 Over the virtuous dead  
 A tear of pity, in that tear I'll join,  
 Inspired with sentiments like thine.

SERVANT, IOLAUS, CHORUS.

SER. Ye children, hail! but where is Iolaus,  
 That aged man; and hath your grandame left  
 Her seat before the altar?

IOL. Here am I,  
 If aught my presence can avail.

SER. On earth  
 Why art thou stretched, what means that downcast look?

IOL. Domestic cares have harrowed up my soul.

SER. Lift up thy head, arise.

IOL. I am grown old,  
 And all my strength is vanished.

SER. But to thee  
 I bring most joyful tidings.

IOL. Who art thou?  
 Where have I seen thee? I remember not.

SER. Hyllus' attendant, canst thou not distinguish  
 These features?

IOL. O my friend, art thou arrived  
 To snatch me from despair?

SER. Most certainly:  
 Moreover the intelligence I bring  
 Will make thee happy.

IOL. Thee I call, come forth,  
 Alcmena, mother of a noble son,  
 And listen to these acceptable tidings:  
 Full long thy soul, for those who now approach,  
 Was torn with grief, lest they should ne'er return.

ALCMENA, SERVANT, IOLAUS, CHORUS.

ALC. Whence with your voice resounds this echoing dome,  
 O Iolaus, is another herald  
 From Argos come, who forcibly assails you?  
 My strength indeed is small, yet be assured  
 Of this, presumptuous stranger, while I live  
 Thou shalt not bear them hence. May I no more

Be deemed the mother of that godlike son,  
When I submit to this. But if thou dare  
To touch the children, with two aged foes  
Ignobly wilt thou strive.

IOL. Be of good cheer,  
Thou hoary matron, banish these alarms ;  
No herald with a hostile message comes  
From Argos.

ALC. Why then raised you that loud voice,  
The harbinger of fear ?

IOL. That from the temple  
Thou might'st come forth, and join us.

ALC. What you mean  
I comprehend not. Who is this ?

IOL. He tells us  
Thy grandson marches hither.

ALC. Hail, O thou  
Who bear'st these welcome tidings ? but what brings him  
To these domains ? Where is he ? What affairs  
Prevented him from coming hither with thee,  
To fill my soul with transport ?

SER. He now marshals  
The forces which attend him.

ALC. In this conference  
Am I no longer then allowed to join ?

IOL. Thou art : but 'tis my business to inquire  
Into these matters.

SER. Which of his transactions  
Say art thou most solicitous to know ?

IOL. The number of the troops he leads ?

SER. Is great,  
I cannot count them.

IOL. The Athenian chiefs  
Are sure apprized of this.

SER. They are apprized,  
And the left wing is formed.

IOL. Then the whole host  
Arrayed in arms is ready for the battle.

SER. The victims to a distance from the ranks  
Already are removed.

IOL. But at what distance  
Is the encampment of the Argive warriors ?

SER. So near that we their leader can distinguish.

IOL. What is he doing ; marshalling our foes ?

SER. This we conjecture : for I could not hear  
His voice : but I must go ; for I my lord  
Will not abandon when he nobly braves  
The dangers of the field.

IOL. I too with thee

Will join him ; for the same are our intentions,  
As honour bids us, to assist our friends.

SER. Unwisely hast thou spoken.

IOL. With my friends

Shall not I then the stubborn conflict share ?

SER. That strength which erst was thine is now no more.

IOL. Can I not pierce their shields ?

SER. Thou may'st : but first,

More likely, fall thyself.

IOL. No foe will dare

To meet me face to face.

SER. By thy mere looks,

With that debilitated arm, no wound

Canst thou inflict.

IOL. My presence in the field

Will to our troops give courage, and augment

Their number.

SER. Of small service to thy friends

Will thy appearance prove.

IOL. Detain me not :

I for some glorious action am prepared.

SER. Thou hast the will to act, but not the power

IOL. I will not be reproached for loitering here,

Say what thou wilt beside.

SER. But without arms

How wilt thou face yon warriors sheathed in mail ?

IOL. The various implements of war are lodged

Beneath these roofs ; with freedom will I use,

And if I live, return them ; if I die,

The god will not demand them back again.

Go then into the temple, and reach down

Those martial trappings from the golden nails

On which they hang, and bring them to me swiftly.

For this were infamous, while some are fighting,

If others loiter slothfully behind. [Exit SERVANT.]

CHOR. Time hath not yet debased that lofty soul

'Tis vigorous, though thy body be decayed.

Why should'st thou enter on these fruitless toils,

Which only injure thee, and to our city

Can be of little service ? on thy age

Should'st thou reflect, and lay aside attempts

That are impossible, for by no arts

The long-lost force of youth canst thou regain.

ALC. What schemes are these ? distempered in your mind,

Me and my children mean you to abandon ?

IOL. The battle is man's province : to thy care

Them I consign.

ALC. But if you die, what means

Have I of being saved ?

IOL. The tender care  
Of the surviving children of thy son.

ALC. Should they too meet with some severe mishap,  
Which may the gods forbid.

IOL. These generous strangers  
Will not betray thee ; banish every fear.

ALC. In them I trust : I have no other friend.

IOL. Jove too, I know, is mindful of thy toils.

ALC. I will not speak in disrespectful terms  
Of Jove: but whether he his plighted troth  
Have kept, full well he knows.

SER. [*returning.*] Thou here behold'st  
The brazen panoply, now haste to sheathe  
Thy limbs in mail ; the battle is at hand,  
And Mars detests a loiterer : if thou fear  
Accoutrements so ponderous, to the field  
Advance disarmed, nor till thou join the ranks  
Wear these unwieldy trappings ; for meantime  
I in my hands their burden will sustain.

IOL. Well hast thou spoken ; with those arms attend me  
Ready for the encounter, place a spear  
In my right hand, and under my left arm  
Hold me, and guide my steps.

SER. Shall I conduct  
A warrior like a child ?

IOL. I must tread sure,  
Else 'twere an evil omen.

SER. Would thy power  
Equalled thy zeal.

IOL. Haste: greatly 'twill afflict me  
If, left behind, I cannot join the fray.

SER. Slow are thy steps, and hence thou deem'st I move not.

IOL. Behold'st thou not the swiftness of my pace ?

SER. Thou to thyself I see appear'st to hasten,  
Although thou gain'st no ground.

IOL. When in the field  
Thou seest me, thou wilt own I speak the truth.

SER. What great exploit achieving ? I could wish  
That thou might'st prove victorious.

IOL. Through his shield  
Some foe transfixing.

SER. We at length may reach  
Th' embattled plain, but this I greatly fear.

IOL. Ah, would to heaven, that thou, my withered arm,  
Again wert vigorous, as in former days  
Thee I remember, when thou didst lay waste  
The Spartan realms with Hercules ; thus fight  
My battles now, and singly will I triumph  
Over Eurystheus, for that dastard fears

To face the dangers of th' embattled field :  
 Too apt in our ideas to unite  
 Valour with wealth, yet to the prosperous man  
 Superior wisdom falsely we ascribe.

[*Exeunt* IOLAUS and SERVANT.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

O fostering Earth, resplendent Moon,  
 Who gladd'st the dreary shades of night,  
 And thou, enthroned at broadest noon,  
 Hyperion, 'midst exhaustless light,  
 To me propitious tidings bring,  
 Raise to the skies a festive sound.  
 And waft the gladsome notes around,  
 Till, from the palace of our king,  
 They echo through Minerva's fane :  
 My house, my country, to maintain  
 Against the ruthless spoiler's pride,  
 Menaced because this realm extends  
 Protection to its suppliant friends,  
 I with the sword our contest will decide.

I. 2.

Although there seem just cause for dread,  
 When cities like Mycene blest,  
 Whose triumphs fame hath widely spread  
 Enter this region to invest  
 Our bulwarks, harbouring ruthless hate.  
 Think, O my country, think what shame,  
 Should we reject the suppliant's claim  
 Appalled by Argos' haughty state.  
 Resistless Jove shall aid the spear  
 I brandish unappalled by fear ;  
 The tribute of eternal praise  
 From all that breathe, to him is due :  
 Nor magnified by our weak view  
 Shall men above the gods their trophies raise.

II. I.

Descend with venerable mien,  
 O thou our guardian and our queen,  
 For on thy fostering soil we stand,  
 These walls were reared by thy command,

Drive from our menaced gates the lawless host,  
 Suppress that Argive tyrant's boast ;  
 For if by you unaided, is this hand  
 Too weak their fury to withstand.

## II. 2.

Thce, O Minerva, we adore,  
 Thy altar ever streams with gore :  
 We on each moon's concluding day  
 To thee our public homage pay ;  
 Through every fane harmonious numbers sound,  
 Sweet minstrelsy then breathes around,  
 And th' echoing hills their nightly dance repeat  
 As the nymphs move with agile feet.

## SERVANT, ALCMENA, CHORUS.

SER. O royal dame, the message that to you  
 I bring, is both concise, and what reflects  
 On me abundant glory to relate,  
 In fight have we prevailed, and trophies reared  
 On which the armour of your foes is hung.

ALC. This day hath brought thee hither, O my friend,  
 Thy freedom for such tidings to receive :  
 But one anxiety there still remains  
 To which thou leav'st me subject ; much I fear  
 For the important lives of those I love.

SER. They live, and have obtained from all the host  
 The greatest fame.

ALC. And Iolaus too,  
 My aged friend ?

SER. Yet more, he hath performed  
 Through the peculiar favour of the gods  
 Exploits most memorable.

ALC. What glorious deed  
 Hath he achieved in fight ?

SER. From an old man,  
 He is grown young again.

ALC. Thou speak'st of things  
 Most wonderful. But first, how fought our friends  
 With such success, I wish thee to inform me.

SER. All that hath passed, at once will I relate  
 When, to each other in the field opposed,  
 We had arranged both armies, and spread forth  
 The van of battle to its full extent,  
 Hyllus alighting from his chariot, stood  
 In the midway 'twixt either host, and cried :  
 " Thou leader of the Argive troops, who com'st  
 With hostile fury to invade this land,  
 Thy interests recommend what I propose,



Nor can Mycene suffer from the loss  
If thou deprive her of a single warrior ;  
Therefore with me encounter hand to hand,  
And if thou slay me, seize and bear away  
The sons of Hercules ; but if thou die,  
My palace and hereditary rank  
Permit me to enjoy." The troops assented,  
And praised what he had spoken as the means  
Of finishing their labours, and a proof  
Of his exalted courage. But Eurystheus  
Unmoved by reverence for th' assembled host  
Who heard the challenge, and with terror smitten,  
Forgot the general's part, nor dared to face  
The lifted spear, but acted like a dastard :  
Yet he who was thus destitute of courage  
Came to enslave the sons of Hercules.  
Hyllus again retreated to his rank ;  
The prophets too, when they perceived no peace  
Could be effected by a single combat,  
Without delay the blooming virgin slew,  
Auspicious victim, from whose pallid lips  
Her trembling spirit fled. The lofty car  
Some mounted, o'er their sides while others flung  
Their bucklers to protect them. To his host,  
Meantime the king of Athens, in a strain  
Worthy of his exalted courage, spoke :  
" Ye citizens, the land to which ye owe  
Your nourishment and birth, now claims your aid."  
Equally loth to sully the renown  
Of Argos and Mycene, in like terms  
The foe besought his partners of the war  
Their utmost vigour to exert. No sooner  
Had the loud signal by Etruria's trump  
Been given, than they in thickest battle joined.  
Think with what crash their brazen shields resounded,  
What groans and intermingled shouts were heard !  
First through our lines the host of Argos burst,  
And in their turn gave way : then foot to foot,  
And man to man opposed, in stubborn conflict  
We all persisted : multitudes were slain ;  
But in this language either chief his troops  
Encouraged : " O ye citizens of Athens,  
O ye who till the fruitful Argive field,  
Will ye not from your native land repel  
The foul disgrace ?" But with our utmost efforts  
Scarce could we put to flight the Argive host.  
When Iolaus saw young Hyllus break  
The ranks of battle, he with lifted hands  
Entreated him to place him in his car,

Then seized the reins, and onward in pursuit  
 Of the swift coursers of Eurystheus drove.  
 As to the sequel ; from report alone  
 Let others speak, I tell what I have seen :  
 While through Pallenè's streets he passed, where rise  
 Minerva's altars, soon as he descried  
 The chariot of Eurystheus, he a prayer  
 Addressed to blooming Hebe, and to Jove,  
 That for that single day he might recover  
 The pristine vigour of his youth, and punish  
 His foes as they deserve. You now shall hear  
 What a miraculous event ensued ;  
 Two stars 'bove Iolaus' chariot stood,  
 And overshadowed it with gloomy clouds,  
 Which, by the wise 'tis said, were Hercules  
 Your son, and blooming Hebe : from that mist  
 Which veiled the skies, the chief grown young again,  
 Displayed his vigorous arms, and near the rocks  
 Of Scyron, seized Eurystheus in his car.  
 Binding his hands with chains, he hither brings  
 The Argive tyrant, a distinguished prize,  
 Who once was happy ; but on all mankind  
 Loudly inculcates by his present fortunes  
 This lesson : not too rashly to ascribe  
 Felicity to him who in appearance  
 Is prosperous, but to wait till we behold  
 His close of life ; for fortune day by day  
 Doth waver.

CHOR. Thou great author of success,  
 O Jove, at length am I allowed to view  
 The day, by which my terrors are dispelled.

ALC. 'Twas late indeed, when thou, O Jove, didst look  
 On my afflictions ; yet am I to thee  
 Most grateful for the kindness thou hast shown me.  
 And though I erst believed not that my son  
 Dwells with the gods, I clearly know it now.  
 Now, O my children, ye from all your toils  
 Shall be set free, and of Eurystheus, doomed  
 With shame to perish, burst the galling yoke,  
 Behold your father's city, the rich fields  
 Of your inheritance again possess,  
 And sacrifice to your paternal gods,  
 From whom excluded, in a foreign land  
 Ye led a wandering miserable life.  
 But with what sage design yet undisclosed,  
 Hath Iolaus spared Eurystheus' life,  
 Inform me : for to us it seems unwise  
 Not to avenge our wrongs when we have caught  
 Our enemies.

SER. He through respect to you  
 Hath acted thus, that you might see the tyrant  
 Vanquished, and rendered subject to your power,  
 Not by his own consent, but in the yoke  
 Bound by necessity ; for he was loth  
 To come into your presence, ere he bleed,  
 And suffer as he merits. But farewell,  
 O venerable matron, and remember  
 The promise you first made when I began  
 These tidings, and, oh, set me free: for nought  
 But truth should from ingenuous lips proceed.

[*Exit* SERVANT.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

To me the choral song is sweet,  
 When the shrill flute and genial banquet meet,  
 If Venus also grace the festive board :  
 I taste a more refined delight  
 Now I behold my friends (transporting sight !)  
 To unexpected happiness restored.  
 For in this nether world, eventful Fate,  
 And Saturn's offspring Time, full many a change create.

I. 2.

Follow the plain and beaten way,  
 From Justice, O my country, never stray,  
 Nor cease the powers immortal to revere.  
 To heights scarce short of frenzy rise  
 The errors of that mortal, who denies  
 Assent to truths confirmed by proofs so clear.  
 Jove's power by signal judgments is descried,  
 Oft as his vengeance blasts the towering crest of pride.

II. 1.

In heavenly mansions with the blest,  
 Thy son, O venerable dame, doth rest ;  
 He hath confuted those invidious tales,  
 That to loathed Pluto's house he came  
 Soon as he perished in that dreadful flame :  
 He under roofs of burnished gold regales,  
 On the soft couch of lovely Hebe placed ;  
 Them two, both sprung from Jove, O Hymen, thou hast  
 graced.

## II. 2.

Events, which strike man's wondering eyes,  
 From a variety of causes rise.  
 For fame relates how Pallas saved the sire,  
 And from her city far renowned,  
 Her race, protection have the children found;  
 She hath suppressed th' o'erweening tyrant's ire,  
 Whose violence no laws could ere control;  
 Curse on such boundless pride, that fever of the soul.

MESSENGER, EURYSTHEUS, ALCMENA, CHORUS.

MES. Your eyes indeed behold, O royal dame,  
 Yet shall this tongue declare that we have brought  
 Eurytheus hither, unexpected sight,  
 Reverse of fortune his presumptuous soul  
 Foresaw not, this oppressor little deemed  
 That he should ever fall into your hands,  
 When from Mycene, by the Cyclops' toil  
 Erected, he those squadrons led, and hoped  
 With pride o'erweening to lay Athens waste;  
 But Heaven our situation hath reversed:  
 And therefore with exulting Hyllus joins  
 The valiant Iolaus, in erecting  
 Trophies to Jove the author of our conquest.  
 But they to you commanded me to lead  
 This captive, wishing to delight your soul:  
 For 'tis most grateful to behold a foe  
 Fall'n from the height of gay prosperity.

ALC. Com'st thou, detested wretch? at length hath Justice  
 O'ertaken thee? First hither turn thy head,  
 And dare to face thine enemies: for, dwindled  
 Into a vassal, thou no longer rul'st.  
 Art thou the man (for I would know the truth)  
 Who didst presume to heap unnumbered wrongs,  
 Thou author of all mischief, on my son  
 While yet he lived, wherever now resides  
 His dauntless spirit? For in what one instance  
 Didst thou not injure him? At thy command,  
 Alive he travelled to th' infernal shades;  
 Thou sent'st, and didst comission him to slay  
 Hydras and lions. Various other mischiefs,  
 Which were by thee contrived, I mention not,  
 For an attempt to speak of them at large  
 Would be full tedious. Nor was it enough  
 For thee to venture on these wrongs alone,  
 But thou, moreover, from each Grecian state  
 Me and these children hast expelled, though seated  
 As suppliants at the altars of the gods,

Confounding those whose locks are grey through age  
 With tender infants. But thou here hast found  
 Those who were men indeed, and a free city  
 Which feared thee not. Thou wretchedly shalt perish,  
 And pay this bitter usury to atone  
 For all thy crimes, whose number is so great  
 That it were just thou more than once shouldst die.

MES. You must not kill him.

ALC. Then have we in vain  
 Taken him captive. But what law forbids  
 His being slain?

MES. The rulers of this land  
 Consent not.

ALC. Is it not by them esteemed  
 A glorious action to despatch our foes?

MES. Not such as they have seized alive in battle.

ALC. Is Hyllus satisfied with this decree?

MES. He, in my judgment, will forsooth act rightly,  
 If he oppose what Athens shall enjoin.

ALC. The captive tyrant ill deserves to live,  
 Or longer view the sun.

MES. In this first instance  
 They did amiss, when by their swords he died not.

ALC. Is it not just that he should suffer still?

MES. He who will slay him is not to be found.

ALC. What shall I say if some adventurous hand——

MES. If you do this, you will incur great censure.

ALC. I love this city, I confess : but no man,  
 Since he is fall'n into my power, shall force  
 This prisoner from me : let them call me bold  
 And more presumptuous than becomes a woman,  
 I am resolved to execute my purpose.

MES. Full well I know the hatred which you bear  
 To this unhappy man is terrible,  
 And such as merits pardon.

EUR. Be convinced  
 Of this, O woman, that I cannot flatter,  
 Nor to preserve this wretched life say aught,  
 Whence they may brand me with a dastard's name.  
 For I with much reluctance undertook  
 This contest ; near in blood am I to thee,  
 And of that race whence sprung thy son Alcides.  
 But whether I consented, or was loth,  
 Me Juno caused by her immortal power  
 To harbour this dire frenzy in my breast.  
 Since I became his foe, since I resolved  
 Upon this strife, much mischief I devised,  
 And brooded o'er it many a tedious night,  
 That after I had wearied out and slain

Those I abhorred, I might no longer lead  
 A life of fear : for well I knew thy son  
 Was no mere cipher, but a man indeed :  
 Though strong my hate, on him will I confer  
 The praise he merits from his valiant deeds.  
 But after he was dead, was I not forced,  
 Because I was a foe to these his sons,  
 And knew what bitter enmity 'gainst me  
 They from their sire inherited, to leave  
 No stone unturned, to slay, to banish them,  
 And plot their ruin ? Could I have succeeded  
 In these designs, my throne had stood secure.  
 If thou my prosperous station hadst obtained,  
 Wouldst thou not have attempted to hunt down  
 The lion's whelps, instead of suffering them  
 At Argos unmolested to reside ?  
 Thou canst prevail on no man to give credit  
 To such assertions : therefore, since my foes  
 Forbore to slay me, when prepared to lose  
 My life in battle, by the laws of Greece,  
 If I now die, my blood will fix a stain  
 Of lasting guilt on him who murders me.  
 This city hath discreetly spared my life,  
 More influenced by its reverence for the gods  
 Than by the hatred which to me it bears.  
 My answer to the charges thou hast urged  
 Against me, having heard, esteem me now  
 A suppliant, and though wretched, still a king,  
 For such is my condition : though to die  
 I wish not, yet can I without regret  
 Surrender up my life.

CHOR. To you, Alcmena,  
 A little wholesome counsel would I give,  
 This captive monarch to release, since such  
 The pleasure of the city.

ALC. If he die,  
 And to the mandates of th' Athenian realm  
 I still submit, what mischief can ensue ?

CHOR. 'Twere best of all. But how can these two things  
 Be reconciled ?

ALC. I will inform you how  
 This may with ease be done. I, to his friends,  
 When slain will yield him up, and with this land  
 Comply in the disposal of his corse :  
 But he shall die to sate my just revenge.

EUR. Destroy me if thou wilt ; to thee I sue not :  
 But on this city, since it spared my life  
 Through pious reverence, and forbore to slay me,  
 Will I bestow an ancient oracle

Of Phœbus, which in future times shall prove  
 More advantageous than ye now suppose ;  
 For after death, so have the Fates decreed,  
 My corse shall ye inter before the temple  
 Of the Pallenian maid : to you a friend  
 And guardian of your city, shall I rest  
 Beneath this soil for ever ; but a foe  
 To those who spring from this detested race  
 When with their armies they invade this land  
 Requiting with ingratitude your kindness :  
 Such strangers ye protect. But thus forewarned,  
 Why came I hither ? Through a fond belief  
 That Juno was with far superior power  
 To each oracular response endued,  
 And that my cause she ne'er would have betrayed.  
 On me waste no libations, nor let gore  
 Be poured forth on the spot of my interment,  
 For I to punish these their impious deeds,  
 Will cause them with dishonour to return :  
 From me shall ye receive a double gain,  
 For you I will assist, and prove to them  
 Most baneful e'en in death.

ALC.

Why are ye loth

To slay this man, if what ye hear be true,  
 That welfare to this city hence will spring,  
 And your prosperity ? For he points out  
 The safest road. Alive he is a foe,  
 But after he is dead will prove a friend.  
 Ye servants bear him hence, and to the dogs  
 Cast forth without delay his breathless corse :  
 Think not, presumptuous wretch, that thou shalt live  
 Again t' expel me from my native land.

CHOR. With this am I well pleased. My followers, go.  
 For hence in our king's sight shall we stand guiltless.





# R H E S U S.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

CHORUS OF TROJAN  
SENTINELS.  
HECTOR.  
ÆNEAS.  
DOLON.  
A SHEPHERD.  
RHESUS.

ULYSSES.  
DIOMEDE.  
PARIS.  
MINERVA.  
THE MUSE.  
THE CHARIOTEER OF  
RHESUS.

SCENE.—BEFORE HECTOR'S TENT AT THE GATES OF TROY.

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### CHORUS, HECTOR.

CHOR. Let some swift sentinel to Hector's tent  
Go and inquire if any messenger  
Be yet arrived, who recent tidings bears  
From those, who during the fourth nightly watch  
Are by the host deputed. On your arm  
Sustain your head, unfold those low'ring eyelids,  
And from your lowly couch of withered leaves,  
O Hector, rise, for it is time to listen.

HEC. Who comes? art thou a friend? pronounce the watch-  
word.

Who are ye, that by night approach my bed?  
Speak out.

CHOR. We guard the camp.

HEC. Why com'st thou hither  
With this tumultuous haste?

CHOR. Be of good cheer.

HEC. I am. Hast thou discovered in the camp  
This night some treachery?

CHOR. None.

HEC. Why then deserting  
The post where thou art stationed, dost thou rouse  
The troops, unless thou through this midnight gloom  
Bring some important tidings? know'st thou not  
That near the Argive host we under arms  
Take our repose.

CHOR. Prepare your brave allies :  
 Go to their chambers, bid them wield the spear,  
 Rouse them from slumber, and despatch your friends  
 To your own troop ; caparison the steeds.  
 Who bears the swift alarm to Pantheus' son ?  
 Who to Europa's offspring, Lycia's chief ?  
 Where are the priests who should inspect the victims ?  
 Who leads the light-armed squadron to the field ?  
 And where are Phrygia's archers ? Let each bow  
 Be strung.

HEC. Thy tidings are in part alarming,  
 In part thou giv'st us courage, though thou speak  
 Nought plainly. By the terrifying scourge  
 Of Pan hast thou been smitten, that thou leav'st  
 Thy station to alarm the host ? Explain  
 These clamorous sounds. What tidings shall I say  
 Thou bring'st ? Thy words are many, but their drift  
 I comprehend not.

CHOR. All night long, O Hector,  
 The Grecian camp hath kindled fires, the torches  
 Amid their fleet are blazing, and the host  
 Tumultuous rush to Agamemnon's tent,  
 At midnight calling on the king t' assemble  
 A council : for the sailors never yet  
 Were thus alarmed. But I, because I fear  
 What may ensue, these tidings hither bring,  
 Lest you should charge me with a breach of duty.

HEC. Full seasonably thou com'st, although thou speak  
 Words fraught with terror : for these dastards hope  
 They in their barks shall from this shore escape  
 Ere I discover them : their kindled fires  
 Prove this suspicion. Thou, O partial Jove,  
 Hast robbed me of my triumph, like the prey  
 Torn from the lion, ere I have destroyed  
 With this avenging spear the Grecian host.  
 Had not the sun withdrawn his radiant beams,  
 I the successful battle had prolonged  
 Till I had burnt their ships, and hewn a way  
 Through their encampments, and in slaughter drenched  
 My bloody hand. I would have fought by night  
 And taken my advantage of the gales  
 Sent by auspicious fortune : but the wise,  
 And seers who knew the will of Heaven, advised me  
 To wait but till to-morrow's dawn appeared,  
 And then sweep every Grecian from the land.  
 But now no longer will they stay to prove  
 The truth of what my prophets have foretold :  
 For cowards in the midnight gloom are brave.  
 Instantly therefore through the host proclaim

These orders : " Take up arms, and rouse from sleep ;"  
 Pierced through the back as to the ships he flies,  
 So shall full many a dastard with his gore  
 Distain the steep ascent ; the rest fast bound  
 In galling chains shall learn to till our fields.

CHOR. O Hector, ere you learn the real fact,  
 You are too hasty : for we know not yet  
 That they are flying.

HEC. Wherefore then by night  
 Are those fires kindled through the Grecian camp ?

CHOR. I am not certain, though my soul full strongly  
 Suspects the cause.

HEC. If thou fear this, thou tremblest  
 At a mere shadow.

CHOR. Such a light ne'er blazed  
 Before among the foes.

HEC. Nor such defeat  
 In battle, did they e'er till now experience.

CHOR. This have you done ; look now to what remains.

HEC. I give this short direction : take up arms  
 Against the foe.

CHOR. Behold ! Æneas comes :  
 Sure, from his haste, some tidings, which deserve  
 His friends' attentive ear, the warrior brings.

ÆNEAS, HECTOR, CHORUS.

ÆNE. What mean the watch, O Hector, who by night  
 Were to their stations in the camp assigned,  
 That they, with terror smitten, at your chamber  
 In a nocturnal council have assembled ?  
 And why is the whole army thus in motion ?

HEC. Put on thy arms, Æneas.

ÆNE. What hath happened ?  
 Are you informed that in this midnight gloom  
 The foe hath formed some stratagem ?

HEC. They fly !  
 They mount their ships.

ÆNE. What proof have you of this ?

HEC. All night their torches blaze ; to me they seem  
 As if they would not wait to-morrow's dawn :  
 But, kindling fires upon their lofty decks,  
 They sure fly homeward from this hostile land.

ÆNE. But why, if it be thus, prepare your troops  
 For battle ?

HEC. As they mount the deck, this spear  
 Shall overtake the dastards ; I their flight  
 Will harass : for 'twere base, and prejudicial  
 As well as base, when Heaven delivers up

The foe into our hands, to suffer those  
Who wronged us to escape without a conflict.

ÆNE. Ah! would to Heaven you equally stood foremost  
In wisdom, as in courage: but one man  
By bounteous Nature never was endued  
With knowledge universal: various gifts  
Doth she dispense, to you the warrior's palm,  
To others sapient counsels: now you hear  
Their torches blaze, you thence infer the Greeks  
Are flying, and would lead the troops by night  
Over the trenches: but when you have passed  
The yawning fosse, should you perceive the foes  
Instead of flying from the land, resist,  
With dauntless courage, your protended spear,  
If you are vanquished, to these sheltering walls  
You never can return: for in their flight  
How shall the troops o'er slanting palisades  
Escape, or, how the charioteer direct  
Over the narrow bridge his crashing wheels?  
If you prevail, you have a foe at hand,  
The son of Peleus, from your flaming torches  
Who will protect the fleet, nor suffer you  
Utterly to destroy the Grecian host  
As you expect; for he is brave. Our troops  
Let us then leave to rest from martial toils,  
And sleep beside their shields. That we despatch  
Amid the foe some voluntary spy,  
Is my advice: if they prepare for flight,  
Let us assail the Greeks; but if those fires  
Are kindled to ensnare us, having learned  
The enemy's intentions, let us hold  
A second council on this great emprise.  
Illustrious chief, I have declared my thoughts.

CHORUS.

I.

These counsels I approve: thy wayward scheme,  
O Hector, change, and think the same:  
For perilous commands I deem,  
Given by the headstrong chief, deserve our blame.  
Why send not to the fleet a spy,  
Who may approach the trenches, and descry  
With what intent our foes upon the strand  
Have kindled many a flaming brand?

HEC. Ye have prevailed, because ye all concur  
In one opinion: but depart, prepare  
Thy fellow-soldiers, for perhaps the host

May by the rumours of our nightly council  
 Be put in motion. I will send a spy  
 Among the Greeks ; and if we learn what schemes  
 They have devised, the whole of my intentions  
 To thee will I immediately reveal  
 In person. With confusion and dismay  
 But if the foe precipitate their flight,  
 Give ear, and follow where the clanging trump  
 Summons thee forth, for then I cannot wait,  
 But will this night attack the Grecian host,  
 Storm their entrenchments, and destroy their fleet.

ÆNE. Despatch the messenger without delay.  
 For you now think discreetly, and in me  
 Shall find, when needed, in your bold emprise  
 A firm associate. [Exit ÆNEAS.]

HEC. What brave Trojan, present  
 At this our conference, as a spy will go  
 T' explore the Grecian navy ? to this land  
 What generous benefactor will arise ?  
 Who answers ? for I singly cannot serve  
 The cause of Troy and its confederate bands  
 In every station.

DOL. For my native realm,  
 Facing this danger, to the fleet of Greece  
 I as a spy will go ; and when I've searched  
 Into the progress of our foes, return :  
 But I on these conditions undertake  
 The toilsome enterprise——

HEC. Thou well deserv'st  
 Thy name, and to thy country art a friend,  
 O Dolon ; for this day thy father's house,  
 Which is already noble, thou exalt'st  
 With double fame.

DOL. I therefore ought to strive :  
 But after all my labours let me reap  
 A suitable reward. If gain arise  
 From the performance of the task enjoined,  
 We feel a twofold joy.

HEC. This were but just :  
 I contradict thee not : name thy reward ;  
 Choose what thou wilt, except the rank I bear.

DOL. Your rich domains I wish not to possess.

HEC. To thee a daughter of imperial Priam  
 In marriage shall be given.

DOL. With my superiors  
 I will not wed.

HEC. Abundant gold is ours,  
 If thou prefer this stipend.

DOL. My own house

With wealth is furnished, I am far remote  
From want.

HEC. What then dost thou desire that Troy  
Contains?

DOL. When you have conquered the proud Greeks,  
Promise to give me——

HEC. I will give thee all  
That thou canst ask, except my royal captives.

DOL. Slay them ; I seek not to withhold your arm  
From cutting off the vanquished Menelaus.

HEC. Is it thy wish, Oileus' son to thee  
Should be consigned?

DOL. The hands of princes, nurtured  
Effeminately, are not formed to till  
The stubborn soil.

HEC. From which of all the Greeks  
Taken alive wouldst thou receive his ransom?

DOL. Already have I told you, that at home  
I have abundant riches.

HEC. Thou shalt choose  
Among our spoils.

DOL. For offerings let them hang  
High in the temples of the gods.

HEC. What gift  
Greater than these canst thou from me require?

DOL. Achilles' steeds : for when I stake my life  
On Fortune's die, 'twere reasonable to strive  
For such an object as deserves my toils.

HEC. Although thou in thy wishes to possess  
Those steeds hast interfered with me : for sprung  
From an immortal race themselves immortal  
They bear Pelides through the ranks of war,  
Neptune, 'tis said, the king of ocean, tamed them  
And gave to Peleus : I, who prompted thee  
To this emprise, will not bely thy hopes,  
But to adorn thy noble father's house,  
On thee Achilles' generous steeds bestow.

DOL. This claims my gratitude : if I succeed,  
My courage will for me obtain a palm,  
Such as no Phrygian ever won before :  
Nor should you envy me, for joys unnumbered  
And the first station in the realm, are yours.

[Exit HECTOR.]

CHORUS.

II.

The danger's great, but great rewards allure  
Thee, generous youth, t' assert thy claim,  
Thrice blest if thou the gift procure,  
Yet will thy toils deserve immortal fame :

Th' allies of kings let grandeur tend,  
 May Heaven and Justice thy emprise befriend,  
 For thou already seem'st to have acquired  
 All that from man can be desired.

DOL. I am resolved to go : but my own doors  
 First must I enter, and myself attire  
 In such a garb as suits my present scheme,  
 Thence will I hasten to the Argive fleet.

CHOR. What other dress intend'st thou to assume  
 Instead of that thou wear'st ?

DOL. Such as befits  
 My errand and the stealth with which I travel.

CHOR. We ought to gain instruction from the wise.  
 What covering hast thou chosen for thy body ?

DOL. I to my back will fit the tawny hide  
 Of a slain wolf, will muffle up my front  
 With the beast's hairy visage, fit my hands  
 To his fore-feet, thrust into those behind  
 My legs, and imitate his savage gait ;  
 Approaching undiscovered by the foe,  
 The trenches and the ramparts that defend  
 The navy : but whenever I shall come  
 To desert places, on two feet I mean  
 To travel : such deception have I framed.

CHOR. May Hermes, Maia's offspring, who presides  
 O'er well-conducted fallacies, assist  
 Thy journey thither, and with safety lead  
 Thy homeward steps ! for well thou understand'st  
 The business ; there is nought which yet thou need'st  
 But good success.

DOL. I shall return in safety,  
 And having slain Ulysses, or the son  
 Of Tydeus, bring to you their ghastly heads :  
 For omens of assured success are mine :  
 Then say that Dolon reached the Grecian fleet.  
 These hands distained with gore, my native walls  
 Will I revisit ere the sun arise. [Exit DOLON.]

#### CHORUS.

#### ODE.

#### I. I.

O thou, who issuing with majestic tread  
 From Delian, Lycian, or Thymbraean fanes,  
 Twang'st thy unerring bow ; on Phrygia's plains,  
 Apollo, thy celestial influence shed,  
 Hither come with nightly speed,  
 The enterprising chief to lead

Through mazes undiscovered by our foes ;  
 Aid thy loved Dardanian line,  
 For matchless strength was ever thine,  
 Constructed by thy hand Troy's ancient bulwarks rose.

## I. 2.

Speed Dolon's journey to the Grecian fleet,  
 Let him espy th' entrenchments of their host ;  
 Again in triumph from the stormy coast  
 Conduct the warrior to his native seat ;  
 May he mount that chariot drawn  
 By steeds that browsed the Phthian lawn  
 When our brave lord, the Mars of Greece, hath slain ;  
 Coursers of unrivalled speed,  
 Which erst to Eacus' seed  
 To Peleus, Neptune gave who rules the billowy main.

## II. 1.

His country, his paternal walls, to save,  
 The generous youth explores the anchored fleet :  
 From me such worth shall due encomiums meet.  
 How few with hardy bosoms stem the wave,  
 When Hyperion veils his face,  
 And cities tremble on their base !  
 At this dread crisis Phrygian heroes rise,  
 Mysian chiefs, uncurbed by fear,  
 Brandish with nervous arm the spear,  
 Curst be the lying tongue that slanders my allies.

## II. 2.

In savage guise now Dolon stalks arrayed,  
 With step adventurous o'er the hostile ground :  
 What Grecian chief shall feel the deadly wound,  
 While the wolf's hide conceals his glittering blade ?  
 Weltering first in crimson gore,  
 May Menelaus rise no more ;  
 Next may the victor, Agamemnon's head  
 Bear to Helen, stung with grief  
 At her affinity to that famed chief  
 Who in a thousand ships to Troy his squadrons led.

## A SHEPHERD, HECTOR, CHORUS.

SHEP. Most gracious monarch, may I ever greet  
 My lords with tidings such as now I bring !  
 HEC. Full oft misapprehension clouds the soul  
 Of simple rustics : to thy lord in arms  
 Thou of thy fleecy charge art come to speak



At this unseemly crisis : know'st thou not  
My mansion, or the palace of my sire ?  
There ought'st thou to relate how fare thy flock.

SHEP. We shepherds are, I own, a simple race,  
Yet my intelligence deserves attention.

HEC. Such fortunes as befall the fold, to me  
Relate not, for I carry in this hand  
The battle and the spear.

SHEP. I too am come  
Such tidings to unfold ; for a brave chief,  
Your friend, the leader of a numerous host,  
Marches to fight the battles of this realm.

HEC. But from what country ?

SHEP. Thrace, and he is called  
The son of Strymon.

HEC. Didst thou say, that Rhesus  
Hath entered Iliion's fields ?

SHEP. You comprehend me,  
And have anticipated half my speech.

HEC. Why doth he travel over Ida's hill,  
Deserting that broad path where loaded wains  
With ease might move ?

SHEP. I have no certain knowledge ;  
Yet may we form conjectures ; 'tis a scheme  
Most prudent, with his host to march by night  
Because he hears the plain with hostile bands  
Is covered : but us rustics he alarmed,  
Who dwell on Ida's mount, the ancient seat  
Of Iliion's first inhabitants, by night  
When through that wood, the haunt of savage beasts  
The warrior trod : for with a mighty shout  
The Thracian host rushed on, but we, our flocks,  
With terror smitten, to the summit drove,  
Lest any Greek should come to seize the prey,  
And waste your crowded stalls : till we discovered  
Voices so different from the Hellenian tribes,  
That we no longer feared them. I advanced,  
And in the Thracian language made inquiry  
Of the king's vanguard, as they moved along  
To explore a passage for the host, what name  
Their leader bore, sprung from what noble sire,  
To Iliion's walls he came, the friend of Priam.  
When I had heard each circumstance I wished  
To know, I for a time stood motionless,  
And saw majestic Rhesus, like a god,  
High in his chariot, drawn by Thracian steeds  
Whiter than snow, a golden beam confined  
Their necks, and o'er his shoulders hung a shield  
Adorned with sculptures wrought in massive gold ;

Like that which in Minerva's Ægis flames,  
 Bound on the courser's front, a brazen Gorgon  
 Tinkled incessant with alarming sound.  
 The numbers of an army so immense  
 I cannot calculate; the horse were many,  
 Many the ranks of troops with bucklers armed,  
 And archers; and a countless multitude,  
 Like infantry in Thracian vests arrayed  
 Brought up the rear. Such is th' ally who comes  
 On Troy's behalf to combat; nor by flight,  
 Nor by withstanding his protended spear,  
 Can Peleus' son escape him.

CHOR. When the gods  
 Are to a realm propitious, each event  
 Is easily converted into bliss.

HEC. Since I in battle prosper, and since Jove  
 Is on our side, I shall have many friends;  
 But those we need not who in former time  
 Our toils partook not, with malignant blast  
 When on the sails of Ilium Mars had breathed.  
 Rhesus hath shown too plainly what a friend  
 He is to Troy, for to the feast he comes,  
 Yet was he absent when the hunters seized  
 Their prey, nor did he share the toils of war.

CHOR. You justly scorn such friends; yet, O receive  
 Those who would aid the city.

HEC. We who long  
 Have guarded Ilium can defend it now.

CHOR. Are you persuaded you have gained already  
 A triumph o'er the foes?

HEC. I am persuaded,  
 And when to-morrow's sun the heaven ascends  
 This shall be proved.

CHOR. Beware of what may happen;  
 Jove oft o'erthrows the prosperous.

HEC. I abhor  
 These tardy succours.

SHEP. O, my lord, 'twere odious,  
 Should you reject with scorn the proffered aid  
 Of our allies: the sight of such a host  
 Will strike the foe with terror.

CHOR. Since he comes  
 But as a guest, not partner in the war,  
 Let him approach your hospitable board,  
 For little thanks are due from Priam's sons  
 To such confederates.

HEC. Prudent are thy counsels,  
 Thou too hast rightly judged: and in compliance  
 With what the messenger hath said, let Rhesus

Refulgent in his golden arms draw near,  
For Ilion shall receive him as her friend.

[*Exit* SHEPHERD.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

Daughter of Jove, forbear to wreak  
Impending vengeance, though the tongue,  
O Nemesis, its boastful strain prolong :  
I the free dictates of my soul will speak.  
Thou com'st, brave son of that illustrious spring,  
Thou com'st thrice welcome to our social hall :  
At length doth thy Pierian mother bring  
Her favoured child, while ling'ring in his fall,  
Adorned by many a bridge, thee with paternal call

I. 2.

Doth Strymon summon to the field : of yore  
When he the tuneful Muse addressed,  
A gliding stream he sought her snowy breast,  
Thee, lovely youth, the yielding goddess bore :  
To us thou com'st a tutelary power  
Yoking thy coursers to the fervid car :  
O Phrygia ! O my country ! at this hour  
Hastes thy deliverer glittering from afar,  
Him may'st thou call thy Jove, thy thunderbolt of war.

II. 1.

While swiftly glides th' unheeded day,  
Again shall Troy without control  
Chant the young loves, and o'er the foaming bowl  
The sportive contest urge 'midst banquets gay ;  
But Atreus' sons desponding cross the wave,  
And sail from Ilion to the Spartan strand.  
Accomplish what thy friends foretold, O save  
These menaced walls by thy victorious hand,  
Return with laurels crowned, and bless thy native land.

II. 2.

To dazzle fierce Pelides' sight,  
Before him wave thy golden shield  
Obliquely raised, that meteor of the field,  
Vault from thy chariot with unrivalled might,  
And brandish with each dexterous hand a lance ;  
Whoever strives with thee shall ne'er return  
To Argive fanes, and join Saturnia's dance,  
He by the spear of Thrace in combat slain,  
Shall lie a breathless corse on Troy's exulting plain.

Hail, mighty chief! ye Thracian realms, the mien  
 Of him ye bore speaks his exalted rank.  
 Observe those nervous limbs with plated gold  
 Incased, and hearken to those tinkling chairs  
 Which on his shield are hung. A god, O Troy,  
 E'en Mars himself, from Strymon's current sprung,  
 And from the Muse, brings this auspicious gale.

RHESUS, HECTOR, CHORUS.

RHE. Thou brave descendant of a noble sire,  
 Lord of this realm, O Hector, I accost thee  
 After a tedious absence, and rejoice  
 In thy success, for to the turrets reared  
 By Greece, thou now lay'st siege, and I am come  
 With thee those hostile bulwarks to o'erthrow,  
 And burn their fleet.

HEC. Son of the tuneful Muse,  
 And Thracian Strymon's stream, I ever love  
 To speak the truth, for I am not a man  
 Versed in duplicity; long, long ago,  
 Should you have come to succour Troy, nor suffered,  
 Far as on you depended, by our foes  
 This city to be ta'en. You cannot say  
 That uninvited by your friends you came not,  
 Because you marked not our distress. What heralds,  
 What embassies to you did Phrygia send,  
 Beseeching you, the city to protect,  
 What sumptuous presents did she not bestow?  
 But you, our kinsman, who derive your birth  
 From a barbarian stem, to Greece betrayed  
 Us, a barbarian nation, though from ruling  
 Over a petty state, by this right arm  
 I raised you to the wide-extended throne,  
 When round Pangæum and Pæonia's realm  
 Rushing upon the hardiest Thracian troops  
 I broke their ranks of battle, and subdued  
 The people to your empire: but you spurn  
 My benefits, nor come with speed to succour  
 Your friends in their distress. Though they who spring not  
 From the same ancestors, observed our summons;  
 Of whom full many in yon field of death  
 Have tombs heaped o'er them, a most glorious proof  
 Of faith unshaken; others under arms  
 Their chariots mount, and steadfastly endure  
 The wintry blasts, the parching flames of heaven,  
 Nor on a gay convivial couch reclined  
 Like you, O Rhesus, drain the frequent bowl.  
 That you may know I yet can stand alone,

Such conduct I resent ; this to your face  
I speak.

RHE. I also am the same : my language  
Is plain and honest ; I am not a man  
Of mean duplicity. My soul was tortured  
With greater anguish far than thou couldst feel,  
Because I was not present in this land ;  
But Scythia's tribes who near our confines dwell  
Made war against me just as I to Troy  
Was journeying ; I had reached the Euxine shore  
To sail with Thracia's host, the Scythian blood  
There stained our spears, and my brave troops expired  
'Midst intermingled slaughter : this event  
Hindered my reaching Troy, and aiding thee  
In battle. Having conquered them, and taken  
For hostages their children, them I bound  
To pay me annual tribute ; with my fleet  
Then crossed the Hellespont, and marched on foot  
Through various realms, nor, as thou proudly say'st,  
Drained the intoxicating bowl, nor slept  
Beneath a gilded roof, but to such blasts  
As cover with thick ice the Thracian wave,  
Or through Pæonia howl, was I exposed  
Wrapped in this mantle many a sleepless night.  
But I, though late, am in due season come :  
For this is the tenth year since thou hast waged  
An ineffectual war, day after day  
By thee is idly lavished, while the die  
Of battle 'twixt the Argive host and thine  
Spins doubtful ere it fall. But it for me  
Will be sufficient that the sun once mount  
The heavens, while I their bulwarks storm, invade  
Their fleet, and slay the Greeks. To my own home  
I the next day from Ilion will return,  
Thy toils soon ending : let no Trojan bear  
A shield : for with this spear will I subdue  
The boasters, though 'twas late ere I arrived.

CHOR. My soul this language doth approve,  
Such friends as thou art sent by Jove,  
But humbly I that god beseech,  
To pardon thy presumptuous speech.  
The navy launched from Argos' strand,  
Though freighted with a daring band,  
Neither in former times, nor now  
Contained a chief more brave than thou.  
How shall Achilles' self withstand,  
Or Ajax meet, thy vengeful hand ?  
O may the morn with orient ray  
Exhibit that auspicious day,

When thou the victor's prize shalt gain  
And dye with crimson gore the plain.

RHE. Soon with exploits like these will I atone  
For my long absence: but, with due submission  
To Nemesis, I speak; when from the foe  
We have delivered this beleaguered city  
And seized their spoils for offerings to the gods;  
With thee to Argos will I go, invade,  
And ravage with victorious arms, all Greece,  
To teach them in their turn what 'tis to suffer.

HEC. Could I escape from the impending stroke,  
And with that safety which we erst enjoyed  
These walls inhabit, I to Heaven should pay  
Full many a grateful vow: but as for Argos,  
As for the Grecian states, to lay them waste  
By arms were far less easy than you speak of.

RHE. Is it not said the bravest chiefs of Greece  
Came hither?

HEC. Them I hold not in contempt,  
But long have kept at bay.

RHE. When these are slain,  
We therefore each obstruction have removed.

HEC. Forbear to think of distant prospects now,  
While our immediate interests lie neglected.

RHE. Art thou so tame as to endure such wrongs  
Without retorting them?

HEC. While I maintain  
What I possess, my empire is sufficient.  
But freely take your choice, or in the left  
Or the right wing, or centre of our host  
Display your shield, and range your troops around.

RHE. I singly will encounter all our foes,  
O Hector; but if thou esteem it base  
Not to assist me when I burn their fleet,  
Because thou hast already toiled so long,  
Oppose me to Achilles in the front  
Of battle.

HEC. We at him no spear must aim.

RHE. Yet was I told he sailed for Troy.

HEC. He sailed,  
And still is here, but angry with the chiefs,  
Refuses to assist them.

RHE. In the camp  
Of Greece, say who is second in renown?

HEC. Ajax, I deem, and Tydeus' son are equal  
To any; but most fluent in his speech,  
And with sufficient fortitude inspired,  
Is that Ulysses, from whom Troy hath suffered  
Insults the most atrocious; for by night,

Entering Minerva's fane, he stole her image,  
 And bore it to the Grecian fleet; disguised  
 In tattered vest, that vile impostor next  
 Entered the gates, and cursed the Argive host,  
 Sent as a spy to Ilion; having slain  
 The sentinels, he through the gates escaped,  
 And in some fraudulent scheme is ever found:  
 At the Thymbraean temple is he stationed  
 Hard by our ramparts, we in him contend  
 With a most grievous pest.

RHE. The valiant man  
 Is never mean enough to slay his foes  
 By stealth, he loves to meet them face to face;  
 But, as for him, the recreant chief thou nam'st,  
 Who lurking with a thievish purpose frames  
 These dark contrivances, as through the gates  
 I sally forth to combat, I will seize him;  
 Driven through his back, my spear shall leave the miscreant  
 Food for the vultures, for the impious robber  
 Who spoils the temples of the gods deserves  
 No better fate.

HEC. Now choose, for it is night,  
 The spot for an encampment: I will show you  
 A separate quarter where your troops must sleep.  
 But mark me well, Apollo is the watchword;  
 In case of an emergency, announce  
 This signal to the Thracian host.

[Exit RHECUS.]

~~Extend~~  
 The watch beyond the lines, and there receive  
 Dolon our spy, who sallied forth t' explore  
 The navy of our foes; if he be safe  
 He, by this time, the trenches must approach.

[Exit HECTOR.]

CHORUS.

I.

Who comes this rampart to defend?  
 The times assigned us sentinels is o'er;  
 Yon fading constellation shines no more  
 Now the seven Pleiades the heaven ascend.  
 In ether view the eagle glide.  
 Wake! what means this long delay?  
 Rise and watch; now dawns the day!  
 Saw ye the moon diffuse her radiance wide?  
 Aurora is at hand: but at the gate  
 (For Dolon sure returns) what faithful guard shall wait?  
 SEMICHOR. To whom did the first watch belong?  
 SEMICHOR. 'Tis said  
 Choræbus, son of Mygdon, is their chief.

SEMICHOR. Who in his room was stationed?  
 SEMICHOR. The Pæ-nians  
 Called from their tent Cilicia's hardy troops.  
 SEMICHOR. The Mysians summoned us.  
 SEMICHOR. Hasten, let us seek  
 The fifth division of the watch, and rouse  
 Lycia's brave warriors as by lot ordained.

## CHORUS.

## II.

Hark! couched on her ill-omened nest,  
 Fell murderess of her son, in varied strains  
 Near Simois' banks the nightingale complains :  
 What sounds melodious heave her throbbing breast !  
 The flocks on Ida wont to feed  
 Still browse o'er that airy height,  
 Soothing the cold ear of night,  
 Hark to the murmurs of the pastoral reed.  
 Sleep on our closing eyelids gently steals ;  
 Sweet are its dews when morn her earliest dawn reveals.  
 SEMICHOR. But wherefore doth not he draw near whom  
 Hector  
 Sent to explore the fleet ?  
 SEMICHOR. He hath so long  
 Been absent that I tremble.  
 SEMICHOR. If he fell  
 Into some ambush, and is slain, we soon  
 Shall have sufficient cause for fear.  
 SEMICHOR. But haste,  
 Rouse Lycia's warriors as by lot ordained. [*Exit* CHORUS.]

## ULYSSES, DIOMEDE.

ULY. Heard'st thou, O Diomede, the sound of arms,  
 Or in these ears did empty murmurs ring ?  
 DIO. No ; but the steely trappings which are linked  
 To yonder chariots, rattled, and I too  
 With vain alarm was seized, till I perceived  
 The coursers, who their clanging harness shook.  
 ULY. Beware, lest in this gloom of night thou stumble  
 Upon the sentinels.  
 DIO. Though in the dark  
 We tread, I with such caution will direct  
 My steps as not to err.  
 ULY. But, should'st thou wake them,  
 Thou know'st the watchword of their host.  
 DIO. I know  
 It is Apollo ; this I heard from Dolon.  
 ULY. Ha ! I perceive our foes have left these chambers.



DIO. Here, Dolon told us, is the tent of Hector :  
'Gainst him I wield this javelin.

ULY. What hath happened?  
Is the whole squadron too elsewhere removed?

DIO. Perchance they too 'gainst us may have contrived  
Some stratagem.

ULY. For Hector now is brave  
Since he hath conquered.

DIO. How shall we proceed?  
For in this chamber him we cannot find,  
And all our hopes are vanished.

ULY. To the fleet  
Let us in haste return : for him some god  
Protects, and crowns him with triumphant wreaths :  
We must not strive 'gainst Fortune's dread behests.

DIO. Then to Æneas will we go, or Paris  
That Phrygian most abhorred, and with our swords  
Lop off their heads.

ULY. But how, in darkness wrapt,  
Canst thou direct thy passage through the troops,  
To slay them without danger?

DIO. Yet 'twere base,  
Back to the Grecian fleet should we return,  
No fresh exploit performing 'gainst the foe.

ULY. What means this language? hast thou not performed  
A great exploit? have we not slain the spy  
Who to our navy went, and are not these  
The spoils of Dolon? how canst thou expect  
To spread a general havoc through their troops?  
Comply; let us retire: may Fortune speed  
Our progress homeward.

MINERVA, ULYSSES, DIOMEDE.

MIN. With affliction stung,  
Why from the Trojan camp do ye retire?  
Although the gods forbid you to destroy  
Hector or Paris, heard ye not that Rhesus,  
A mighty chief, with numerous troops is come  
To Troy? If he outlives this night, nor Ajax,  
Nor can Achilles hinder him from wasting  
The camp of Greece, demolishing your walls,  
And forcing a wide passage through your gates  
With his victorious spear: him slay, and all  
Is yours; but go not to the couch of Hector,  
Nor hope to leave that chief a weltering trunk,  
For he must perish by another hand.

ULY. Dread goddess, O Minerva, I distinguished  
Thy well-known voice: for midst unnumbered toils  
Thou ever dost support me: but, oh say,

Where sleeps the mighty warrior thou hast named,  
 And in what part of the barbarian host  
 Have they assigned his station?

MIN. Near at hand,  
 And separate from the Phrygian troops, he lies;  
 Hector hath placed him just without the lines  
 Till morn arise; conspicuous in the gloom  
 Of night, and close beside their sleeping lord,  
 Yoked to the car his Thracian coursers stand,  
 White as the glossy plumage of the swan:  
 Them bear away when ye have slain their lord,  
 A glorious prize, for the whole world can boast  
 No car beside drawn by such beauteous steeds.

ULY. Either do thou, O Diomed, transpierce  
 The Thracian soldiers, or to me consign  
 That task; meanwhile seize thou the steeds.

DIO. To slay  
 The foe be mine; do you the coursers guide,  
 For you are practised in each nicer art,  
 And quick of apprehension. To each man  
 Should that peculiar station be assigned  
 In which he can be useful.

MIN. But to us  
 Paris I see is coming, who hath heard  
 A doubtful rumour from the watch, that foes  
 Enter the trenches.

DIO. Hath he any comrade,  
 Or marches he alone?

MIN. Alone he seems  
 To go to Hector's chamber, to announce  
 That there are foes discovered in the camp.

DIO. Is it not first ordained that he shall die?

MIN. You can no more, the Destinies forbid:  
 For Hector must not perish by your hand;  
 But haste to him on whom ye came to wreak  
 Fate's dreadful purposes: myself meanwhile  
 Assuming Venus' form, who 'midst the toils  
 Of battle by her tutelary care  
 Protects him, will with empty words detain  
 Paris your foe. Thus much have I declared:  
 Yet he, whom you must smite, though near at hand,  
 Nor knows, nor hears, the words which I have uttered.

[*Exeunt* ULYSSES and DIOMEDE.]

PARIS, MINERVA.

PAR. General and brother, Hector, thee I call:  
 Yet sleep'st thou? doth not this important hour  
 Demand thy vigilance? some foes approach,  
 Robbers or spies.

MIN. Be of good cheer ; for Venus  
Protects you : I in all your battles feel  
An interest, mindful of the prize I gained  
Favoured by you, and am for ever grateful :  
Now to the host of Ilion I conduct  
Your noble Thracian friend, who from the Muse,  
Harmonious goddess, and from Strymon springs.

PAR. To Troy and me thou ever art a friend.  
In thy behalf when I that judgment gave,  
I boast that for this city I obtained  
The greatest treasure life affords. But hither,  
Hearing an indistinct account, I come ;  
For 'mong the guards there hath prevailed a rumour,  
That Grecian spies have entered Ilion's walls :  
Though the astonished messenger who bore  
These tidings, saw them not himself, nor knows  
Who saw them : I on this account am going  
To Hector's tent.

MIN. Fear nought ; for in the camp  
No new event hath happened. To arrange  
The Thracian troops is Hector gone.

PAR. Thy words  
Are most persuasive, and to them I yield  
Implicit credence. From all fears released,  
I to my former station will return.

MIN. Go and depend upon my guardian care  
To see my faithful votaries ever blest ;  
For you in me shall find a zealous friend. [Exit PARIS.]

ULYSSES, DIOMEDE, MINERVA.

MIN. But now to you, my real friends, I speak.  
Son of Laertes, O conceal your sword,  
For we have slain the Thracian chief, and seized  
His coursers, but our foes have ta'en th' alarm  
And rush upon you, therefore fly with speed,  
Fly to the naval ramparts. Why delay  
To save your lives when hostile throngs approach?  
[Exit MINERVA.]

CHORUS, ULYSSES, DIOMEDE.

CHOR. Come on, strike, strike, destroy. Who marches  
yonder?  
Look, look, 'tis him I mean ! these are the robbers  
Who in the dead of night alarmed our host.  
Hither, my friends, haste hither ; I have seized them.  
What answer mak'st thou ? tell me whence thou cam'st,  
And who thou art.

ULY. No right hast thou to know ;  
Insult me, and this instant thou shalt die.

CHOR. Wilt thou not, ere this lance transpierce thy  
breast,  
Repeat the watchword?  
ULY. That thou soon shalt hear;  
Be satisfied.  
1st SEMICHOR. Come on, my friends, strike! strike!  
2nd SEMICHOR. Hast thou slain Rhesus?  
ULY. I have slain the man  
Who would have murdered thee : forbear.  
1st SEMICHOR. I will not.  
2nd SEMICHOR. Forbear to slay a friend.  
1st SEMICHOR. Pronounce the watchword.  
ULY. Apollo.  
2nd SEMICHOR. Thou art right; let not a spear  
Be lifted up against him.  
1st SEMICHOR. Know'st thou whither  
Those men are gone?  
2nd SEMICHOR. We saw not.  
1st SEMICHOR. Follow close  
Their steps, or we must call aloud for aid.  
2nd SEMICHOR. Yet were it most unseemly to disturb  
Our valiant comrades with our nightly fears.

[*Exeunt* ULYSSES and DIOMEDE.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

What chief is he, who moved along;  
What daring plunderer fleet and strong,  
Shall boast he 'scaped my vengeful hand?  
How overtake his rapid flight?  
To whom compare him, who by night,  
With dauntless step passed through our armed band  
And slumbering guards? doth he reside  
In Thessaly, near ocean's boisterous tide  
In Locris, or those islands scattered o'er  
The waves? whence comes he to this fell debate?  
What power supreme doth he adore?  
1st SEMICHOR. Was this Ulysses' enterprise, or whose?  
2nd SEMICHOR. If we may form our judgment from the past,  
Who but Ulysses—  
1st SEMICHOR. Think'st thou that it was?  
2nd SEMICHOR. Why not?  
1st SEMICHOR. He is an enterprising foe.  
2nd SEMICHOR. What bravery? whom do you applaud?  
1st SEMICHOR. Ulysses.  
2nd SEMICHOR. Praise not the treacherous weapon of a  
robber.

## CHORUS.

## II.

He entered Iliou once before,  
 With foam his eyes were covered o'er,  
 In tatters hung his squalid vest;  
 He artfully concealed his sword,  
 And sued for fragments from our board;  
 Shorn was his head, and like a beggar dressed;  
 He cursed with simulated hate  
 Th' Atrides, rulers of the Grecian state.  
 May just revenge his forfeit life demand:  
 Would he had perished as his crimes deserve,  
 Before he reached the Phrygian land.

1st SEMICHOR. Whether this deed was by Ulysses wrought  
 It matters not, I shrink with fear, for Hector  
 Will to us guards impute the blame.

2nd SEMICHOR. What charge  
 Can he allege?

1st SEMICHOR. He will suspect.

2nd SEMICHOR. Why shrink  
 With terror?

1st SEMICHOR. 'Twi'x our ranks they passed.

2nd SEMICHOR.

Who passed?

1st SEMICHOR. They, who this night have entered Phrygia's  
 camp.

## CHARIOTEER OF RHESUS, CHORUS.

CHA. Alas! intolerable stroke of fate!

1st SEMICHOR. Be silent.

2nd SEMICHOR. Rouse! for some one may have fallen  
 Into the snare.

CHA. O dire calamity  
 Of Troy's allies, the Thracians!

1st SEMICHOR. Who is he  
 That groans?

CHA. Ah! wretched me, and O thou king  
 Of Thrace, who in an evil hour beheld'st  
 Accurs'd Iliou; what an end of life  
 Was thine!

CHOR. But which of our allies art thou?  
 For o'er these eyes the gloom of night is spread,  
 And I discern thee not.

CHA. Where shall I find  
 Some of the Trojan chiefs? beneath his shield  
 O where doth Hector taste the charms of sleep?  
 To which of Iliou's leaders shall I tell  
 All we have suffered? and what wounds unseen

Some stranger hath on us with ruthless hand  
 Inflicted? but he vanished and hath heaped  
 Conspicuous sorrows on the Thracian realm.

CHOR. Some terrible disaster to the troops  
 Of Thrace it seems hath happened, if aright  
 I comprehend what I from him have heard.

CHA. Our host is utterly destroyed, our king  
 Hath been despatched by some foul secret stroke.  
 How am I tortured by a deadly wound,  
 Yet know not to what cause I must impute  
 My perishing! 'Twas by the Fates ordained,  
 That I, and Rhesus, who to Ilion led  
 Auxiliar troops, ingloriously should bleed.

CHOR. He in no riddle hath expressed the tale  
 Of our misfortunes; he asserts too clearly  
 That our allies are slain.

CHA. We are most wretched,  
 And to our wretchedness have joined disgrace,  
 A twofold evil. For, to die with glory,  
 If glory must be purchased at the expense  
 Of life, is very bitterness I deem  
 To him who bleeds (for what can make amends  
 For such a loss as life); but to the living  
 Is he the source of pride, from him his house  
 Derives renown. But we, alas! like fools,  
 Ignobly perish. Hector in the camp  
 No sooner fixed our station, and pronounced  
 The watchword, than we slept upon the plain,  
 O'ercome with toil; no sentinels were stationed  
 To watch our troops by night, nor were our arms  
 Duly arranged, and to the harnessed steeds  
 Hung no alarm bell; for our monarch heard  
 That ye had proved victorious, and with ruin  
 Threatened the Grecian fleet. Immersed we lay  
 In luckless slumber; till disturbed in mind  
 I started up, and with a liberal hand  
 Measured the coursers' food, resolved betimes  
 To yoke them for the battle. I beheld  
 Two men, who, in the midnight darkness, walked  
 Around our camp; but when I moved, they fled,  
 And disappeared immediately; with threats  
 I bade them keep aloof: 'twas my conjecture  
 That robbers, some of our own countrymen,  
 Approached: they answered not, nor know I more.  
 Returning to my tent, again I slept,  
 And forms tremendous hovered in my dream.  
 For near my royal master, as I stood,  
 I saw two visionary wolves ascend  
 Those coursers' backs which I was wont to guide,

Of lashing with their tails they forced them on,  
 Indignant breathing as they champed the bit,  
 And struggling with dismay ; but in attempting  
 To drive away these ravenous beasts, I woke,  
 Roused by the terrors of the night, and heard,  
 Soon as I raised my head, expiring groans ;  
 The tepid current of my master's blood,  
 Yet gasping in the agonies of death,  
 Besprinkled me. As from the couch I leaped  
 Unarmed, and sought for weapons, some strong warrior  
 Smote with his sword my ribs ; the ghastly wound  
 Displayed his might : prostrate I sunk to earth.  
 Bearing the steeds away, and glittering car,  
 They by the swiftness of their feet escaped,  
 Tortured with pain, too faint to stand, I know  
 Too well the dire calamity these eyes  
 Beheld ; but cannot say, or through what means,  
 Or by the hand of whom, my lord was slain :  
 Yet can I guess that by our friends we suffer. ✕

CHOR. O charioteer of Thracia's wretched king,  
 Be well assured this deed was by our foes  
 Committed. For lo ! Hector's self, apprized  
 Of this calamity, draws near ; he feels  
 Such anguish as he ought for thy disasters.

HECTOR, CHARIOTEER OF RHESUS, CHORUS.

HEC. O ye accursed authors of this mischief,  
 How did those spies, who by the foe were sent  
 Thus, to your infamy, escape, and spread  
 Dire havoc through the host ; both as they entered  
 And as they left the camp ? Yet, unmolested,  
 Ye suffered them to pass. Who should be punished  
 But you ? for you, I say, were stationed here  
 To watch the camp ; but they without a wound  
 Are vanished, laughing at the Phrygian troops  
 For their unmanly cowardice, and me  
 Their leader. Be assured, by Jove I swear,  
 All-gracious father, or the scourge or death  
 Shall wait you for such guilt, else deem that Hector  
 Is but a thing of nought, a very coward.

CHOR. Great is, alas ! my danger, mighty prince,  
 The foe stole in while I to you conveyed  
 Those tidings, that the Greeks around their ships  
 Had kindled fires : through all the live-long night  
 These watchful eyes have ne'er been sealed by sleep.  
 By Simois' holy fountain I conjure you,  
 My royal lord, impute no blame to me,  
 For I am wholly guiltless. If you learn  
 That in my deeds or words I have offended,

Plunge me alive beneath earth's deepest vault ;  
I ask no mercy.

CHA. Why dost thou upbraid  
These for the guilt ? by plausible harangues  
Wouldst thou impose on thy barbarian friends ;  
O thou barbarian, thou the bloody deed  
Didst perpetrate ; nor can our slaughtered comrades,  
Nor we who linger pierced with ghastly wounds,  
Admit that 'twas another. There requires  
A long and subtle speech to make me think  
Thou didst not basely murder thy allies,  
Because the beauty of our steeds attracted  
Thy admiration, and on their account  
Hast thou slain those who at thy earnest prayer  
Landed on Ilion's shore ; they came, they died.  
With greater decency than thou observ'st,  
Who dost assassinate thy friends, did Paris  
The rites of hospitality infringe.  
Pretend not that some Grecian came unseen  
And smote us. Who subdued the Phrygian host,  
Who reached our quarters unobserved by Hector ?  
Thou with the Trojan army wert before us ;  
But who was wounded, who among thy troops  
Expired, when through their ranks as thou pretend'st  
The foe to us advanced ? But I was wounded,  
And they, whom a more grievous ill o'ertook,  
No more behold the sun. To be explicit,  
I charge no Greek : what foe could come by night  
And find out Rhesus' tent, unless some god  
Had told the murderers, for they sure knew nought  
Of his arrival ? therefore all this mischief  
Must be thy sole contrivance.

HEC. Our allies  
Have long assisted us since first the Greeks  
This realm invaded ; and I never heard  
They to my charge imputed any crime.  
Could I begin with thee ? by such desire  
For beauteous steeds may I be never seized,  
As to induce me to destroy my friends.  
Ulysses was the author of this deed.  
What Greek could have accomplished or contrived  
Such an exploit, but he ? Him much I fear :  
My soul is also troubled lest he light  
On Dolon too, and slay him, for 'tis long  
Since he went forth, nor doth he yet return.

CHA. I know not that Ulysses whom thou nam'st,  
Nor did a foe inflict this ghastly wound.

HEC. Therefore retain, since thus to thee it seems,  
Thy own opinion.



CHA. O my native land,  
Might I but die in thee!

HEC. Thou shalt not die :  
For of the dead the number is sufficient.

CHA. Reft of my lord, but whither shall I turn ?

HEC. Thou in my house shalt careful treatment find,  
And healing balsams.

CHA. Shall the ruthless hands  
Of murderers dress my wounds ?

HEC. He will not cease  
Alleging the same charge.

CHA. Perdition seize  
The author of this bloody deed ! my tongue  
Has fixed no charge, as thou pretend'st, on thee ;  
But Justice knows.

HEC. Conduct him to my palace  
With speed, that we may 'scape his clamorous plaints.  
But you must go, and to the citizens  
Proclaim, acquainting Priam, and the elders  
Who sit in council, first, that I direct  
The bodies of the slain shall be interred  
With due respect beside the public road.

[Exit CHARIOTEER, supported by one of  
HECTOR'S Attendants.

CHOR. Why from the summit of exalted bliss  
Into fresh woes hath some malignant god  
Plunged Troy, why caused this sad reverse of fortune ?

*The MUSE appears in the air,* HECTOR, CHORUS.

CHOR. High o'er our heads what deity, O king,  
Is hovering ? in her hands a recent corse  
She bears : I shudder at the dreadful sight.

MUSE. Ye Trojans, mark me well : for I a Muse  
Who by the wise am worshipped, hither come,  
One of the nine famed sisters, having seen  
The wretched fate of this my dearest son,  
Who by the foe was slain : but he who smote  
The generous youth, Ulysses, that dissembler,  
At length shall suffer as his crimes deserve.

ODE.

I.

Parental anguish rends my breast,  
For thee my son, my son, I grieve,  
Thy mother sinks with woes oppressed.  
Why didst thou take this road, why leave  
Thy home, and march to Ilion's gate,  
Where death did thy arrival wait ?

Oft with maternal zeal I strove  
 Thy luckless courage to restrain,  
 And oft thy sire opposed in vain.  
 But now with ineffectual love,  
 My dearest son, thee now no more,  
 Thee, O my son, must I deplore.

CHOR. As far as bosoms, by no kindred ties  
 United, can partake a mother's grief,  
 Do I bewail thy son's untimely fate.

MUSE.

II.

On him your tenfold vengeance shed  
 From Oeneus who derives his birth,  
 Smite base Ulysses' perjured head,  
 Ye fiends who desolate the earth ;  
 Through them with agonizing pain  
 I mourn my valiant offspring slain ;  
 May Helen too partake their doom,  
 Who from her bridal mansions fled,  
 And sought th' adulterer's Phrygian bed ;  
 For thou in Troy art to the tomb  
 By her consigned ; and many a state  
 Bewails its bravest warriors' fate.

Much while on earth, and since thy murmuring ghost  
 Was plunged in Orcus' dreary mansions more,  
 O offspring of Philammon, didst thou wound  
 My soul : that arrogance which caused thy ruin,  
 That contest with Pieria's choir, gave birth  
 To this unhappy youth : for having passed  
 The rapid current, with incautious step  
 Approaching Strymon's genial bed, we mounted  
 Pangæum's summit, for its golden mines  
 Distinguished ; each melodious instrument  
 Around us in full concert breathed ; our strife  
 Was there decided with the Thracian minstrel ;  
 That Thamyris who dared blaspheme our art,  
 We of his eyes deprived. But since I bore  
 Thee, O my son, through deference for my sisters,  
 And for my own reputed chastity,  
 Thee to the watery mansions of thy sire  
 I sent ; and Strymon, to no human care,  
 But to the nymphs who haunt his limpid founts,  
 For nurture did consign thee ; from those virgins  
 When, O my dearest son, thou hadst received  
 The best of educations, thou becam'st  
 Monarch of Thrace, the first of men. I felt

No boding apprehensions of thy death ;  
 By thee, while marshalled on thy native ground,  
 Athirst for blood the dauntless squadrons moved.  
 But thee I cautioned, for I knew thy fate,  
 That thou to Troy shouldst never go ; but thee  
 Th' ambassadors of Hector and the Senate,  
 By oft repeated messages, persuaded  
 To come to the assistance of thy friends.  
 Yet think not, O Minerva, thou sole cause  
 Of my son's fate, that thou these watchful eyes  
 Hast 'scaped ; Ulysses and the son of Tydeus  
 Were not the authors of this bloody deed,  
 Although they gave the wound. We sister Muses  
 Honour thy city, in thy land we dwell.  
 Orpheus, the kinsman of this hapless youth  
 Whom thou hast slain, dark mysteries did unfold ;  
 And by Apollo, and our sister choir,  
 Thy venerable citizen Musæus  
 Was taught to soar beyond each warbled strain  
 Of pristine melody : but in return  
 For all these favours, bearing in my arms  
 My son, I utter this funereal dirge ;  
 But I no other minstrel will employ.

✕ CHOR. Falsely the wounded Thracian charioteer  
 Charged us with a conspiracy to slay him.

HEC. Full well I knew, there needed not a seer  
 T' inform me, that he perished by the arts  
 Of Ithacus. But was it not my duty  
 When I my country saw by Grecian troops  
 Besieged, to send forth heralds to my friends,  
 Requesting them to aid us ? I did send,  
 And Rhesus came, by gratitude constrained,  
 Illustrious partner of my toils. His death  
 Lamenting, will I raise a tomb to grace  
 The corse of my ally, and o'er the flame  
 Strew tissue'd vests : for with confederate arms  
 Dauntless he came, though piteous was his death.

MUSE. They shall not plunge him in the yawning grave,  
 Such vows will I address to Pluto's bride,  
 Daughter of fruitful Ceres, to release  
 His ghost from the drear shades beneath : she owes  
 To Orpheus' friends such honours. But henceforth,  
 Dead as it were to me, will he no more  
 Behold the sun, we ne'er must meet again,  
 Nor shall he see his mother, but shall lie  
 Concealed beneath the caverns of that land  
 With silver mines abounding, from a man  
 Exalted to a god, restored to life,  
 The priest of Bacchus, and of him who dwells

Beneath Pangeum's rock, a god adored  
 By those who haunt his orgies. But ere long  
 To yonder goddess of the briny waves  
 Shall I bear doleful tidings : for by fate  
 It is decreed, her offspring too shall die ;  
 But first our sisterhood, in choral plaints,  
 Will sing of thee, O Rhesus, and hereafter  
 Achilles, son of Thetis, shall demand  
 Our elegiac strains, not she who slew  
 Thee, hapless youth, Minerva, can redeem him ;  
 Such an inevitable shaft is stored  
 In Phœbus' quiver. O ye pangs that rend  
 A mother's breast, ye toils the lot of man ;  
 They who behold you in your real light  
 Will live without a progeny, nor mourn  
 With hopeless anguish o'er their children's tomb.

[Exit the MUSE.]

CHOR. To bury the deceased with honours due,  
 Will be his mother's care : but if, O Hector,  
 Thou mean'st to execute some great emprise,  
 'Tis now the time : for morn already dawns.

HEC. Go, and this instant bid our comrades arm,  
 Harness the steeds : but while ye in these toils  
 Are busied, ye the signal must await,  
 Th' Etrurian trumpet's clangour ; for I trust  
 I first shall o'er the Grecian host prevail,  
 Shall storm their ramparts, and then burn their fleet,  
 And that Hyperion's orient beams will bring  
 A day of freedom to Troy's valiant race.

CHOR. Obey the monarch : clad in glittering mail  
 Let us go forth, and his behests proclaim  
 To our associates ; for that god who fights  
 Our battles, haply will bestow success.

# THE TROJAN CAPTIVES.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

|                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| NEPTUNE.          | TALTHYBIUS. |
| MINERVA.          | CASSANDRA.  |
| HECUBA.           | ANDROMACHE. |
| CHORUS OF CAPTIVE | MENELAUS.   |
| TROJAN DAMES.     | HELEN.      |

SCENE.—BEFORE THE ENTRANCE OF AGAMEMNON'S TENT  
IN THE GRECIAN CAMP NEAR TROY.

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### NEPTUNE.

FROM the Ægean deep, in mazy dance  
Where Nereus' daughters glide with agile feet,  
I Neptune hither come. For round the fields  
Of Iliou, since Apollo and myself  
With symmetry exact reared many a tower  
Hewn from the solid rock ; the love I bore  
The city where my Phrygian votaries dwelt,  
Laid waste by Greece, where smoke e'en now ascends  
The heavens, hath ne'er been rooted from this breast,  
For on Parnassus bred, the Phocian chief  
Epeus, by Minerva's arts inspired,  
Framed with a skilful hand, and through the gates  
Sent that accursed machine, the horse which teemed  
With ambushed javelins. Through forsaken groves,  
Through the polluted temples of the gods,  
Flow tides of crimson slaughter ; at the base  
Of altars sacred to Hercean Jove,  
Fell hoary Priam. But huge heaps of gold  
And Phrygian plunder, to the fleet of Greece  
Are sent : the leaders of the host that sacked  
This city, wait but for a prosperous breeze,  
That after ten years absence they their wives  
And children may with joy behold. Subdued  
By Juno, Argive goddess, and Minerva,  
Who leagued in Phrygia's overthrow, I leave

Troy the renowned, and my demolished shrines.  
 For when pernicious solitude extends  
 O'er cities her inexorable sway,  
 Abandoned are the temples of the gods,  
 None comes to worship there. Scamander's banks  
 Re-echo many a shriek of captive dames  
 Distributed by lot; th' Arcadians, some,  
 Some the Thessalians gain, and some the sons  
 Of Theseus leaders of th' Athenian troops :  
 But they whom chance distributes not, remain  
 Beneath yon roof selected by the chiefs  
 Of the confederate army. Justly deemed  
 A captive, among them is Spartan Helen :  
 And if the stranger wishes to behold  
 That wretched woman, Hecuba lies stretched  
 Before the gate, full many are her tears,  
 And her afflictions many : at the tomb  
 Of stern Achilles her unhappy daughter  
 Polyxena died wretchedly, her lord  
 The royal Priam, and her sons are slain,  
 That spotless virgin too whom from his shrine  
 Apollo with prophetic gifts inspired,  
 Cassandra, spurning every sacred rite,  
 Did Agamemnon violently drag  
 To his adulterous bed. But, O farewell,  
 Thou city prosperous once; ye splendid towers,  
 Had not Minerva's self ordained your fall,  
 Ye still on your firm basis might remain.

## MINERVA, NEPTUNE.

MIN. May I accost the god who to my sire  
 In blood is nearest, mighty, through high Heaven  
 Revered, and lay aside our ancient hate?

NEP. 'Tis well, thou royal maid : an interview  
 'Twixt those of the same house, is to the soul  
 An efficacious philtre.

MIN. I applaud  
 Those who are temperate in their wrath, and bring  
 Such arguments, O monarch, as affect  
 Both you and me.

NEP. From all th' assembled gods  
 Some new commission bear'st thou, or from Jove,  
 Or what celestial power?

MIN. From none of these.  
 But in the cause of Troy, whose fields we tread,  
 I to your aid betake me, and would join  
 Our common strength.

NEP. Hast thou then laid aside

Thy former hate, to pity Troy, consumed  
By the relentless flames ?

MIN. First, thither turn  
Your views : to me will you unfold your counsels,  
And aid the schemes I would effect ?

NEP. With joy :  
But I meanwhile would thy designs explore,  
Whether thou com'st on the behalf of Greece,  
Or Troy.

MIN. The Trojans, erst my foes, I wish  
To cheer, and to embitter the return  
Of the victorious Grecian host.

NEP. What means  
This change of temper ? to excess thou hat'st  
And lov'st at random.

MIN. Know you not the insult  
Which hath been shown to me, and to my temple ?

NEP. I know that Ajax violently tore  
Cassandra thence.

MIN. Yet by the Greeks unpunished  
He 'scaped, and e'en uncensured.

NEP. Though the Greeks  
O'erthrew Troy's walls through thy auxiliar might——

MIN. And for this very cause will I conspire  
With you to punish them.

NEP. I am prepared  
For any enterprise thou wilt. What mean'st thou ?

MIN. Their journey home I am resolved to make  
Most inauspicious.

NEP. While they yet remain  
Upon the shore, or 'midst the briny waves ?

MIN. As to their homes from Ilion's coast they sail.

For Jove will send down rain, immoderate hail,  
And pitchy blasts of air : he promises  
To give me too his thunderbolts to smite  
The Greeks and fire their ships ; but join your aid,  
Cause the Ægean deep with threefold waves,  
And ocean's whirlpools horribly to rage,  
Fill with their courses the unfathomed caves  
Beneath Eubœa's rocks, that Greece may learn  
My shrines to reverence, nor provoke the gods.

NEP. It shall be done : there need not many words  
To recommend thy suit. My storms shall rouse  
Th' Ægean deep ; the shores of Myconè,  
Scyros with Lemnos, all the Delian rocks,  
And steep Caphareus with full many a corse  
Will I o'erspread. But mount Olympus' height,  
And from the Thunderer's hand his flaming shafts  
Receiving, mark when the devoted host

Of Greece weigh anchor. Frantic is the man  
 Who dares to lay the peopled city waste,  
 Temples with tombs profaning, and bereaves  
 Of their inhabitants those sacred vaults  
 Where sleep the dead; at length shall vengeance smite  
 That hardened miscreant in his bold career. *[Exeunt.]*

*The Scene opens, and discovers HECUBA on a couch.*

HEC. Arise, thou wretch, and from the dust uplift  
 Thy drooping head; though Ilium be no more,  
 And thou a queen no longer, yet endure  
 With patience Fortune's change, and as the tide  
 Or as capricious Fortune wills, direct  
 Thy sails, nor turn against the dashing wave  
 Life's stubborn prow, for chance must guide thy voyage.  
 Alas! for what but groans belongs to me  
 Whose country, children, husband, are no more?  
 Oh, mighty splendour of my sires, now pent  
 In a small tomb, how art thou found a thing  
 Of no account! What portion of my woes  
 Shall I suppress, or what describe, how frame  
 A plaintive strain? Now fixed on this hard couch,  
 Wretch that I am, are my unwieldy limbs.  
 Ah me! my head, my temples, ah, my side!  
 Oh, how I wish to turn, and to stretch forth  
 These joints! My tears shall never cease to flow,  
 For like the Muse's lyre, th' affecting tale  
 Of their calamities consoles the wretched.  
 Ye prows of those swift barks which to the coast  
 Of fated Ilium, from the Grecian ports  
 Adventurous launched amid the purple wave,  
 Accompanied by inauspicious pæans  
 From pipes, and the shrill flute's enlivening voice,  
 While from the mast devolved the twisted cordage  
 By Egypt first devised, ye to the bay  
 Of Troy did follow Menelaus' wife,  
 Helen, abhorred adult'ress, who disgraced  
 Castor her brother, and Eurotas' stream:  
 She murdered Priam, sire of fifty sons,  
 And me the wretched Hecuba hath plunged  
 Into this misery. Here, alas! I sit  
 In my loathed prison, Agamemnon's tent;  
 From princely mansions dragged, an aged slave,  
 My hoary tresses shorn, this head deformed  
 With baldness. But, alas! ye hapless wives  
 Of Ilium's dauntless warriors, blooming maids,  
 And brides affianced in an evil hour,  
 Together let us weep, for Ilium's smoke  
 Ascends the skies. Like the maternal bird,



Who wails her callow brood, I now commence  
 A strain far different from what erst was heard  
 When I on mighty Priam's sceptred state  
 Proudly relying, led the Phrygian dance  
 Before the hallowed temples of the gods.

*[She rises, and comes forth from the tent.]*

SEMICHORUS, HECUBA.

SEMICHOR. O Hecuba, what mean these clamorous notes,  
 These shrieks of woe? for from the vaulted roof  
 Thy plaints re-echoing smite my distant ear,  
 And fresh alarms seize every Phrygian dame  
 Who in these tents enslaved deplores her fate.

HEC. E'en now, my daughter, at the Grecian fleet  
 Th' exulting sailors ply their oars.

SEMICHOR. Ah me!  
 What mean they? will they instantly convey me  
 Far from my ruined country?

HEC. By conjecture  
 Alone am I acquainted with our doom.

SEMICHOR. Soon shall we hear this sentence: "From  
 these doors

Come forth ye Trojan captives, for the Greeks  
 Are now preparing to return."

HEC. O cease,  
 My friends, nor from her chambers hither bring  
 Cassandra, frantic prophetess, defiled  
 By Argive ruffians, for the sight of her  
 Would but increase my griefs.

SEMICHOR. Troy, wretched Troy,  
 Thou art no more, they to whom fate ordains  
 No longer on thy fostering soil to dwell  
 Are wretched, both the living and the slain.

CHORUS, HECUBA.

CHOR. Trembling I come from Agamemnon's tent,  
 Of thee my royal mistress to inquire  
 Whether the Greeks have doomed me to be slain,  
 And whether yet along the poop arranged  
 The mariners prepare to ply their oars.

HEC. Deprived of sleep through horror, O my daughter,  
 I hither came: but on the road I see  
 A Grecian herald.

CHOR. Tell me to what lord  
 Am wretched I consigned.

HEC. E'en now the lot  
 Is casting to decide your fate.

CHOR. What chief  
 To Argos, or to Phthia, me shall bear,  
 Or to some island, sorrowing, far from Troy?

HEC. To whom shall wretched I, and in what land  
 Become a slave, decrepit like the drone  
 Through age, mere semblance of a pallid corse,  
 Or flitting spectre from the realms beneath?  
 Shall I be stationed or to watch the door,  
 Or tend the children of a haughty lord,  
 Erst placed at Troy in rank supreme?

CHOR. Alas !

HEC. With what loud plaints dost thou revive thy woes !

CHOR. I never more through Ida's loom shall dart  
 The shuttle, nor behold a blooming race  
 Of children, in those lighter tasks employed  
 Which suit the young and beauteous, to the couch  
 Of some illustrious Greek conveyed, the joys  
 Which night and fortune yields are lost to me ;  
 Or filled with water, from Pirene's spring  
 Shall I be doomed to bear the ponderous urn.

HEC. O could we reach the famed and happy realm  
 Of Theseus, distant from Eurotas' tide,  
 And curst Therapne's gates, where I should meet  
 Perfidious Helen, and remain a slave  
 To Menelaus, who demolished Troy.

CHOR. By fame's loud voice I am informed, the vale  
 Of Peneus, at Olympus base, abounds  
 With wealth and plenteous fruitage.

HEC. This I make  
 My second option, next the blest domain  
 Of Theseus.

CHOR. I am told that Vulcan's realm  
 Of Ætna, opposite Phœnicia's coast  
 The mother of Sicilian hills, is famed  
 For palms obtained by valour. Through the realm  
 Adjacent, bordering on th' Ionian deep,  
 Crathis the bright, for auburn hair renowned,  
 The tribute of its holy current pours,  
 And scatters blessings o'er a martial land.  
 But lo, with hasty step a herald comes  
 Bearing some message from the Grecian host !  
 What is his errand ? for we now are slaves  
 To yon proud rulers of the Doric realm.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TAL. O Hecuba, full oft, you know, to Troy  
 I, as their herald, by the Grecian host  
 Have been despatched ; you cannot be a stranger  
 To me, Talthybius, who to you, and all,  
 One message bring.

HEC. This, this, my dearest friends,  
 Is what I long have feared.

TAL. The lots are cast  
Already, if your terrors thence arose.

HEC. Alas, to what Thessalian city saidst thou,  
Or to the Phthian, or the Theban realm  
Shall we be carried?

TAL. To a separate lord  
Hath each of you distinctly been assigned.

HEC. To whom, alas, to whom am I allotted?  
What Phrygian dames do happier fortunes wait?

TAL. I know; but be distinct in your inquiries,  
Nor ask at once a multitude of questions.

HEC. Say who by lot hath gained my wretched daughter  
Cassandra?

TAL. Her the royal Agamemnon  
His chosen prize hath taken.

HEC. As a slave  
To tend his Spartan wife? ah, me!

TAL. No slave,  
But concubine.

HEC. What, Phœbus' votive maid,  
To whom the god with golden tresses gave  
This privilege, that she should pass her life  
In celibacy?

TAL. With the shafts of love  
Hath the prophetic nymph transpierced his breast.

HEC. My daughter, cast the sacred keys away,  
And rend the garlands thou with pride didst wear.

TAL. Is it not great for captives to ascend  
The regal couch?

HEC. But where is she whom late  
Ye took away, and whither have ye borne  
That daughter?

TAL. Speak you of Polyxena,  
Or for whom else would you inquire?

HEC. On whom  
Hath chance bestowed her?

TAL. At Achilles' tomb  
It is decreed that she shall minister.

HEC. Wretch that I am! for his sepulchral rites  
Have I then borne a priestess? but what law  
Is this, what Grecian usage, O my friend?

TAL. Esteem your daughter happy; for with her  
All now is well.

HEC. What saidst thou? doth she live?

TAL. 'Tis her peculiar fate to be released  
From all affliction.

HEC. But, alas! what fortune  
Attends the warlike Hector's captive wife,  
How fares it with the lost Andromache?

TAL. Her to Achilles' son hath from the band  
Of captives chosen.

HEC. As to me who need  
For a third foot, the staff which in these hands  
I hold, whose head is whitened o'er with age,  
To whom am I a slave?

TAL. By lot the king  
Of Ithaca Ulysses hath obtained you.

HEC. Alas! alas! let your shorn temples feel  
The frequent blow; rend your discoloured cheeks.  
Ah me! I am allotted for a slave  
To a detestable and treacherous man,  
Sworn foe of justice, to that lawless viper,  
With double tongue confounding all, 'twixt friends  
Exciting bitter hate. Ye Trojan dames,  
O shed the sympathizing tear: I sink  
Beneath the pressure of relentless fate.

CHOR. Thy doom, O queen, thou know'st: but to what chief,  
Hellenian or Achaian, I belong  
Inform me.

TAL. Peace! Conduct Cassandra hither  
With speed, ye guards, into our general's hands  
When I his captive have delivered up,  
That we the rest may portion out. Why gleams  
That blazing torch within? would Iliion's dames  
Their chambers fire? what mean they? doomed to leave  
This land, and to be borne to Argive shores,  
Are they resolved to perish in the flames?  
The soul, inspired with an unbounded love  
Of freedom, ill sustains such woes. Burst open  
The doors, lest, to their honour and the shame  
Of Greece, on me the censure fall.

HEC. They kindle  
No conflagration, but, with frantic step,  
My daughter, lo! Cassandra rushes hither.

CASSANDRA, TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

CAS. Avaunt! the sacred flame I bring  
With reverential awe profound,  
And wave the kindled torch around,  
O Hymen, thou benignant king.  
The bridegroom comes with jocund pride,  
I too am styled a happy bride,  
My name through Argos' streets shall ring,  
O Hymen, thou benignant king!  
While thou attend'st my father's bier,  
O Hecuba, with many a tear,  
While Iliion's ramparts overthrown  
From thee demand th' incessant groan,

Ere the bright sun withhold his ray,  
 E'en in the glaring front of day,  
 I bid the nuptial incense blaze  
 To thee, O Hymen, thee whose power  
 Invoking at her bridal hour  
 The bashful virgin comes. Yon maze  
 Encircling, 'mid the choral dance,  
 As ancient usage bids, advance,  
 And in thy hand a flaming pine,  
 O mother, brandish. God of wine,  
 Thy shouting votaries hither bring,  
 As if in Ilium thou hadst found  
 Old Priam still a happy king.  
 Range that holy group around,  
 O Phœbus, in thy laureate mead,  
 Thy temple, shall the victim bleed.  
 Let Hymen, Hymen, Hymen, sound.  
 My mother, for the dance prepare,  
 Vault nimbly, and our revels share.  
 At Hymen's shrine, my friends, prolong  
 Your vows, awake th' ecstatic song ;  
 In honour of my bridal day,  
 Chant, Phrygian nymphs, the choral lay,  
 And celebrate the chief whom fate  
 Ordains to be Cassandra's mate.

CHOR. Wilt thou not stop the princess, lest she rush  
 With frantic step amid the Grecian host ?

HÆC. O Vulcan, wont to light the bridal torch,  
 Now dost thou brandish an accursed flame ;  
 My soul foresaw not this. Alas ! my daughter,  
 I little thought, that 'midst the din of arms,  
 Or while we crouch beneath the Argive spear,  
 Thou couldst have celebrated such espousals.  
 Give me the torch, for while with frantic speed  
 Thou rushest on, it trembles in thy hand.  
 Nor yet have thy afflictions, O my daughter,  
 Brought back thy wandering reason, thou remain'st  
 Disordered as before. Ye Trojan dames,  
 Remove yon blazing pines, and in the stead  
 Of these her bridal songs let tears express  
 The anguish of your souls.

CAS. O mother, place  
 A laureate wreath on my victorious brow,  
 Exulting lead me to the monarch's bed.  
 And if for thee too slowly I advance,  
 Drag me along by force ; for I am now  
 No more the spouse of Phœbus ; but that king  
 Of Greece, famed Agamemnon, shall in me  
 Take to his arms a bride more inauspicious

Than even Helen's self: him will I smite,  
 And lay his palace waste, in great revenge  
 For my slain sire and brothers. But I cease  
 These menaces, and speak not of the axe  
 Which shall smite me and others, or the conflict  
 My wedlock shall produce, whence by the hands  
 Of her own son a mother shall be slain,  
 And th' overthrow of Atreus' guilty house.  
 This city will I prove to have been happier  
 Than the victorious Greeks (for though the gods  
 Inspire, I curb the transports of my soul),  
 Who for one single woman, to regain  
 The beauteous Helen only, wasted lives  
 Unnumbered. Their wise leader, in the cause  
 Of those he hated, slew whom most he loved;  
 He to his brother yielded up his daughter,  
 Joy of his house, for that vile woman's sake,  
 Who with her own consent, and not by force,  
 Was borne away. But at Scamander's banks  
 When they arrived, they died, though not by exile  
 Torn from their country, or their native towers:  
 But them who in embattled fields were slain  
 Their children saw not, nor in decent shroud  
 Were they enwrapped by their loved consorts' hands,  
 But lie deserted on a foreign coast:  
 Their sorrows also who remained at home  
 Are similar; in widowhood forlorn  
 Some die; and others, of their own brave sons  
 Deprived, breed up the children of a stranger;  
 Nor at their slighted tombs is blood poured forth  
 To drench the thirsty ground. Their host deserves  
 Praises like these. 'Tis better not to speak  
 Of what is infamous, nor shall my Muse  
 Record the shameful tale. But, first and greatest  
 Of glories, in their country's cause expired  
 The Trojans; the remains of those who fell  
 In battle, by their friends borne home, obtained  
 Sepulchral honours in their native soil,  
 That duteous office kindred hands performed:  
 While every Phrygian who escaped the sword  
 Still with his wife and children did reside,  
 Joy to the Greeks unknown. Now hear the fate  
 Of Hector, him whom thou bewail'st, esteemed  
 The bravest of our heroes, by the Greeks  
 Landing on Ilion's coast the warrior fell;  
 In their own country had the foe remained,  
 His valour ne'er had been displayed: but Paris  
 Wedded the daughter of imperial Jove,  
 In her possessing an illustrious bride.

It is the wise man's duty to avoid  
 Perilous war. After the die is cast,  
 He who undaunted meets the fatal stroke,  
 Adds to his native city fair renown ;  
 But the last moments of a coward shame  
 The land which gave him birth. Forbear to weep,  
 My mother, for thy ruined country's fate ;  
 Weep not because thou seest thy daughter borne  
 To Agamemnon's bed, for by these spousals  
 Our most inveterate foes shall I destroy.

CHOR. How sweetly 'midst the sorrows of thy house  
 Thou smil'st ! ere long perchance wilt thou afford  
 A melancholy instance that thy strains  
 Are void of truth.

TAL. Had not Apollo fired  
 E'en to distraction thy perverted soul,  
 Thou on my honoured leader, ere he quit  
 The shores of Iliou, shouldst not unavenged  
 Pour forth these omens. But, alas ! the great,  
 And they who in th' opinion of mankind  
 Are wise, in no respect excel the vulgar.  
 For the dread chieftain of the Grecian host,  
 The son of Atreus, loves with boundless passion  
 This damsel frantic as the Mænades.  
 Myself am poor, yet would not I accept  
 A wife like her. Since thou hast lost thy reason,  
 I to the winds consign thy bitter taunts  
 'Gainst Argos, with the praises thou bestow'st  
 On Troy. Thou bride of Agamemnon, come,  
 Follow me to the fleet. But when Ulysses  
 Would bear you hence, O Hecuba, obey  
 The summons, you are destined to attend  
 A queen called virtuous by all those who come  
 To Iliou.

CAS. Arrogant, detested slave !  
 All heralds are like thee, the public scorn,  
 Crouching with abject deference to some king  
 Or city. Say'st thou, "To Ulysses' house  
 My mother shall be borne ?" Of what account  
 Were then the oracles Apollo gave  
 Uttered by me his priestess, which declare,  
 "She here shall die ?" I spare the shameful tale.  
 He knows not, the unhappy Ithacus,  
 What evils yet await him, in the tears  
 Of me and every captive Phrygian maid,  
 While he exults, and deems our misery gain.  
 Ten more long years elapsed beyond the term  
 Spent in besieging Iliou, he alone  
 Shall reach his country ; witness thou who dwell'st

'Midst ocean's straits tempestuous, dire Charybdis,  
 Ye mountains where on human victims feast  
 The Cyclops, with Ligurian Circe's isle,  
 Whose wand transforms to swine, the billowy deep,  
 Covered with shipwrecks, the bewitching Lotus,  
 The sacred Oxen of the Sun, whose flesh  
 Destined to utter a tremendous voice  
 The banquet shall embitter : he at length,  
 In a few words his history to comprise,  
 Alive must travel to the shades beneath,  
 And hardly 'scaping from a watery grave  
 In his own house find evils numberless.  
 But why do I recount Ulysses' toils?  
 Lead on, that I the sooner in the realms  
 Of Pluto, with that bridegroom may consummate  
 My nuptials. Ruthless miscreant as thou art,  
 Thou in the tomb ignobly shalt be plunged  
 At midnight ; nor shall the auspicious beams  
 Of day illumine thy funereal rites,  
 O leader of the Grecian host, who deem'st  
 That thou a mighty conquest hast achieved.  
 Near to my lord's remains, and in that vale,  
 Where down a precipice the torrent foams,  
 My corse shall to the hungry wolves be thrown,  
 The corse of Phœbus' priestess, O ye wreaths  
 Of him whom best of all the gods I loved,  
 Adieu, ye symbols of my holy office,  
 I leave those feasts the scenes of past delight,  
 Torn from my brows avaunt, for I retain  
 My chastity unsullied still ; the winds  
 To thee shall waft them, O prophetic king.  
 Where is your general's bark, which I am doomed  
 T' ascend? the rising breezes shall unfurl  
 Your sails this instant ; for in me ye bear  
 One of the three Eumenides from Troy.  
 Farewell, my mother, weep not for my fate,  
 O my dear country, my heroic brothers,  
 And aged father, in the realms beneath,  
 Ere long shall ye receive me : but victorious  
 Will I descend among the mighty dead,  
 When I have laid th' accursed mansions waste  
 Of our destroyers, Atreus' impious sons.

[*Exeunt* CASSANDRA and TALTHYBIUS.]

CHOR. Attendants of the aged Hecuba,  
 Behold ye not your mistress, how she falls  
 Upon the pavement speechless? Why neglect  
 To prop her sinking frame ! Ye slothful nymphs,  
 Raise up this woman, whom a weight of years  
 Bows to the dust.



HEC.                    Away, and on this spot  
 Allow me, courteous damsels, to remain :  
 No longer welcome as in happier days  
 Are your kind offices ; this humble posture,  
 This fall best suits my present lowly state,  
 Best suits what I already have endured  
 And still am doomed to suffer. O ye gods,  
 In you I call upon no firm allies,  
 Yet sure 'tis decent to invoke the gods  
 When we by adverse fortune are opprest.  
 First, therefore, all the blessings I enjoyed  
 Would I recount, hence shall my woes demand  
 The greater pity. Born to regal state,  
 And with a mighty king in wedlock joined,  
 A race of valiant sons did I produce ;  
 I speak not of their numbers, but the noblest  
 Among the Phrygian youths, such as no Trojan,  
 Nor Grecian, nor barbarian dame could boast :  
 Them saw I fall beneath the hostile spear,  
 And at their tomb these tresses cut : their sire,  
 The venerable Priam, I bewailed not,  
 From being told of his calamitous fate  
 By others, but these eyes beheld him slain,  
 E'en at the altar of Hercæan Jove,  
 And Ilion taken. I those blooming maids  
 Have also lost, whom with maternal love  
 I nurtured for some noble husband's bed ;  
 They from these arms are torn : nor can I hope  
 Or to be seen by them, or e'er to see  
 My children more. But last of all, to crown  
 My woes, an aged slave, shall I be borne  
 To Greece ; and in such tasks will they employ me  
 As are most grievous in the wane of life ;  
 Me, who am Hector's mother, at the door  
 Stationed to keep the keys, or knead the bread,  
 And on the pavement stretch my withered limbs,  
 Which erst reposed upon a regal couch,  
 And in such tattered vestments, as belie  
 My former rank, enwrap my wasted frame.  
 Wretch that I am, who, through one woman's nuptials,  
 Have borne, and am hereafter doomed to bear,  
 Such dreadful ills. O my unhappy daughter,  
 Cassandra, whom the gods have rendered frantic,  
 With what sad omens hath thy virgin zone  
 Been loosed ! and where, Polyxena, art thou,  
 O virgin most unfortunate ? but none  
 Of all my numerous progeny, or male  
 Or female, comes to aid their wretched mother.  
 Why, therefore, would ye lift me up ? what room

Is there for hope? me who with tender foot  
 Paced through the streets of Troy, but now a slave,  
 Drag from the palace to the rushy mat  
 And stony pillow, that where'er I fall  
 There may I die, through many, many tears  
 Exhausted. Of the prosperous and the great  
 Pronounce none happy till the hour of death.

## CHORUS.

## ODE.

Prepare, O Muse, prepare a song  
 Expressive of the fall of Troy;  
 The sympathetic dirge prolong  
 And banish every note of joy.  
 I with loud voice of Ilion's fate will speak,  
 Sing how the foe our ramparts stormed  
 Through the machine their treachery formed,  
 The vehicle of many a daring Greek,  
 Who burst like thunder from that wooden steed,  
 With gorgeous trappings graced, in mimic state,  
 Concealing armed bands, which passed the Scæan gate,  
 They whom such semblance could mislead,  
 The unsuspecting crowd,  
 As on Troy's citadel they stood,  
 Exclaimed; "Henceforth our toils shall cease,  
 Come on, and to Minerva's fane convey  
 This holy image, pledge of peace."  
 What veteran paused? what youth but led the way?  
 Enlivening songs breathed round in notes so sweet,  
 That gladly they received the pestilential cheat.

## II.

Then did all Phrygia's race combine  
 Through their devoted gates to bear,  
 Enclosed in the stupendous pine  
 The fraud of Greece, that latent snare,  
 To glut Minerva with Dardanian blood,  
 To pacify th' immortal maid,  
 They the huge mass with ropes conveyed:  
 Thus the tall bark, into the briny flood  
 Too ponderous to be borne, is rolled along:  
 Till they had lodged it in th' ill-omened fane  
 Of her to whom we owe our ruined country's bane.  
 After their toil and festive song,  
 The cloud-wrapped evening spread  
 Her veil o'er each devoted head,  
 Shrill Phrygian voices did resound,

And Libya's flutes accompanied the choir,  
 While nymphs high vaulting from the ground,  
 Mixed their applauses with the chorded lyre,  
 And from each hearth the flames with radiance bright,  
 While heedless warriors slept, dispelled the shades of night.

## III.

Then o'er the genial board, to her who reigns  
 In woodland heights, Diana, child of Jove,  
 I waked the choral strains.  
 But soon there flew a dismal sound  
 Pergamus' wide streets around:  
 The shrieking infant fondly strove  
 To grasp the border of a mother's vest,  
 And with uplifted hands its little fears expressed:  
 Mars from his ambush by Minerva's aid  
 Conspicuous issued and the fray began,  
 Thick gore adown our altars ran,  
 And many a slaughtered youth was laid  
 A headless trunk on the disfigured bed,  
 That Greece might shine with laureate wreaths arrayed,  
 By Troy while fruitless tears are shed.

## ANDROMACHE, HECUBA, CHORUS.

CHOR. Seest thou, Andromache, O queen, this way  
 Advancing, wafted in a foreign car?  
 Eager to cling to the maternal breast  
 Close follows her beloved Astyanax,  
 The son of Hector.

HEC. Whither art thou borne,  
 O wretched woman, on a chariot placed  
 'Midst Hector's brazen armour, and those spoils  
 From captive Phrygian chiefs in combat torn,  
 With which Achilles' son from Ilion's siege  
 Triumphant, will the Phthian temples grace?

AND. Our Grecian masters drag me hence.

HEC.

Alas!

AND. Why with your groans my anguish strive t' assuage?

HEC. Oh!

AND. I by griefs am compassed—

HEC.

Mighty Jove!

AND. And dread vicissitudes of fate.

HEC.

My children.

AND. We once were blest.

HEC.

Now are those prosperous days  
 No more; and Ilion is no more.

AND.

Most wretched!

HEC. My noble sons.

AND.

Alas!

HEC. Alas my—  
 AND. Woes.  
 HEC. O piteous fortune—  
 AND. Of the city—  
 HEC. Wrapt  
 In smoke.

AND. Return, my husband, O return.  
 HEC. In clamorous accents thou invok'st my son,  
 Whom Pluto's realms detain, unhappy woman.

AND. Thy consort's tutelary power.  
 HEC. And thou,  
 Whose courage long withstood the Grecian host,  
 Thou aged father of our numerous race,  
 Lead me, O Priam, to the shades beneath.

AND. Presumptuous are such wishes.  
 HEC. We endure  
 These grievous woes.

CHOR. While ruin overwhelms  
 Our city, for on sorrows have been heaped  
 Fresh sorrows, through the will of angry Heaven,  
 Since in an evil hour thy son was snatched  
 From Pluto, who, determined to avenge  
 Those execrable nuptials, with the ground  
 Hath levelled Pergamus' beleaguered towers.  
 Near Pallas' shrine the corpses of the slain  
 Weltering in gore to vultures lie exposed,  
 And Ilion droops beneath the servile yoke.  
 Thee, O my wretched country, I with tears  
 Forsake: e'en now thou view'st the piteous end  
 Of all thy woes, and my loved native house.

HEC. My children! O my desolated city!  
 Your mother is bereft of every joy.

CHOR. What shrieks, what plaints resound! what  
 floods of tears  
 Stream in our houses! but the dead forget  
 Their sorrows, and for ever cease to weep.

HEC. To those who suffer, what a sweet relief  
 Do tears afford! the sympathetic Muse  
 Inspires their plaints.

AND. O mother of that chief,  
 Whose forceful javelin thinned the ranks of Greece,  
 Illustrious Hector, seest thou this?

HEC. I see  
 The gods delight in raising up the low,  
 And ruining the great.

AND. Hence with my son,  
 A captive am I hurried; noble birth  
 Subject to these vicissitudes now sinks  
 Into degrading slavery.

HEC. Uncontrolled  
The power of fate : Cassandra from these arms  
But now with brutal violence was torn !

AND. A second Ajax to thy daughter seems  
To have appeared. Yet hast thou other griefs.

HEC. All bounds, all numbers they exceed ; with ills  
Fresh ills as for pre-eminence contend.

AND. Polyxena, thy daughter, at the tomb  
Of Peleus' son hath breathed her last, a gift  
To the deceased.

HEC. Wretch that I am, alas !  
Too clearly now I understand the riddle  
Which in obscurer terms Talthybius uttered.

AND. I saw her bleed, and lighting from this car  
Covered her with the decent shroud and wailed  
O'er her remains.

HEC. Alas ! alas ! my child  
To bloody altars dragged by impious hands,  
Alas ! alas ! how basely wert thou slain !

AND. Most dreadfully she perished ; yet her lot  
Who perished is more enviable than mine.

HEC. Far different, O my daughter, is the state  
Of them who live, from them who breathe no more :  
For the deceased are nothing : but fair hope,  
While life remains, can never be extinct.

AND. Thou whom, although I sprung not from thy womb,  
I deem a mother, to my cheering words  
With patience listen, they will yield delight  
To thy afflicted soul. 'Tis the same thing  
Ne'er to be born, or die ; but better far  
To die, than to live wretched : for no sorrow  
Affects th' unconscious tenant of the grave.  
But he who once was happy, he who falls  
From fortune's summit down the vale of woe,  
With an afflicted spirit wanders o'er  
The scenes of past delight. In the cold grave,  
Like one who never saw the blessed sun,  
Polyxena remembers not her woes.  
But I who aimed the dextrous shaft, and gained  
An ample portion of renown, have missed  
The mark of happiness. In Hector's house  
I acted as behoves each virtuous dame.  
First, whether sland'rous tongues assail or spare  
The matron's chastity, an evil name,  
Her who remains not at her home, pursues :  
Such vain desires I therefore quelled, I stayed  
In my own chamber, a domestic life  
Preferring, and forbore to introduce  
Vain sentimental language, such as gains

Too oft the ear of woman : 'twas enough  
 For me to yield obedience to the voice  
 Of virtue, that best monitor. My lord  
 With placid aspect and a silent tongue  
 I still received, for I that province knew  
 In which I ought to rule, and when to yield  
 Submission to a husband's will. The fame  
 This conduct gained me, reached the Grecian camp,  
 And proved my ruin : for when I became  
 A captive, Neoptolemus resolved  
 To take me to his bed, and in the house  
 Of murderers I to slavery am consigned.  
 If shaking off my Hector's loved remembrance  
 To this new husband I my soul incline,  
 I shall appear perfidious to the dead ;  
 Or, if I hate Achilles' son, become  
 Obnoxious to my lords ; though some assert  
 That one short night can reconcile th' aversion  
 Of any woman to the nuptial couch ;  
 I scorn that widow, reft of her first lord,  
 Who listens to the voice of love, and weds  
 Another. From her comrade torn, the mare  
 Sustains the yoke reluctant, though a brute  
 Dumb and irrational, by nature formed  
 Subordinate to man ; but I in thee  
 Possessed a husband, O my dearest Hector,  
 In wisdom, fortune, and illustrious birth,  
 For me sufficient, great in martial deeds :  
 A spotless virgin-bride, me from the house  
 Of my great father, didst thou first receive ;  
 But thou art slain, and I to Greece must sail  
 A captive, and endure the servile yoke !  
 Is not the death of that Polyxena,  
 Whom thou, O Hecuba, bewail'st, an ill  
 More tolerable than those which I endure ?  
 For hope, who visits every wretch beside,  
 To me ne'er comes ; to me no promised joys  
 Afford a flattering prospect to deceive  
 This anxious bosom ; for 'tis sweet to think  
 E'en of ideal bliss.

CHOR. Thou art involved  
 In the same sufferings, and in plaintive notes  
 Bewailing thy calamity, inform'st me  
 What treatment to expect.

HEC. I ne'er did mount  
 A ship, yet I from pictures and report  
 These matters know : amidst a moderate storm,  
 Such as they hope to weather out, the sailors  
 To save themselves, exert a cheerful toil :

This to the rudder, to the shattered sails  
 That goes, a third laborious at the pump  
 Draws off the rising waters; but if vanquished  
 By the tempestuous ocean's rage, they yield  
 To fortune, and consigning to the waves  
 Their vessel, are at random driven along.  
 Thus I am mute beneath unnumbered woes,  
 Nor can this tongue expatiate, for the gods  
 Such torrents pour as drown my feeble voice!  
 But, O my daughter, cease to name the fate  
 Of slaughtered Hector, whom no tears can save.  
 Pay due attention to thy present lord,  
 With amorous glances and a fond compliance  
 Receiving him; act thus, and thou wilt cheer  
 Our friends, and this my grandson educate  
 A bulwark to fallen Ilium, that his race  
 The city may rebuild, and dwell in Troy.  
 But a fresh topic of discourse ensues.  
 What servant of the Greeks do I behold  
 Again draw near, t' announce some new design?

TALTHYBIUS, ANDROMACHE, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TAL. O thou who erst wert Hector's wife, that bravest  
 Of Phrygians, hate me not; for with reluctance  
 Will I the general sentence of the Greeks  
 And Pelops' progeny, announce.

AND. What means  
 This evil prelude.

TAL. 'Tis decreed thy son—  
 How shall I speak it?

AND. To a separate lord  
 Shall be consigned?

TAL. None of the Grecian chiefs  
 Shall ever o'er Astyanax bear rule.

AND. Must I leave here, him who alone remains  
 Of all that erst was dear to me in Troy?

TAL. Alas! I know not in what terms t' express  
 The miseries that await thee?

AND. I commend  
 Such modesty, provided thou canst speak  
 Aught to afford me comfort.

TAL. They resolve  
 To slay thy son; thou hear'st my dismal errand.

AND. Ah me! thou hast unfolded to these ears  
 An evil, greater than my menaced spousals.

TAL. By his harangues to the assembled Greeks,  
 Ulysses hath prevailed.

AND. Alas! alas!  
 Immoderate are the sorrows I endure.

TAL. Saying they ought not to train up the son  
Of that heroic sire.

AND. May he obtain  
O'er his own children triumphs great as these !

TAL. He from the towers of Ilion must be thrown :  
But I entreat thee, and thou hence shall seem  
More prudent, strive not to withhold thy son,  
But bear thy woes with firmness ; nor, though weak,  
Deem thyself strong ; for thou hast no support,  
And therefore must consider that thy city  
Is overthrown, thy husband is no more,  
Thou art reduced to servitude ; and we  
Are strong enough to combat with one woman :  
O therefore brave not this unequal strife,  
Stoop not to aught that's base, nor yet revile,  
Nor idly scatter curses on thy foes ;  
For if thou utter aught that may provoke  
The anger of the host, thy son will bleed  
Unburied and unwept : but if thou bear  
With silence and composure thy mi-fortunes,  
Funereal honours shall adorn his grave,  
And Greece to thee her lenity extend.

AND. Thee, O my dearest son, thy foes will slay ;  
Soon art thou doomed to leave thy wretched mother.  
What saves the lives of others, the renown  
Of an illustrious sire, to thee will prove  
The cause of death : by this paternal fame  
Art thou attended in an evil hour.  
To me how luckless proved the genial bed,  
And those espousals, that to Hector's house  
First brought me, when I trusted I should bear  
A son, no victim to the ruthless Greeks,  
But an illustrious Asiatic king.  
Weep'st thou, my son ? dost thou perceive thy woes ?  
Why cling to me with timid hands ? Why seize  
My garment ? thus beneath its mother's wings  
The callow bird is sheltered. From the tomb,  
No Hector brandishing his massive spear  
Rushes to save thee ; no intrepid kinsman  
Of thy departed father, nor the might  
Of Phrygian hosts is here : but from aloof  
Borne headlong by a miserable leap,  
Shalt thou pour forth thy latest gasp of life  
Unpitied. Tender burden in the arms  
Of thy fond mother ! what ambrosial odours  
Breathed from thy lips ? I swathed thee to my breast  
In vain, I toiled in vain, and wore away  
My strength with fruitless labours. Yet embrace  
Thy mother once again ; around my neck  
Entwine thine arms, and give one parting kiss.



Ye Greeks, who studiously invent new modes  
 Of unexampled cruelty, why slay  
 This guiltless infant? Helen, O thou daughter  
 Of Tyndarus, never didst thou spring from Jove,  
 But I pronounce thee born of many sires,  
 An evil Genius, Envy, Slaughter, Death,  
 And every evil that from Earth receives  
 Its nourishment; nor dare I to assert  
 That Jove himself begot a pest like thee,  
 Fatal to Greece and each barbarian chief.  
 Perdition overtake thee! for those eyes  
 By their seducing glances have o'erthrown  
 The Phrygian empire. Bear this child away,  
 And cast him from the turrets if ye list,  
 Then banquet on his quivering flesh: the gods  
 Ordain that I shall perish: nor from him  
 Can I repel the stroke of death. Conceal  
 This wretched form from public view, and plunge me  
 In the ship's hold; for I have lost my son,  
 Such the blest prelude to my nuptial rite.

CHOR. Thy myriads, hapless Ilion, did expire  
 In combat for one woman, to maintain  
 Paris' accursed espousals.

AND. Cease, my child,  
 Fondly to lisp thy wretched mother's name,  
 Ascend the height of thy paternal towers,  
 Whence 'tis by Greece decreed thy parting breath  
 Shall issue. Take him hence. Aloud proclaim  
 This deed ye merciless: that wretch alone  
 Who never knew the blush of virtuous shame,  
 Your sentence can applaud.

[*Exeunt ANDROMACHE and TALTHYBIUS.*]

HEC. O child, thou son  
 Of my unhappy Hector, from thy mother  
 And me thou unexpectedly art torn.  
 What can I do, what help afford? for thee  
 I smite this head, this miserable breast;  
 Thus far my power extends. Alas! thou city,  
 And, O my grandson! is there yet a curse  
 Beyond what we have felt? remains there aught  
 To save us from the yawning gulf of ruin?

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. I.

In Salamis' profound retreat  
 Famed for the luscious treasures of the bee,  
 High raised above th' encircling sea  
 Thou, Telamon, didst fix thy regal seat;

Near to those sacred hills, where spread  
 The olive first its fragrant sprays,  
 To form a garland for Minerva's head,  
 And the Athenian splendor raise :  
 With the famed archer, with Alcmena's son  
 Thou cam'st exulting with vindictive joy ;  
 By your confederate arms was Ilion won,  
 When from thy Greece thou cam'st our city to destroy.

## I. 2.

Repining for the promised steeds,  
 From Greece Alcides led a chosen band,  
 With hostile prows th' indented strand  
 He reached, and anchored near fair Simois' meads ;  
 Selected from each ship, he led  
 Those who with dextrous hand could wing  
 Th' unerring shaft, till slaughter reached thy head,  
 Laomedon, thou perjured king :  
 Those battlements which Phœbus' self did rear  
 The victor wasted with devouring flame ;  
 Twice o'er Troy's walls hath waved the hostile spear,  
 Twice have insulting shouts announced Dardania's shame.

## II. 1.

Thou bear'st the sparkling wine in vain  
 With step effeminate, O Phrygian boy,  
 Erewhile didst thou approach with joy  
 To fill the goblet of imperial Jove ;  
 For now thy Troy lies levelled with the plain,  
 And its thick smoke ascends the realms above.  
 On th' echoing coast our plaints we vent,  
 As feathered songsters o'er their young bewail,  
 A child or husband these lament,  
 And those behold their captive mothers sail :  
 The founts where thou didst bathe, th' athletic sports,  
 Are now no more. Each blooming grace  
 Sheds charms unheeded o'er thy placid face,  
 And thou frequent'st Heaven's splendid courts.  
 Triumphant Greece hath levelled in the dust  
 The throne where Priam ruled the virtuous and the just.

## II. 2.

With happier auspices, O love,  
 Erst didst thou hover o'er this fruitful plain,  
 Hence caught the gods thy thrilling pain ;  
 By thee embellished, Troy's resplendent towers  
 Reared their proud summits blest by thundering Jove,  
 For our allies were the celestial powers.  
 But I no longer will betray

Heaven's ruler to reproach and biting shame.

The white-winged morn, blest source of day,  
Who cheers the nations with her kindling flame,  
Beheld these walls demolished, and th' abode

Of that dear prince who shared her bed  
In fragments o'er the wasted champaign spread :

While swift along the starry road,

Her golden car his country's guardian bore :

False was each amorous god, and Ilium is no more.

MENELAUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

MEN. Hail, O ye solar beams, who on this day,  
When I my consort Helen shall regain  
Your radiance shed. For I am he who long  
Endured the toils of battle, Menelaus,  
Attended by the Grecian host. To Troy,  
Not in a woman's cause, as many deem,  
I came, but came to punish him who broke  
The laws of hospitality, and ravished  
My consort from my palace. He hath suffered  
As he deserved, such was the will of Heaven,  
He and his country by the spear of Greece  
Have been destroyed. But I am come to bear  
That Spartan dame away, whom with regret  
I term my consort, though she once was mine.  
But she beneath these tents is with the rest  
Of Phrygia's captives numbered : for the troops  
Whose arms redeemed her, have to me consigned  
That I might either take away, or spare  
Her life, and waft her to the Argive coast.  
I am resolved that Helen shall not bleed  
In Troy, but o'er the foaming waves to Greece  
Will I convey her, and to them whose friends  
Before yon walls were slain, surrender up  
To perish by their vengeance. But with speed  
Enter the tent, thence by that hair defiled  
With murder, O my followers, drag her forth,  
And hither bring : for when a prosperous breeze  
Arises, her will I to Greece convey.

HEC. O thou who mov'st the world, and in this earth  
Hast fixed thy station, whosoe'er thou art,  
Impervious to our reason, whether thou,  
O Jove, art dread necessity which rules  
All nature, or that soul which animates  
The breasts of mortals, thee do I adore,  
For in a silent path thou tread'st and guid'st  
With justice the affairs of man.

MEN.

What means

This innovation in the solemn prayer  
You to the gods address?

HEC. I shall applaud  
The stroke, O Menelaus, if thou slay  
Thy wife; but soon as thou behold'st her, fly,  
Lest she with love ensnare thee. For the eyes  
Of men she captivates, o'erturns whole cities,  
And fires the roofs of lofty palaces,  
She is possessed of such resistless charms;  
Both I and thou and thousands to their cost,  
Alas! are sensible how great her power.

HELEN, MENELAUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

HEL. O Menelaus, this is sure a prelude  
To greater horrors. For with brutal hands  
I by your servants from these tents am dragged?  
Too well I know you hate me, yet would learn,  
How you and Greece have of my life disposed.

MEN. Thou by the utmost rigour of the laws  
Hast not been sentenced; but the host, to me  
Whom thou hast wronged, consign thee to be slain.

HEL. May not I answer to these harsh resolves,  
That if I bleed, unjustly shall I bleed?

MEN. I came not hither to debate, but slay thee?

HEC. Hear her, nor let her die, O Menelaus,  
Without this privilege. Me too allow  
To make reply to her defence; for nought  
Of the foul deeds, which she in Troy committed  
Yet know'st thou: if united, the whole tale  
Must force thee to destroy her, and preclude  
All means of her escaping.

MEN. An indulgence  
Like this supposes leisure to attend;  
However, if she have a wish to speak,  
She may: but be assured, that my compliance  
To your request is owing, for such favour  
To her I would not grant.

HEL. Perhaps with me  
Whom you account a foe, you will not deign,  
Whether I seem to utter truth or falsehood,  
To parley. But to each malignant charge  
With which, O Hecuba, I know thou com'st  
Prepared against me, will I make reply,  
And to o'crbalance all that thou canst urge  
Produce recriminations. First, she bore  
Paris, the author of these mischiefs, next  
Did aged Priam ruin Troy and me,  
When erst that infant he forbore to slay,  
That baleful semblance of a flaming torch!

Hear what ensued ; by Paris were the claims  
Of the three rival goddesses decided.  
The gift Minerva proffered ; that commanding  
The Phrygians, he should conquer Greece ; while Juno  
Promised, that he his empire should extend  
From Asia to remotest Europe's bounds,  
If he to her adjudged the golden prize ;  
But Venus, who in rapturous terms extolled  
My charms, engaged that as the great reward  
She would on him bestow me ; to her beauty  
If o'er each goddess he the preference gave.  
Observe the sequel : Venus, o'er Minerva  
And Juno, gained the triumph ; and my nuptials  
Thus far have been a benefit to Greece ;  
Ye are not subject to barbarian lords,  
Crushed by invasion, or tyrannic power.  
But I my ruin owe to what my country  
Hath found thus advantageous, for my charms  
To Paris sold, and branded with disgrace,  
E'en for such deeds as merited a wreath  
To crown these brows. But you may urge, that all  
I have alleged is of no real weight,  
Because by stealth I from your palace fled.  
Accompanied by no mean goddess, came  
That evil genius, sprung from Hecuba,  
Distinguish him by either name you list,  
Paris or Alexander, in your house,  
Whom, O delirious, you behind you left,  
And sailed from Sparta to the Cretan isle.  
Well, be it so. Of my own heart, not you  
I in regard to all that hence ensued  
Will ask the question. What could have induced me,  
Following that stranger, to forsake my home,  
False to my native land ? impute the guilt  
To Venus, and assume a power, beyond  
E'en that of Jove, who rules th' inferior gods  
But yields to her behests. My crime was venial ;  
Yet hence you may allege a specious charge  
Against me ; since to earth's dark vaults the corse  
Of Paris was consigned, no longer bound  
Through Heaven's supreme decree in nuptial chains,  
I to the Grecian fleet should have escaped  
From Ilion's palace ; such was my design :  
This can the guards of Troy's beleaguered towers,  
And sentinels who on the walls were stationed,  
Attest, that oft they caught me, as with ropes  
By stealth I strove to light upon the ground ;  
But a new husband, fierce Deiphobus,  
Obtained me for a wife by brutal force,

Though every Phrygian disapproved. What law  
 Can sentence me, whom 'gainst my will he wedded,  
 By you, my lord, with justice to be slain?  
 But for the benefits through me derived  
 To Greece, I in the stead of laureate wreaths  
 With slavery am requited. If you wish  
 To overcome the gods' supreme behests,  
 That very wish were folly.

CHOR. O my Queen,  
 Assert thy children's and thy country's cause,  
 'Gainst her persuasive language, for she speaks  
 With eloquence, though guilty: curst imposture!

HEC. I those three goddesses will first defend,  
 And prove that she has uttered vile untruths:  
 For of such madness ne'er can I suspect  
 Juno and Pallas that immortal maid,  
 As that the first should to barbarian tribes  
 Propose to sell her Argos, or Minerva  
 To make her Athens subject to the Phrygians:  
 Seeking in sportive strife the palm of beauty  
 They came to Ida's mount. For through what motive  
 Could Juno with such eagerness have wished  
 Her charms might triumph? to obtain a husband  
 Greater than Jove? could Pallas, who besought  
 Her sire she ever might remain a virgin,  
 Propose to wed some deity? Forbear  
 To represent these goddesses as foolish,  
 That thy transgressions may by their example  
 Be justified: thou never canst persuade  
 The wise. Thou hast presumed t' assert (but this  
 Was a ridiculous pretence) that Venus  
 Came with my son to Menelaus' house.  
 Could she not calmly have abode in Heaven,  
 Yet wafted thee and all Amycla's city  
 To Ilion? but the beauty of my son  
 Was great, and thy own heart, when thou beheld'st him  
 Became thy Venus: for whatever folly  
 Prevails, is th' Aphrodite of mankind:  
 That of Love's goddess, justly doth commence  
 With the same letters as an idiot's name.  
 Him didst thou see in a barbaric vest  
 With gold refulgent, and thy wanton heart  
 Was thence inflamed with love, for thou wert poor  
 While yet thou didst reside in Greece; but leaving  
 The Spartan regions, thou didst hope, the city  
 Of Troy, with gold o'erflowing, could support  
 Thy prodigality; for the revenues  
 Of Menelaus far too scanty proved  
 For thy luxuriant appetites: but sayst thou

That Paris bore thee thence by force? what Spartan  
 Saw this? or, with what cries didst thou invoke  
 Castor or Pollux, thy immortal brothers,  
 Who yet on earth remained, nor had ascended  
 The starry height? But since thou cam'st to Troy,  
 And hither the confederate troops of Greece  
 Tracing thy steps, began the bloody strife,  
 Whene'er thou heard'st that Menelaus prospered  
 Him didst thou praise, and make my son to grieve  
 That such a mighty rival shared thy love:  
 But if the Trojan army proved victorious,  
 He shrunk into a thing of nought. On Fortune  
 Still didst thou look, still deaf to Virtue's call  
 Follow her banners: yet dost thou assert  
 That thou by cords hast from the lofty towers  
 In secrecy attempted to descend,  
 As if thou here hadst been constrained to stay?  
 Where then wert thou surprised, or sharpened sword,  
 Or ropes preparing, as each generous dame  
 Who sought her former husband would have done?  
 Oft have I counselled thee in many words:  
 "Depart, O daughter, that my sons may take  
 Brides less obnoxious: thee aboard the ships  
 Of Greece, assisting in thy secret flight,  
 Will I convey. O end the war 'twixt Greece  
 And Ilion." But to thee was such advice  
 Unwelcome; for with pride thou in the house  
 Of Paris didst behave thyself, and claim  
 The adoration of barbaric tribes,  
 For this was thy great object. But e'en now  
 Thy charms displaying, clad in gorgeous vest  
 Dost thou go forth, still daring to behold  
 That canopy of Heaven which o'erhangs  
 Thy injured husband; thou detested woman!  
 Whom it had suited, if in tattered vest  
 Shivering, with tresses shorn, in Scythian guise  
 Thou hadst appeared, and for transgressions past  
 Deep smitten with remorse, assumed the blush  
 Of virtuous matrons, not that frontless air.  
 O Menelaus! I will now conclude;  
 By slaying her, prepare for Greece the wreaths  
 It merits, and extend to the whole sex  
 This law, that every woman who betrays  
 Her lord shall die.

CHOR. As that illustrious stem  
 Whence thou deriv'st thy birth, and as thy rank  
 Demand, on thy adulterous wife inflict  
 Just punishment, and purge this foul reproach,  
 This instance of a woman's lust, from Greece:

So shall thy very enemies perceive  
Thou art magnanimous.

MEN. Your thoughts concur  
With mine, that she a willing fugitive  
My palace left and sought a foreign bed ;  
But speaks of Venus merely to disguise  
Her infamy !—Away ! thou shalt be stoned,  
And in one instant for the tedious woes  
Of Greece make full atonement ; I will teach thee  
That thou didst shame me in an evil hour.

HEL. I by those knees entreat you, O forbear  
To slay me, that distraction sent by Heaven  
To me imputing : but forgive me.

HEC. Wrong not  
Thy partners in the war, whom she hath slain ;  
In theirs, and in my children's cause, I sue.

MEN. Desist, thou hoary matron : her entreaties  
Move not this steadfast bosom. O my followers  
Attend her, I command you, to the ships  
Which shall convey her hence.

HEC. Let her not enter  
Thy ship.

MEN. Is she grown heavier than before ?

HEC. He never loved who doth not always love,  
Howe'er the inclinations of the dame  
He loves may fluctuate.

MEN. All shall be performed  
According to thy wish ; she shall not enter  
My bark : for thou hast uttered wholesome counsels :  
But soon as she in Argos' lands, with shame,  
As she deserves, shall she be slain, and warn  
All women to be chaste. No easy task :  
Yet shall her ruin startle every child  
Of folly, though more vicious still than Helen.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. I.

E'en thus by too severe a doom,  
To Greece, O Jove, hast thou betrayed  
Our shrines, our altars, dropping rich perfume,  
The lambent flame that round the victims played,  
Myrrh's odorous smoke that mounts the skies,  
Yon holy citadel, with Ida's grove  
Around whose oaks the clasping ivy plies,  
Where rivulets meandering rove



Cold and translucent from the drifted snows ;  
 On that high ridge with orient blaze  
 The sun first scatters his enlivening rays,  
 And with celestial flame th' ecstatic priestess glows.

## I. 2.

Each sacrifice, each pious rite,  
 Hence vanished, with th' harmonious choirs  
 Whose accents soothed the languid ear of night,  
 While to the gods we waked our sounding lyres ;  
 Their golden images no more  
 Twelve times each year, on that revolving eve  
 When shines the full-orbed moon, do we adore.  
 Harassed by anxious fears, I grieve,  
 Oft thinking whether thou, O Jove, wilt deign  
 To listen to our piteous moan,  
 High as thou sitt'st on thy celestial throne ;  
 For Troy, by fire consumed, lies level with the plain.

## II. 1.

Thou, O my husband, roam'st a flitting shade,  
 To thee are all funereal rites denied,  
 To thee no lustral drops supplied :  
 But I by the swift bark shall be conveyed  
 Where Argos' cloud-capped fortress stands,  
 Erected by the Cyclops' skilful hands.  
 Before our doors assembling children groan,  
 And oft repeat with clamorous moan  
 A mother's name. Alone shall I be borne  
 Far from thy sight, by the victorious host  
 Of Greece, and leaving Ilion's coast,  
 O'er ocean's azure billows sail forlorn,  
 Either to Salamis, that sacred land,  
 Or where the Isthmian summit o'er two seas  
 A wide extended prospect doth command,  
 Seated in Pelops' straits where Greece the prize decrees.

## II. 2.

Its arduous voyage more than half complete,  
 In the Ægean deep, and near the land,  
 May the red lightning by Jove's hand  
 Winged from the skies with tenfold ruin, meet  
 The bark that wafes me o'er the wave  
 From Troy to Greece a miserable slave.  
 Before the golden mirror went to braid  
 Her tresses, like a sportive maid,  
 May Helen never reach the Spartan shore.  
 Those household gods to whom she proved untrue,  
 Nor her paternal mansions view,

Enter the streets of Pitane no more,  
 Nor Pallas' temple with its brazen gate ;  
 Because her nuptials teemed with foul disgrace  
 To mighty Greece through each confederate state ;  
 And hence on Simois' banks were slain Troy's guiltless race

But ha ! on this devoted realm are hurled  
 Successive woes. Ye hapless Phrygian dames,  
 Behold the slain Astyanax, whom Greece  
 With rage inhuman from yon towers hath thrown.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

*The Body of ASTYANAX borne in upon a Shield.*

TAL. O Hecuba, one ship is left behind  
 To carry the remainder of the spoils  
 Which to Achilles' son have been adjudged,  
 To Phthia's coast. For Neoptolemus,  
 Hearing that recent evils hath befall'n  
 His grandsire Peleus, and that Pelias' son  
 Acastus hath expelled him from his realm,  
 Already hath departed with such speed  
 As would admit of no delay : with him  
 Andromache is gone, for whom I shed  
 A stream of tears, when from the land she went  
 Wailing her country, and to Hector's tomb  
 Her plaints addressing : the victorious chief  
 Hath she entreated, to allow the corse  
 Of your unhappy Hector's son, who perished  
 From Ilion's ramparts thrown, to be interred,  
 Nor bear this shield, the terror of the Greeks,  
 With brass refulgent, which his father placed  
 Before his flank in battle, to the house  
 Of Peleus ; nor to that ill-omened chamber  
 Where spousals dire on her arrival wait  
 The mother of the slain ; for such an object  
 Must grieve her to behold : but in the stead  
 Of cedar and the monumental stone,  
 Bury the child in this : for she the corse  
 Hath to your arms consigned, that you may grace it  
 With many a fragrant garland, and with vests  
 Such as your present fortunes will afford.  
 For she has sailed, and through his haste her lord  
 Prevented her from lodging in the grave  
 Her son. While thus you his remains adorn  
 We will mark out the spot, and with our spears  
 Dig up the ground. Without delay perform  
 These duties : I one task to you most irksome  
 Have rendered needless : for I lav'd the body,

And cleansed the wounds as o'er Scamander's stream  
 I passed. But to prepare for the deceased  
 A tomb, I go, that with united toil  
 When this we have accomplished, they may steer  
 Our vessel homeward. [Exit TALTHYBIUS.]

HEC. Place that orb'd shield  
 Of Hector on the ground, a spectacle  
 Most piteous, and unwelcome to these eyes.  
 How, O ye Greeks, whose abject souls belie  
 Your brave achievements, trembling at a child,  
 Could ye commit this unexampled murder,  
 Lest at some future time he should rebuild  
 The walls of Ilium? Ye inhuman cowards!  
 Our ruin from that fatal hour we date  
 When Hector with unnumbered heroes fell.  
 But having sacked our city, and destroyed  
 Each Phrygian warrior, scared ye such an infant  
 The dastard I abhor who meanly shrinks  
 Through groundless panic. O for ever loved,  
 By what a piteous fate didst thou expire!  
 Hadst thou, the champion of thy country, died,  
 In riper years, when married, and endued  
 With power scarce second to th' immortal gods,  
 Thou hadst been blest, if aught on earth deserves  
 The name of bliss. But thou, my son, beheld'st  
 And hadst a distant knowledge of these joys,  
 Which thou didst ne'er experience: for to thee  
 The treasures which the palaces of Troy  
 Contained, proved useless. O unhappy youth!  
 How wert thou hurled from thy paternal walls  
 Reared by Apollo's hand; and through those ringlets,  
 Which oft thy mother smoothed and kissed, the gore  
 Bursts from thy fractured skull: but let me waive  
 So horrid a description. O ye hands,  
 How in your fingers do ye still retain  
 A pleasing sad remembrance of your sire,  
 Or why do ye lie motionless before me?  
 Dear mouth, full many a babbling accent wont  
 To utter, art thou closed by death? Thy voice  
 Deceived me erst, when clinging to these garments,  
 "O mother," oft didst thou exclaim, "the hair  
 Shorn from my brows to thee I will devote,  
 Lead round thy tomb my comrades, and address  
 Thy hovering ghost in many a plaintive strain."  
 Now not to me, alas! dost thou perform  
 These dutious offices, but I, bowed down  
 With age, an exile, of my children rest,  
 Must bury the disfigured corpse of thee  
 A tender infant. These unnumbered kisses,

My cares in nurturing thee, and broken sleep,  
 Proved fruitless. What inscription can the bard  
 Place o'er thy sepulchre? "The Greeks who feared  
 This infant, slew him!" Such an epitaph  
 Would shame them. As for thee who hast obtained  
 Nought of thy wealth paternal, yet this shield  
 In which thou shalt be buried will be thine.  
 O brazen orb, which erst wert wont to guard  
 The nervous arm of Hector, thou hast lost  
 Thy best possessor: in thy concave circle  
 How is that hero's shape impressed; it bears  
 Marks of that sweat which dropped from Hector's brow,  
 Wearied with toil, when 'gainst thy edge he leaned  
 His cheek. Hence carry, to adorn the corse,  
 Whate'er our present station will afford,  
 For such the fortunes which Jove grants us now  
 As splendour suits not: yet accept these gifts  
 Out of the little I possess. An idiot  
 Is he, who thinking himself blest, exults  
 As if his joys were stable: like a man  
 Smitten with frenzy, changeful fortune bounds  
 Inconstant in her course, now here, now there,  
 Nor is there any one who leads a life  
 Of bliss uninterrupted.

CHOR. All is ready:  
 For from the spoils yon Phrygian matrons bear  
 Trappings to grace the dead.

HEC. On thee, my son,  
 Not as a victor who with rapid steeds  
 Didst ever reach the goal, or wing the shaft  
 With surer aim, an exercise revered  
 By each unwearied Phrygian youth, thy grandame  
 Places these ornaments which erst were thine:  
 But now hath Helen, by the gods abhorred,  
 Stripped thee of all thou didst possess, and caused  
 Thy murder, and the ruin of our house.

CHOR. Alas! thou hast transpierced my inmost soul,  
 O thou, whom I expected to have seen  
 Troy's mighty ruler.

HEC. But I now enwrap  
 Thy body with the vest thou shouldst have worn  
 At Hymen's festive rites, in wedlock joined  
 With Asia's noblest princess. But, O source  
 Of triumphs numberless, dear shield of Hector,  
 Accept these laureate wreaths: for though by death  
 Thou canst not be affected, thou shalt lie  
 Joined with this corse in death; since thou deserv'st  
 More honourable treatment, than the arms  
 Of crafty and malignant Ithacus.

CHOR. Thee, much lamented youth, shall earth receive.  
Now groan, thou wretched mother.

HEC. Oh !

CHOR. Commence  
Those wailings which are uttered o'er the dead.

HEC. Ah me !

CHOR. Alas ! too grievous are thy woes  
To be endured.

HEC. These fillets o'er thy wounds  
I bind, and exercise the healing art  
In name and semblance only, but, alas !  
Not in reality. Whate'er remains  
Unfinished, 'mid the shades beneath, to thee  
With tender care thy father will supply.

CHOR. Smite with thy hand thy miserable head  
Till it resound. Alas !

HEC. My dearest comrades.

CHOR. Speak to thy friends ; O Hecuba, what plaints  
Hast thou to utter ?

HEC. Nought but woe for me  
Was by the gods reserved ; beyond all cities  
To them hath Troy been odious. We in vain  
Have offered sacrifice. But had not Jove  
O'erthrown and plunged us in the shades beneath,  
We had remained obscure, we by the Muse  
Had ne'er been sung, nor ever furnished themes  
To future bards. But for this hapless youth  
Go and prepare a grave ; for the deceased  
Is with funereal wreaths already crowned :  
Although these pomps, I deem, are to the dead  
Of little consequence ; an empty pride  
They in the living serve but to display.

CHOR. Thy wretched mother on thy vital thread  
Had stretched forth mighty hopes : though styled most happy  
From thy illustrious birth, thou by a death  
Most horrid didst expire.

HEC. Ha ! who are these  
Whom I behold, in their victorious hands  
Waving those torches o'er the roofs of Troy ?  
E'en now o'er Ilion some fresh woes impend.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TAL. To you I speak, O leaders of the troops  
Who are ordained to burn this town of Priam.  
No longer in your hands without effect  
Reserve those blazing torches : but hurl flames  
On this devoted city, for when Troy  
Is utterly demolished, we shall leave

Its hated shores, exulting. But to you,  
 O Phrygians, I the same behests address;  
 When the shrill trumpet of our chief resounds,  
 Ye to the Grecian navy must repair  
 And from these regions sail. But as for thee,  
 Thou aged and most miserable dame,  
 Follow their steps who from Ulysses come,  
 To whom thy fate consigns thee for a slave  
 Far from thy country in a foreign land.

HEC. Ah, wretched me! this surely is the last,  
 The dire completion this, of all my woes.  
 I leave my country: Iliion's bulwarks flame.  
 Yet, O decrepit feet, with painful haste  
 Bear me along, that I may bid adieu  
 To my unhappy city. Thou, O Troy,  
 Distinguished erst among barbarian tribes  
 By thy superior prowess, soon shalt lose  
 The most illustrious name thou didst acquire:  
 Thee will the flames consume, and us our foes  
 Drag from our home to slavery. O ye gods!  
 Upon the gods yet wherefore should I call?  
 For when we erst invoked them oft, they heard not.  
 Come on, and let us rush amid the flames:  
 For in the ruins of my blazing country  
 'Twill be to me most glorious to expire.

TAL. Thy griefs, O wretched woman, make thee frantic.  
 But lead her hence, neglect not. For Ulysses  
 Obtained this prize, and she to him must go.

HEC. O dread Saturnian king, from whom the Phrygians  
 Derive their origin, dost thou behold  
 Our sufferings, most unworthy of the race  
 Of Dardanus?

CHOR. He surely doth behold:  
 But this great city, city now no more,  
 Is ruined: nought remains of Troy.

HEC. The blaze  
 Of Iliion glares, the fire hath caught the roofs,  
 The streets of Pergamus, and crashing towers.

CHOR. As the light smoke on rapid wing ascends  
 To heaven, how swiftly vanishes fallen Troy!  
 Torrents of flame have laid the palace waste,  
 And o'er its summit waves the hostile spear.

HEC. O fostering soil, that gave my children birth.

CHOR. Alas! alas!

HEC. Yet hear me, O my sons,  
 Your mother's voice distinguish.

CHOR. With loud plaints  
 Thou call'st upon the dead, those aged limbs  
 Stretched on the ground, and scraping up the dust

With either hand. I follow thy example  
Kneeling on earth's cold bosom, and invoke  
My wretched husband in the shades beneath.

HEC. We forcibly are borne——

CHOR.

Most doleful sound!

HEC. To servile roofs.

CHOR.

From my dear native land.

HEC. Slain, uninterred, abandoned by thy friends,  
Thou sure, O Priam, know'st not what I suffer.  
For sable death hath closed thine eyes for ever;  
Though pious, thou by impious hands wert murdered.  
O ye polluted temples of the gods,  
And thou my dearest city.

CHOR.

Ye, alas!

Are by the deadly flame and pointed spear  
Now occupied, on this beloved soil  
Soon shall you lie a heap of nameless ruins :  
For dust, which mixed with smoke, to Heaven ascends,  
No longer will permit me to discern  
Where erst my habitation stood : the land  
Loses its very name, and each memorial  
Of pristine grandeur ; wretched Troy's no more.

HEC. Ye know the fatal truth, ye heard the crash  
Of falling towers. Our city to its basis  
Is shaken. O ye trembling, trembling limbs,  
Support my steps !

TAL.

Depart to end thy days

In servitude. Alas ! thou wretched city !  
Yet to the navy of the Greeks proceed.





# THE CYCLOPS.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

|                   |  |                        |
|-------------------|--|------------------------|
| SILENUS.          |  | ULYSSES.               |
| CHORUS OF SATYRS. |  | POLYPHEME THE CYCLOPS. |

SCENE.—THE MOUNTAIN OF ÆTNA IN SICILY.

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### SILENUS.

O BACCHUS, for thy sake have I endured  
Unnumbered toils, both at the present hour,  
And when these nerves by vigorous youth were strung :  
By Juno first with wild distraction fired,  
Thou didst forsake the mountain nymphs whose care  
Nurtured thy infancy. Next in that war  
With the gigantic progeny of earth,  
Stationed beside thee to sustain thy shield,  
Piercing the buckler of Enceladus,  
I slew him with my lance. Is this a dream ?  
By Jove it is not : for I showed his spoils  
To Bacchus, and the labours I endure  
At present, are so great that they exceed  
E'en those. For since 'gainst thee Saturnia roused,  
To bear thee far away, Etruria's race  
Of impious pirates, I soon caught th' alarm,  
And sailed in quest of thee with all my children :  
Myself the stern ascended, to direct  
The rudder, and each satyr plied an oar  
Till ocean's azure surface with white foam  
Was covered ; thee, O mighty King, they sought.  
Near Malea's harbour as the vessel rode,  
An eastern blast arose, and to this rock  
Of Ætna, drove us, where the sons of Neptune,  
The one-eyed Cyclops, drenched with human gore,  
Inhabit desert caves ; by one of these  
Were we made captives, and beneath his roof  
To slavery are reduced. Our master's name

Is Polypheme ; instead of Bacchus' orgies  
 We tend the flocks of an accursed Cyclops.  
 My blooming sons, on yonder distant cliffs,  
 Feed the young lambs ; while I at home am stationed  
 The goblet to replenish, and to scrape  
 The rugged floor ; to this unholy lord,  
 A minister of impious festivals :  
 And now must I perform the task assigned  
 Of cleansing with this rake the filthy ground,  
 So shall the cave be fit for his reception,  
 When with his flocks my absent lord returns.  
 But I already see my sons approach,  
 Their fleecy charge conducting. Ha ! what means  
 This uproar ? would ye now renew the dance  
 Of the Sicinnides, as when ye formed  
 The train of amorous Bacchus, and assembled,  
 Charmed by the lute, before Althæa's gate ?

CHORUS, SILENUS.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

Sprung from an untainted race,  
 Hardy father of the fold,  
 Why, bounding o'er that craggy space,  
 Roam'st thou desperately bold,  
 Far from the refreshing gale,  
 The verdant herbage of the mead,  
 And sloping channel wont to feed  
 Thy trough with springs that never fail ?  
 Yon caves with bleating lambkins ring,  
 Come, depasture with the flock ;  
 Leave, O leave the dewy rock,  
 Ere this ponderous stone I fling.  
 Thee with speeding horns I call  
 To the Cyclops' lofty stall.

II.

Thou too those swollen udders yield,  
 That thy young ones may be fed,  
 Who, while thou browses't o'er the field,  
 Lie neglected in the shed ;  
 Slumbering all the livelong day  
 At length with clamorous plaints they wake,  
 Thou t' appease them wilt forsake  
 Ætna's valleys ever gay.

Young Bromius and his jocund rout  
 Here their orgies ne'er repeat,  
 No thyrsus waves, no drums they beat ;  
 Where the gurgling currents spout,  
 Here no vineyards yield delight,  
 Nor sport the nymphs on Nyssa's height.

## III.

Yet here I chaunt the strains which Bacchus taught,  
 To that Venus whom I sought  
 When with the Mænades I ranged.  
 Where, gentle Evan, dost thou tread  
 Alone, and from thy comrades far estranged,  
 Those auburn ringlets floating from thy head ?  
 Thy vot'ry once, but now a slave  
 To yonder one-eyed Cyclops, I abide  
 In this detested cave :  
 Covered with a goat's vile hide,  
 Thy friend, alas ! exposed to scorn  
 Wanders helpless and forlorn.

SIL. My sons, be silent : bid your followers drive  
 Their flocks into the stony cave.

CHOR. Proceed.

But wherefore, O my father, in this haste ?

SIL. A Grecian vessel, stranded on the coast,  
 I see, and to this cave the mariners  
 Attend their leader, on their heads they bear  
 Those empty vessels which express they want  
 Provisions, with fresh water too their urns  
 Would they replenish. O unhappy strangers !  
 Who are they ? unapprised what lord here rules,  
 Dread Polypheme, they in an evil hour  
 Are entering this inhospitable threshold,  
 And rushing headlong e'en into the jaws  
 Of this fierce Cyclops, gorged with human flesh.  
 But interrupt me not ; I will inquire  
 Whence to Sicilian Ætna's mount they came.

## ULYSSES, SILENUS, CHORUS.

ULY. Can ye direct me, strangers, where to find  
 Fresh springs to slake our thirst ; or who will sell  
 Food to the hungry sailor ? But what means  
 That group of satyrs, whom before yon cave  
 I see assembled ? we at Bacchus' city  
 Seem to have landed. Thee, the elder-born,  
 Thee first I hail.

SIL. Hail! foreigner; acquaint us  
Both who you are, and from what realm you came.

ULY. Ulysses, king of Ithaca, and th' isle  
Of Cephalenè.

SIL. That loquacious man,  
The crafty brood of Sisyphus, full well  
I know.

ULY. Reproach me not, for I am he.

SIL. Whence sailed you to Sicilia?

ULY. From the shores  
Of blazing Ilion, from the war of Troy.

SIL. What, knew you not the way to your own country?

ULY. The tempests violently drove me hither.

SIL. By Heaven, your fortunes are the same with mine.

ULY. What cam'st thou hither too against thy will?

SIL. Yes, in pursuit of those accursed pirates  
Who seized on Bromius.

ULY. But what land is this,  
And by what men inhabited?

SIL. This mountain,  
Called Ætna, overlooks Sicilia's plains.

ULY. Where are the fortresses and lofty towers  
Which guard its peopled cities?

SIL. They exist not.  
No men, O stranger, on these summits dwell.

ULY. But who possess the land, a savage race  
Of beasts?

SIL. The Cyclops occupy these caves,  
They have no houses.

ULY. Governed by what chief?  
Is this a mere democracy?

SIL. They lead  
The life of shepherds, and in no respect  
Yield to each other.

ULY. Do they sow the grain  
Of Ceres, or on what do they subsist?

SIL. On milk, on cheese, and on their sheep, they feed.

ULY. Affords the vine, nectareous juice, the drink  
Bacchus invented?

SIL. No such thing: they dwell  
In an ungrateful soil.

ULY. But do they practise  
The rites of hospitality, and hold  
The stranger sacred?

SIL. They aver the flesh  
Of strangers is a most delicious food.

ULY. What saidst thou, banquet they on human flesh?

SIL. Here no man lands who is not doomed to bleed.

ULY. Where is this Cyclops, in the cave?

- SIL. He went  
To *Ætna's* summit, with his hounds to trace  
The savage beasts.
- ULY. But know'st thou by what means  
We from this region may escape?
- SIL. I know not.  
But, O *Ulysses*, I'll do everything  
To serve you.
- ULY. Sell us bread, supply our want.
- SIL. I told you we have nothing here but flesh.
- ULY. By this, sharp hunger, which makes all things sweet,  
May be assuaged.
- SIL. Cheese from the press, and milk  
Of heifers too.
- ULY. Produce them: while the day  
Yet lasts, should we conclude our merchandise.
- SIL. With how much gold will you repay me? Speak.
- ULY. No gold I bring, but *Bacchus's* cheering juice.
- SIL. My dearest friend, you mention what we long  
Have stood in need of.
- ULY. This enchanting liquor  
Did *Maron*, offspring of the courteous god,  
On us bestow.
- SIL. Whom erst, while yet a boy  
I in these arms sustained.
- ULY. The son of *Bacchus*,  
T' inform thee more minutely who he is.
- SIL. Aboard the ship, or have you hither brought it?
- ULY. Here is the cask, old man, which thou perceiv'st  
Contains the wine.
- SIL. It hardly is a sup.
- ULY. But we have twice as much as this will yield.
- SIL. A most delicious spring is that you named.
- ULY. Shall I first treat thee with some wine unmixed,  
That thou may'st taste?
- SIL. Well judg'd: this specimen  
Soon will induce me to conclude the purchase.
- ULY. A cup too I have brought as well as cask.
- SIL. Pour forth, that I may drink, and recollect  
The grateful taste of wine.
- ULY. Look there!
- SIL. Ye gods!  
How beauteous is its odour!
- ULY. Hast thou seen it?
- SIL. By *Jove* I have not, but I smell its charms.
- ULY. Taste, nor to words alone confine thy praise.
- SIL. Ha! ha! now *Bacchus* to the choral dance  
Invites me.
- ULY. Hath it moistened well thy palate?

SIL. So well as e'en to reach my fingers' ends.

ULY. Beside all this, shall money too be thine.

SIL. Empty the vessel, and reserve your gold.

ULY. Bring forth the cheese and lambs.

SIL.

That will I do,

Regardless of my lord, because I wish

To drain one goblet of this wine, and give

The flocks of all the Cyclops in its stead.

I'd from Leucadè, when completely drunk,

Into the ocean take a lover's leap,

Shutting my eyes. For he who, when he quaffs

The mantling bowl, exults not, is a madman.

Through wine new joys our wanton bosoms fire,

With eager arms we clasp the yielding fair,

And in the giddy dance forget each ill

That heretofore assailed us. So I kiss

The rich potation; let the stupid Cyclops

Weep with that central eye which in his front

Glares horribly.

[Exit SILENUS.

CHOR. Attend: for we must hold

A long confabulation, O Ulysses.

ULY. We meet each other like old friends.

CHOR.

Was Troy

By you subdued? was Helen taken captive?

ULY. And the whole house of Priam we laid waste.

CHOR. When ye had seized on that transcendent fair,

Did ye then all enjoy her in your turn,

Because she loves variety of husbands?

False to her vows, when she the painted greaves

Around the legs of Paris, on his neck

The golden chain, beheld, with love deep smitten

From Menelaus, best of men, she fled.

Ah! would to Heaven no women had been born

But such as were reserved for my embraces.

SILENUS *returning*, ULYSSES, CHORUS.

SIL. Here, King Ulysses, is the shepherd's food:

Banquet on bleating lambs, and bear away

As many curdled cheeses as you can;

But from these caverns with your utmost speed

Depart, when ye have given me in return

The clustering vine's rich juice which Bacchus loves.

ULY. The Cyclops comes. What shall we do? Old man,

We are undone. Ah, whither can we fly?

SIL. Ye may conceal yourselves beneath that rock.

ULY. Most dangerous is the scheme thou hast proposed,  
To rush into the toils.

SIL.

No danger truly;

For in this rock is many a hiding-place.

ULY. Not thus: indignant Troy might groan indeed

If from a single arm we basely fled.  
 Oft with my shield against a countless band  
 Of Phrygians have I fought. If we must die,  
 Let us die nobly : or with life maintain  
 The fame we erst in dubious fields acquired.

POLYPHEME, SILENUS, CHORUS, ULYSSES.

POL. What mean these transports, this insensate uproar,  
 These Bacchanalian orgies? Nyssa's god,  
 The brazen timbrel, and the rattling drum,  
 Are distant from these regions. In the cave  
 How fare the new-yeaned lambkins? do they suck,  
 Or follow they the ewes? have ye prepared  
 In wicker vats the cheeses? No reply?  
 This club shall make ye weep forthwith. Look up,  
 Not on the ground.

CHOR. We lift our dazzled eyes  
 To Jove himself; I view the twinkling stars  
 And bright Orion.

POL. Is my dinner ready?

CHOR. It is. Prepare your jaws for mastication.

POL. Are the bowls filled with milk?

CHOR. They overflow,  
 You may drink whole hogsheads if you will.

POL. Of sheep, or cows, or mixed?

CHOR. Whate'er you please;  
 But swallow not me too.

POL. No certainly;  
 For ye would foot it in my tortured paunch,  
 And kill me with those antics. But what crowd  
 Behold I in the stalls? Some thieves or pirates  
 Are landed: at the mouth of yonder cave  
 The lambs are bound with osiers, on the floor  
 The cheese-press scattered lies, and the bald head  
 Of this old man is swoll'n with many bruises.

SIL. Ah me! into a fever I am beaten.

POL. By whom, old man, who smote thy hoary head?

SIL. O Cyclops, by these ruffians whom I hindered  
 From carrying off their plunder.

POL. Know they not  
 I am a god sprung from the blest immortals?

SIL. All this I told them, yet they seized your goods,  
 Eat up your cheese without my leave, dragged forth  
 The lambs, declared they would exhibit you  
 In a huge collar of three cubits long,  
 Closely imprisoned, and before that eye,  
 Which in the centre of your forehead glares,  
 Bore out your entrails, soundly scourge your hide,  
 Then throw you into their swift vessel's hold  
 Tied hand and foot, and sell you, with a lever

To heave up ponderous stones, or to the ground  
Level some door.

POL.                   Indeed ! go whet the knives  
Without delay, collect a mighty pile  
Of wood, and light it up with flaming brands,  
They shall be slain immediately, and broiled  
To satisfy my appetite with viands  
Hot from the coals. The rest shall be well sodden ;  
For I am sated with unsavoury beasts,  
Enough on lions have I banqueted  
And stags that haunt this mountain : but 'tis long  
Since human flesh I tasted.

SIL.                   My dread lord,  
Variety is sweet : no other strangers  
Have reached of late these solitary caves.

ULY. O Cyclops, hear the strangers also speak,  
In their defence. We, wanting to buy food,  
Came to your caverns from our anchored bark.  
These lambs to us he bartered for our wine,  
And of his own accord, when he had drank,  
Yielded them up ; no violence was used :  
But the account he gives is utter falsehood,  
Since he was caught without your privity  
Vending your goods.

SIL.                   I ? curses on your head !

ULY. If I have uttered an untruth.

SIL.                   By Neptune  
Your sire, O Cyclops, by great Triton, Nereus,  
Calypso, Nereus' daughters, by the waves,  
And all the race of fishes, I protest,  
Most beauteous Cyclops, my dear little lord,  
I sold not to the foreigners your goods ;  
May swift perdition, if I did, o'ertake  
These sinners here, my children, whom I love  
Beyond expression.

CHOR.               Curb thy tongue : I saw thee  
Vending thy lord's possessions to the strangers :  
If I speak falsehood, may our father perish !  
But injure not these foreigners.

POL.                   Ye lie ;  
For I in him much rather would confide  
Than Rhadamanthus, and pronounce that he  
Is a more upright judge. But I to them  
Some questions would propose. Whence sailed, strangers ?  
Where is your country and your native town ?

ULY. We in the realms of Ithaca were born ;  
But after we had laid Troy's bulwarks waste,  
O Cyclops, by those howling winds which raise  
The ocean's boisterous surges, to your coast  
Our vessel was impelled.



POL. Are ye the men  
Who worthless Helen's ravisher pursued  
To Ilion's turrets on Scamander's bank ?

ULY. The same : most dreadful toils have we endured.

POL. Dishonourable warfare ; in the cause  
Of one vile woman ye to Phrygia sailed.

ULY. Such was the will of Jove ; on no man charge  
The fault. But we to you, O generous son

Of ocean's god, our earnest prayers address,  
Nor fear with honest freedom to remonstrate

That we your hapless friends, who to these caves  
For refuge fly, deserve not to be slain

To satiate with accursed human food  
Your appetite : for to your sire, great king,

Full many a temple on the shores of Greece  
Have we erected ; Tænarus' sacred haven

To him remains inviolate, the cliff  
Of Malea, Sunium for its silver mines

Renowned, on whose steep promontory stands  
Minerva's fane, and the Gerastian bay.

But those intolerable wrongs which Greece  
From Troy had suffered, could we not forgive.

Our triumph interests you, who in a land  
With Greece connected, dwell, beneath the rock

Of flaming *Ætna*. Let those public laws  
Which all mankind obey, on you prevail

To change your ruthless purpose, and admit  
Your suppliants to a conference, who have long

Endured the perils of the billowy deep ;  
With hospitable gifts, and change of raiment

Assist us, nor affix our quivering limbs  
On spits, to sate your gluttony. Enough

Hath Priam's land depopulated Greece,  
Whole myriads have in fighting fields been slain ;

The widowed bride, the aged childless matron,  
And hoary sire, hath Troy made ever wretched.

But if you burn, and at your hateful feasts  
Devour the scattered relics of our host,

Whither shall any Grecian turn ? but listen  
To my persuasion, Cyclops, and control

Your gluttony. What piety enjoins,  
Prefer to this defiance of the gods :

For ruin oft attends unrighteous gain.

SIL. Leave not the smallest morsel of his flesh ;  
Take my advice, and if you eat his tongue,

You certainly, O Cyclops, will become  
A most accomplished orator.

POL. Vile caitiff,  
Wealth is the deity the wise adore,  
But all things else are unsubstantial boasts,

And specious words alone. I nought regard  
 Those promontories sacred to my sire.  
 Why dost thou talk of them? I tremble not,  
 O stranger, at the thunderbolts of Jove,  
 Him I account not a more powerful god  
 Than I am, nor henceforth will heed him : hear  
 My reasons ; when he from the skies sends down  
 The rain, secure from its inclemency  
 Beneath this rock I dwell, and make a feast  
 On roasted calves, or on the savage prey,  
 Stretched at my length supine, then drain a pitcher  
 Of milk, and emulate the thunder's sound.  
 When Thracian Boreas pours his flaky showers,  
 In hides of beasts my body I enwrap,  
 Approach the fire, nor heed the pelting snows.  
 Compelled by strong necessity, the ground  
 Produces grass, and nourishes my herds,  
 Whom, to no other god except myself,  
 And to this belly, greatest of the gods,  
 I sacrifice. Because each day to eat,  
 To drink, and feel no grief, is bliss supreme,  
 The Heaven, the object of the wise man's worship.  
 I leave those gloomy lawgivers to weep,  
 Who by their harsh impertinent restrictions  
 Have chequered human life ; but will indulge  
 My genius, and devour thee. That my conduct  
 May be exempt from blame, thou shalt receive  
 As pledges of our hospitality  
 The fire, and that hereditary cauldron  
 Well heated, which shall boil thy flesh : walk in,  
 Ye shall adorn my table, and produce  
 Delicious meals to cheer my gloomy cave,  
 Such as a god can relish.

ULY.

I have 'scaped,  
 Alas ! each danger at the siege of Troy,  
 'Scaped the tempestuous ocean ; but in vain  
 Attempt to soften the unpitying heart  
 Of him who spurns all laws. Now, sacred queen,  
 Daughter of Jove, now aid me, O Minerva,  
 For I such perils as far, far exceed  
 My Phrygian toils, encounter : and, O Jove,  
 Dread guardian of each hospitable rite,  
 Who sitt'st enthroned above the radiant stars,  
 Look down : for if thou view not this, though deemed  
 Omnipotent, thou art a thing of nought.

*Exeunt* POLYPHEME, ULYSSES, and SILENUS.

1st SEMICHOR. That insatiate throat expand,  
 Boiled and roast are now at hand  
 For thee, O Cyclops, to devour :  
 From the coals in evil hour

Yet reeking, shall thy teeth divide  
 The limbs of each unhappy guest,  
 To thy table served when dressed  
 In dishes formed of shaggy hide.  
 O betray me not, my friend,  
 For I on you alone depend :

Now approach the shades of night,  
 Launch the bark, and aid our flight.

2nd SEMICHOR. Thou cave, and ye unholy rites,  
 Adieu, the Cyclops' cursed delights,  
 Who on his prisoners wont to feed,  
 Hath banished pity from his breast.  
 Inhuman execrable deed !  
 On his own hearth, the suppliant guest,  
 Regardless of the Lares' guardian powers,  
 Now he slays, and now devours :  
 Hot from the coals, with odious jaws,  
 Human flesh the miscreant gnaws.

ULYSSES, CHORUS.

ULY. How, mighty Jove ! shall I express myself ?  
 The dreadful scenes I in the cave have viewed  
 Are so astonishing, they more resemble  
 Some fable than the actions of a man.

CHOR. What now, Ulysses, on your loved companions  
 Feasts this most impious Cyclops ?

ULY. Two, the fattest,  
 Having well viewed and poised them in his hands —

CHOR. How did you bear, O miserable man,  
 These cruel outrages ?

ULY. Soon as we entered  
 The rocky cave, he lighted first the fire,  
 On the wide blaze heaped trunks of lofty oaks,  
 A load sufficient for three wains to bear ;  
 Then near the flaming hearth, upon the ground,  
 Arranged his couch of pine leaves, filled a bowl,  
 Holding about ten firkins, with the milk  
 Of heifers, and beside it placed a jug  
 Adorned with ivy, the circumference seemed  
 Three spacious ells, the depth no less than four :  
 Then made his cauldron bubble, and reached down  
 Spits burnt at the extremities, and polished  
 Not with a knife, but hatchets ; Ætna furnished  
 Such instruments for sacrifice, the stems  
 Of thorn. No sooner had the hellish cook  
 Finished his preparations, than he seized  
 Two of my valiant comrades, whom he slew  
 With calm deliberation ; one he cast  
 Into the hollow cauldron ; from the ground  
 Then lifting up his fellow by the foot

Dashed out his brains against the pointed rock ;  
 Severing his flesh with an enormous knife,  
 Part at the fire he roasted, and to boil,  
 His other joints into the cauldron threw.  
 But I, though from these eyes full many a tear  
 Burst forth, approached the Cyclops, and on him  
 Attended, while my friends, like timorous birds  
 Lurked in the distant crannies of the rock,  
 And all the blood forsook their pallid frame.  
 When sated with his feast the monster lay  
 Supine, and snored, a thought by Heaven inspired  
 Entered this bosom ; having filled a cup  
 With Maron's juice unmingled, I to him  
 Bore it, that he might drink ; and cried, " Behold,  
 O Cyclops, son of Neptune, how divine  
 The beverage which our Grecian vineyards yield  
 The stream of Bacchus." But already g'utted  
 With his abominable food, he seized  
 And emptied the whole bumper at one draught,  
 Then lifting up, in token of applause,  
 His hand : " O dearest stranger," he exclaimed,  
 " To a delicious banquet thou hast added  
 Delicious wine." Perceiving he grew merry  
 I plied him with a second cup, well knowing  
 That wine will stagger him : he soon shall feel  
 Such punishment as he deserves. He sung ;  
 I poured forth more and more, to warm his bowels  
 With strong potations : 'midst my weeping crew  
 He makes the cave with unharmonious strains  
 Re-echo. But I silently came forth,  
 And, if ye give consent, design to save  
 You, and myself. Say, therefore, will ye fly  
 From this unsocial monster, and reside  
 With Grecian maids beneath the roofs of Bacchus ?  
 Your sire within approves of these proposals :  
 But now grown feeble and o'ercharged with wine,  
 Attracted by the goblet, as if birdlime  
 Had smeared his wings, he wavers. But with me  
 Do thou preserve thyself, for thou art young :  
 And I to Bacchus, to thy ancient friend  
 Far different from this Cyclops, will restore thee.

CHOR. My dearest friend, O could we see that day,  
 And 'scape yon impious monster ! for we long  
 Have been deprived of the enlivening bowl,  
 Nor entertain a single hope of freedom.

ULY. Now hear the means by which I can requite  
 This odious savage, and thou too mayst 'scape  
 From servitude.

CHOR. Speak, for we should not hear

The sound of Asia's harp with more delight,  
Than the glad tidings of the Cyclops' death.

ULY. By wine enlivened, he resolves to go  
And revel with his brethren.

CHOR. I perceive  
You mean to seize and kill him when alone,  
By some enchantment, or to dash him headlong  
From the steep rock.

ULY. I have no such design  
As these: on craft alone my plan depends.

CHOR. How then will you proceed? For we long since  
Have heard that you for wisdom are renowned.

ULY. I will deter him from the feast, and say  
He must not portion out among the Cyclops  
This liquor, but reserve it for himself  
And lead a joyous life: when overcome  
By Bacchus' gifts he sleeps, this sword shall point  
An olive pole, which to my purpose suited  
Lies in the cave: I in the fire will heat,  
And, when it flames, direct the hissing brand  
Full on the Cyclops' forehead, to extinguish  
The orb of sight. As when some artist frames  
A nautic structure, he by thongs directs  
The ponderous auger: thus will I whirl round  
Within the Cyclops' eye the kindled staff,  
And scorch his visual nerve.

CHOR. Ho! I rejoice;  
This blest invention almost makes me frantic.

ULY. Thee, and thy friends, and thy decrepit sire,  
This done, aboard my vessel will I place,  
And from this region with a double tier  
Of oars convey.

CHOR. But is it possible  
That I, as if dread Jove were my confederate,  
Shall guide the well-poised brand, and of his eyesight  
Deprive the monster? For I wish to share  
In such assassination.

ULY. I expect  
Your aid: the brand is weighty, and requires  
Our social efforts.

CHOR. I'd sustain a load  
Equal to what a hundred teams convey,  
Could I dash out the cursed Cyclops' eye  
E'en as a swarm of wasps.

ULY. Be silent now;  
(Ye know my stratagem) and at my bidding  
To those who o'er th' adventurous scheme preside  
Yield prompt obedience: for I scorn to leave  
My friends within, and save this single life.

True, 'scape I might, already having passed  
The cavern's deep recess : but it were mean  
If I should extricate myself alone,  
False to the faithful partners of my voyage.

[Exit ULYSSES.]

CHOR. Who first, who next, with steadfast hand  
Ordained to guide the flaming brand,  
The Cyclops' radiant eye shall pierce?

1st SEMICHOR. Silence! for from within a song  
Bursts on my ear in tuneless verse,  
Insensate minstrel, doomed ere long  
This luxurious meal to rue,  
He staggers from yon rocky cave.  
Him let us teach who never knew  
How at the banquet to behave,  
Outrageous and unmannered hind,  
Soon shall he totally be blind.

2nd SEMICHOR. Thrice blest is he, in careless play  
'Midst Bacchus' orgies ever gay,  
Stretched near the social board whence glides  
The vine's rich juice in purple tides,  
Who fondly clasps with eager arms  
The consenting virgin's charms;  
Rich perfumes conspire to shed  
Sweetest odours on his head,  
While enamoured of the fair  
He wantons with her auburn hair.  
But hark! for surely 'tis our mate  
Exclaiming, "Who will ope the gate?"

POLYPHEME, ULYSSES, SILENUS, CHORUS.

POL. Ha! ha! I am replete with wine, the banquet  
Hath cheered my soul: like a well-freighted ship  
My stomach's with abundant viands stowed  
Up to my very chin. This smiling turf  
Invites me to partake a vernal feast  
With my Cyclopean brothers. Stranger, bring  
That vessel from the cave.

[Exit ULYSSES.]

CHOR. With bright-eyed grace  
Our master issues from his spacious hall;  
(Some god approves—the kindled torch—) that form  
Equals the lustre of a blooming nymph  
Fresh from the dripping caverns of the main.  
Soon shall the variegated wreath adorn  
Your temples.

ULY. [returning.] Hear me, Cyclops; well I know  
Th' effect of this potation, Bacchus' gift,  
Which I to you dispensed.

- POL. Yet say what sort  
Of god is Bacchus by his votaries deemed?
- ULY. The greatest source of pleasure to mankind.
- POL. I therefore to my palate find it sweet.
- ULY. A god like this to no man will do wrong.
- POL. But in a bottle how can any god  
Delight to dwell?
- ULY. In whatsoever place  
We lodge him, the benignant power resides.
- POL. The skins of goats are an unseemly lodging  
For deities.
- ULY. If you admire the wine,  
Why quarrel with its case?
- POL. Those filthy hides  
I utterly detest, but love the liquor.
- ULY. Stay here; drink, drink, O Cyclops, and be gay.
- POL. This luscious beverage, must I not impart  
To cheer my brothers?
- ULY. Keep it to yourself  
And you shall seem more honourable.
- POL. More useful,  
If I distribute largely to my friends.
- ULY. Broils, taunts, and discord from the banquet rise.
- POL. Though I am fuddled, no man dares to touch me.
- ULY. He who hath drunk too freely, O my friend,  
Ought to remain at home.
- POL. Devoid of reason  
Is he who when he drinks pays no regard  
To mirth and to good-fellowship.
- ULY. More wise,  
O'ercharged with wine, who ventures not abroad.
- POL. Shall we stay here? What think'st thou, O  
Silenus?
- SIL. With all my heart. What need, for our carousals,  
Of a more numerous company?
- POL. The ground  
Beneath our feet, a flowery turf adorns.
- SIL. O how delightful 'tis to drink, and bask  
Here in the sunshine: on this grassy couch  
Beside me take your seat.
- POL. Why dost thou place  
The cup behind my elbow?
- SIL. Lest some stranger  
Should come and snatch the precious boon away.
- POL. Thou mean'st to tope clandestinely: between us  
Here let it stand. O stranger, by what name  
Say shall I call thee?
- ULY. Noman is my name.  
But for what favour shall I praise your kindness?

POL. The last of all the crew will I devour.

ULY. A wondrous privilege is this, O Cyclops,  
Which on the stranger you bestow.

POL. What mean'st thou?  
Ha! art thou drinking up the wine by stealth?

SIL. Only the gentle Bacchus gave that kiss,  
Because I look so blooming.

POL. Thou shalt weep,  
Because thy lips were to the wine applied,  
Nor did it seek thy mouth.

SIL. Not thus, by Jove;  
I drank because the generous god of wine  
Declared that he admired me for my beauty.

POL. Pour forth; give me a bumper.

SIL. I must taste  
To see what mixture it requires.

POL. Damnation!  
Give it me pure.

SIL. Not so, the heavens forbid!  
Till you the wreath bind on your ample front,  
And I again have tasted.

POL. What a knave  
Is this my cupbearer!

SIL. Accuse me not;  
The wine is sweet: you ought to wipe your mouth  
Before you drink.

POL. My lips and beard are clean.

SIL. Loll thus upon your elbow with a grace,  
Drink as you see me drink, and imitate  
My every gesture.

POL. What art thou about?

SIL. I swallowed then a most delicious bumper.

POL. Take thou the cask, O stranger, and perform  
The office of my cupbearer.

ULY. These hands  
Have been accustomed to the pleasing office.

POL. Now pour it forth.

ULY. Be silent: I obey.

POL. Thou hast proposed a difficult restraint  
To him who largely drinks.

ULY. Now drain the bowl;  
Leave nought behind: the toper must not prate  
Before his liquor's ended.

POL. In the vine  
There's wisdom.

ULY. When to pienteous food you add  
An equal share of liquor, and well drench  
The throat beyond what thirst demands, you sink  
Into sweet sleep: but if you leave behind



Aught of th' unfinished beverage in your cup,  
Bacchus will scorch your entrails.

POL. 'Tis a mercy  
How I swam out ; the very heavens whirl round  
Mingled with earth. I view Jove's throne sublime,  
And the whole synod of encircling gods.  
Were all the Graces to solicit me,  
I would not kiss them : Ganymede himself  
Appears in matchless beauty.

SIL. I, O Cyclops,  
Am Jove's own Ganymede.

POL. By Heaven thou art !  
Whom from the realms of Dardanus I bore.

[Exit POLYPHEME.]

SIL. Ruin awaits me.

CHOR. Dost thou loathe him now

SIL. Ah me ! I from this sleep shall soon behold  
The most accursed effects. [Exit SILENUS.]

ULY. Come on, ye sons  
Of Bacchus, generous youths ; for soon dissolved  
In slumber shall the monster from those jaws  
Vomit forth flesh, within the hall now smokes  
The brand, and nought remains but to burn out  
The Cyclops' eye : act only like a man.

CHOR. The firmness of my soul shall equal rocks  
And adamant. But go into the cave  
With speed, before tumultuous sounds assail  
Our aged father's ears ; for to effect  
Your purpose, all is ready.

ULY. Vulcan, king  
Of Ætna, from this impious pest, who haunts  
Thy sacred mountain, free thyself at once,  
By burning out his glaring eye ; and thou  
Nurtured by sable night, O sleep, invade  
With thy resistless force this beast abhorred  
By Heaven ; nor after all the glorious deeds  
Achieved at Iliou, with his faithful sailors,  
Destroy Ulysses' self, by him who heeds  
Nor god nor mortal. Else must we hold fortune  
A goddess, and all other deities  
Inferior to resistless fortune's power. [Exit ULYSSES.]

CHOR. The neck of him who slays his guest,  
With burning pincers shall be prest,  
And fire bereaving him of sight  
Soon shall destroy that orb of light.  
Within the embers near at hand  
Lies concealed a smoking brand,  
Torn from its parental tree.  
Maron, we depend on thee ;

May th' exasperated foe  
 With success direct the blow !  
 May the Cyclops lose his eye,  
 And curse his ill-timed jollity !  
 Thee, Bromius, how I long to meet  
 Thy front adorned with ivy twine ;  
 Leaving this abhorred retreat.  
 Ah, when shall such delight be mine ?

ULYSSES, CHORUS.

ULY. Be silent, O ye savages, restrain  
 Those clamorous tongues : by Heaven ye shall not breathe,  
 Nor wink your eyes, nor cough, lest ye awaken  
 This pest, the Cyclops, ere he of his eyesight  
 Is by the fire bereft.

CHOR. We will be silent,  
 And in our jaws confine the very air.

ULY. The ponderous weapon seize with dauntless hands,  
 Entering the cavern ; for 'tis fully heated.

CHOR. Will you not give directions who shall first  
 Manage the glowing lever, and burn out  
 The Cyclops' eye, that in one common fortune  
 We all may share.

1st SEMICHOR. We who before the portals  
 Are stationed, are not tall enough to drive  
 Full on its destined mark the hissing brand.

2nd SEMICHOR. But I am with a sudden lameness seized.

1st SEMICHOR. The same calamity which you experience  
 To me hath also happened ; for my feet  
 Are by convulsions tortured, though the cause  
 I know not.

ULY. If ye feel such dreadful spasms,  
 How can ye stand ?

CHOR. Our eyes are also filled  
 With dust or ashes.

ULY. These allies of mine  
 Are worthless cowards.

CHOR. We forsooth want courage  
 Because we feel compassion for our shoulders,  
 Nor would be beaten till our teeth drop out.  
 But I a magic incantation know,  
 Devised by Orpheus, which hath such effect,  
 That of its own accord the brand shall pierce  
 The skull of him, the one-eyed son of earth.

ULY. Long have I known ye are by nature such ;  
 But more than ever do I know you now.  
 On my own friends I therefore must rely.  
 Yet if thou hast no vigour in that arm,  
 Exhort my drooping friends to act with valour  
 And let thy counsels aid the bold emprise. [*Exit* ULYSSES.]

CHOR. Such be my province : we this Carian's life  
 Will hazard. But my counsels shall induce them  
 To burn the Cyclops. Ho! with courage whirl  
 The brand, delay not to scorch out the eye  
 Of him who banquets on the stranger's flesh.  
 With fire assail the savage, pierce the front  
 Of Ætna's shepherd, lest, with anguish stung,  
 On you he perpetrate some deed of horror.

POL. [*within.*] Ah me! by burning coals I am deprived  
 Of eyesight.

CHOR. That was a melodious pæan :  
 To me, O Cyclops, sing th' enchanting strain.

POLYPHEME, CHORUS.

POL. Ah, how am I insulted and destroyed !  
 Yet shall ye never from this hollow rock  
 Escape triumphant, O ye things of nought :  
 For in my station rooted, where this cleft  
 Opens a door, will I spread forth my hands  
 And stop your passage !

CHOR. Ha ! what means these outcries,  
 O Cyclops ?

POL. I am ruined.

CHOR. You appear  
 To have much been abused.

POL. Deplorably.

CHOR. When fuddled, did you fall 'mid burning coals ?

POL. Noman hath ruined me.

CHOR. To you then no one  
 Hath offered any wrong.

POL. These lids hath Noman  
 Deprived of sight.

CHOR. You therefore are not blind.

POL. Would thou couldst see as little.

CHOR. How can no man  
 Put out your eye ?

POL. Thou art disposed to jest.  
 But where is Noman ?

CHOR. He is nowhere, Cyclops.

POL. That execrable stranger, mark me well,  
 Is author of my ruin, who produced  
 The fraudulent draught, and burned my visual nerves.

CHOR. Wine is invincible.

POL. By all the gods,  
 Answer me I conjure you ; did they fly,  
 Or are they here within ?

CHOR. They on the top  
 Of yonder rock which screens them from your reach,  
 In silence take their stand.

POL. But on which side ?

CHOR. Your right.

POL. Where, where ?

CHOR. Upon that very rock.

Have you yet caught them ?

POL. To mischance succeeds

Mischance ; I have fallen down and cracked my skull.

CHOR. They 'scape you now.

POL. Ye misinformed me sure ;

They are not here.

CHOR. I say not that they are.

POL. Where then ?

CHOR. They wheel around you on your left.

POL. Ah me ! I am derided, ye but mock

At my affliction.

CHOR. They are there no longer :

But Noman stands before you.

POL. O thou villain,

Where art thou ?

ULYSSES, POLYPHEME, CHORUS.

ULY. Keeping cautiously aloof,

Thus I, Ulysses, guard my threatened life.

POL. What saidst thou ? Wherefore hast thou changed  
thy name

T' assume a new one ?

ULY. Me my father named

Ulysses. It was destined you should suffer

A just requital for your impious feast ;

For I in vain had with consuming flames

Laid Ilion waste, had I forborne t' avenge

On you the murder of my valiant friends.

POL. Now is that ancient oracle, alas !

Accomplished, which foretold, that I by thee,

On thy return from Troy, should be deprived

Of sight : but that thou also for a deed

So cruel, shalt be punished, and full long

Endure the beating of tempestuous waves.

ULY. Go weep, my actions justify these words.

But to the shore I haste ; and to my country

Will steer the vessel o'er Sicilia's waves.

POL. Thou shalt not ; with this fragment of the rock

Hurled at thy head, thee and thy perjured crew

Will I demolish : for I yet, though blind,

Can mount the cliff which overhangs the port,

And in its wonted crannies fix my steps.

CHOR. But we, blest partners in Ulysses' voyage,  
Henceforth the laws of Bacchus will obey.

# HELEN.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

HELEN.  
TEUCER.  
CHORUS OF GRECIAN DAMES  
(HELEN'S ATTENDANTS).  
MENELAUS.

FEMALE SERVANT.  
MESSENGER.  
THEOCLYMENUS.  
THEONOE.  
CASTOR AND POLLUX.

SCENE.—PROTEUS' TOMB, AT THE ENTRANCE OF THEOCLYMENUS'  
PALACE IN PHAROS, AN ISLAND AT THE MOUTH OF THE NILE.

### HELEN.

BRIGHT are these virgin currents of the Nile  
Which water Egypt's soil, and are supplied,  
Instead of drops from heaven, by molten snow.  
But Proteus, while he lived, of these domains  
Was lord, he in the isle of Pharos dwelt,  
King of all Ægypt; for his wife he gained  
One of the nymphs who haunt the briny deep,  
Fair Psamathe, after she left the bed  
Of Æacus; she in the palace bore  
To him two children, one of them a son  
Called Theoclymenus, because his life  
Is passed in duteous homage to the gods;  
A daughter also of majestic mien,  
Her mother's darling, in her infant years  
(Eidothea called by her enraptured sire):  
But when the blooming maid became mature  
For nuptial joys, Theonoe was the name  
They gave her; all the counsels of the gods,  
The present and the future, well she knew,  
Such privilege she from her grandsire Nereus  
Inherited. But not to fame unknown  
Are Sparta's realm, whence I derive my birth,  
And my sire, Tyndarus. There prevails a rumour  
That to my mother Leda Jove was borne  
On rapid wings, the figure of a swan

Assuming, and by treachery gained admission  
 To her embraces, flying from an eagle,  
 If we may credit such report. My name  
 Is Helen ; but I also will recount  
 What woes I have endured ; three goddesses,  
 For beauty's prize contending, in the cave  
 Of Ida, came to Paris ; Juno, Venus,  
 And Pallas, virgin progeny of Jove,  
 Requesting him to end their strife, and judge  
 Whose charms outshone her rivals. But proposing  
 For a reward, my beauty (if the name  
 Of beauty suit this inauspicious form)  
 And promising in marriage to bestow me  
 On Paris, Venus conquered : for the swain  
 Of Ida, leaving all his herds behind,  
 Expecting to receive me for his bride,  
 To Sparta came. But Juno, whose defeat  
 Fired with resentment her indignant soul,  
 Our nuptials frustrated ; for to the arms  
 Of royal Priam's son, she gave not me,  
 But in my semblance formed a living image  
 Composed of ether. Paris falsely deemed  
 That he possessed me ; from that time these ills  
 Have been increased by the decrees of Jove,  
 For he with war hath visited the realms  
 Of Greece, and Phrygia's miserable sons,  
 That he might lighten from th' unrighteous swarms  
 Of its inhabitants the groaning earth,  
 And on the bravest of the Grecian chiefs  
 Confer renown. While in the Phrygian war,  
 As the reward of their victorious arms,  
 I to the host of Greece have been displayed,  
 Though absent, save in likeness and in name.  
 But Mercury, receiving me in folds  
 Of air, and covering with a cloud (for Jove  
 Was not unmindful of me), in this house  
 Of royal Proteus, who of all mankind  
 Was in his judgment the most virtuous, placed me,  
 That undefiled I might preserve the bed  
 Of Menelaus. I indeed am here ;  
 But with collected troops my hapless lord  
 Pursues the ravisher to Ilion's towers.  
 Beside Scamander's stream hath many a chief  
 Died in my cause ; but I, who have endured  
 All these afflictions, am a public curse ;  
 For 'tis supposed, that treacherous to my lord,  
 I have through Greece blown up the flames of war.  
 Why then do I prolong my life ? these words  
 I heard from Mercury : " That I again

In Sparta, with my husband shall reside,  
 When he discovers that I never went  
 To Troy :” he therefore counselled me to keep  
 A spotless chastity. While Proteus viewed  
 The solar beams, I from the nuptial yoke  
 Still lived exempt ; but since the darksome grave  
 Hath covered his remains, the royal son  
 Of the deceased solicits me to wed him :  
 But honouring my first husband, at this tomb  
 Of Proteus, I a suppliant kneel, to him,  
 To him I sue, to guard my nuptial couch,  
 That if through Greece I bear a name assailed  
 By foul aspersions, no unseemly deed  
 May cover me with real infamy.

TEUCER, HELEN.

TEU. Who rules this fortress? such a splendid dome  
 With royal porticos and blazoned roofs  
 Seems worthy of a Plutus for its lord.  
 But, O ye gods, what vision ! I behold  
 That hateful woman who hath ruined me,  
 And all the Greeks. Heaven’s vengeance on thy head !  
 Such a resemblance bear’st thou to that Helen,  
 That if I were not in a foreign land,  
 I with this stone would smite thee : thou shouldst bleed  
 For being like Jove’s daughter.

HEL. Wretched man,  
 Whoe’er you are, why do you hate me thus  
 Because of her misfortunes ?

TEU. I have erred  
 In giving way to such unseemly rage.  
 All Greece abhors Jove’s daughter. But forgive me,  
 O woman, for the words which I have uttered.

HEL. Say who you are, and from what land you come ?

TEU. One of that miserable race the Greeks.

HEL. No wonder is it then, if you detest  
 The Spartan Helen. But to me declare,  
 Who are you, whence, and from what father sprung ?

TEU. My name is Teucer, Telamon my sire ;  
 The land which nurtured me is Salamis.

HEL. But wherefore do you wander o’er these meads  
 Laved by the Nile ?

TEU. I from my native land  
 Am banished.

HEL. You, alas ! must needs be wretched.  
 Who drove you thence ?

TEU. My father Telamon.

What friend canst thou hold dearer ?

HEL. For what cause

Were you to exile doomed ? your situation  
Is most calamitous.

TEU. My brother Ajax,  
Who died at Troy, was author of my ruin.

HEL. How ? by your sword deprived of life ?

TEU. He fell,  
On his own blade, and perished.

HEL. Was he mad ?  
Who could act thus whose intellects are sound ?

TEU. Know'st thou Achilles, Peleus' son ?

HEL. He erst,  
I heard, to Helen as a suitor came.

TEU. He, at his death, his comrades left to strive  
Which should obtain his arms.

HEL. But why was this  
Hurtful to Ajax ?

TEU. When another won  
Those arms, he gave up life.

HEL. Do your afflictions  
Rise from his fate ?

TEU. Because I died not with him.

HEL. O stranger, went you then to Troy's famed city ?

TEU. And having shared in laying waste its bulwarks,  
I also perished.

HEL. Have the flames consumed,  
And utterly destroyed them ?

TEU. Not a trace  
Of those proud walls is now to be discerned.

HEL. Through thee, O Helen, do the Phrygians perish.

TEU. The Greeks too : for most grievous are the mischiefs  
Which have been wrought.

HEL. What length of time's elapsed  
Since Troy was sacked ?

TEU. Seven times the fruitful year  
Hath almost turned around her lingering wheel.

HEL. But how much longer did your host remain  
Before those bulwarks ?

TEU. Many a tedious moon ;  
There full ten years were spent.

HEL. And have ye taken  
That Spartan dame ?

TEU. By her dishevelled hair,  
Th' adult'ress, Menelaus dragged away.

HEL. Did you behold that object of distress,  
Or speak you from report ?

TEU. These eyes as clearly  
Witnessed the whole, as I now view thy face.

HEL. Be cautious, lest for her ye should mistake  
Some well-formed semblance which the gods have sent.



TEU. Talk if thou wilt on any other subject ;  
No more of her.

HEL. Believe you this opinion  
To be well-grounded ?

TEU. With these eyes I saw her,  
And she e'en now is present to my soul.

HEL. Have Menelaus and his consort reached  
Their home.

TEU. They are not in the Argive land,  
Nor on Eurotas' banks.

HEL. Alas ! alas !  
The tale you have recounted, is to her  
Who hears you, an event most inauspicious.

TEU. He and his consort, both they say are dead.

HEL. Did not the Greeks in one large squadron sail ?  
TEU. Yes ; but a storm dispersed their shattered fleet.

HEL. Where were they, in what seas ?

TEU. They at that time  
Through the mid waves of the Ægean deep  
Were passing.

HEL. Can none tell if Menelaus  
Escaped this tempest ?

TEU. No man ; but through Greece  
'Tis rumoured he is dead.

HEL. I am undone.  
Is Thestius' daughter living ?

TEU. Mean'st thou Leda ?  
She with the dead is numbered.

HEL. Did the shame  
Of Helen cause her wretched mother's death ?

TEU. Around her neck, 'tis said the noble dame  
Entwined the gliding noose.

HEL. But live the sons  
Of Tyndarus, or are they too now no more ?

TEU. They are, and are not, dead ; for two accounts  
Are propagated.

HEL. Which is best confirmed ?  
O wretched me !

TEU. Some say that they are gods  
Under the semblance of two radiant stars.

HEL. Well have you spoken. But what else is rumoured ?  
TEU. That on account of their lost sister's guilt

They died by their own swords. But of these themes  
Enough : I wish not to renew my sorrows.

But O assist me in the great affairs  
On which I to these royal mansions came,  
Wishing to see the prophetess Theonoe,  
And learn, from Heaven's oracular response,  
How I may steer my vessel with success

To Cyprus' isle, where Phœbus hath foretold  
That I shall dwell, and on the walls I rear  
Bestow the name of Salamis, yet mindful  
Of that dear country I have left behind.

HEL. This will your voyage of itself explain :  
But fly from these inhospitable shores,  
Ere Proteus' son, the ruler of this land,  
Behold you : fly, for he is absent now  
Pursuing with his hounds the savage prey.  
He slays each Grecian stranger who becomes  
His captive : ask not why, for I am silent ;  
And what could it avail you to be told ?

TEU. O woman, most discreetly hast thou spoken ;  
Thy kindness may the righteous gods repay !  
For though thy person so resemble Helen,  
Thou hast a soul unlike that worthless dame.  
Perdition seize her ; never may she reach  
The current of Eurotas : but mayst thou,  
Most generous woman, be for ever blest. [*Exit TEUCER.*]

HEL. Plunged as I am 'midst great and piteous woes,  
How shall I frame the plaintive strain, what Muse  
With tears, or doleful elegies, invoke ?

## ODE.

## I. 1.

Ye syrens, winged daughters of the earth,  
Come and attune the sympathetic string,  
Expressive now no more of mirth,  
To soothe my griefs, the flute of Libya bring ;  
Record the tortures which this bosom rend,  
And echo back my elegiac strains :  
Proserpine next will I invoke, to send  
Numbers adapted to her votary's pains ;  
So shall her dark abode, while many a tear I shed,  
Waft the full dirge to soothe th' illustrious dead.

## CHORUS, HELEN.

## CHORUS.

## I. 2.

Near the cerulean margin of our streams  
I stood, and on the tufted herbage spread  
My purple vestments in those beams  
Which from his noontide orb Hyperion shed,  
When on a sudden from the waving reeds  
I heard a plaintive and unwelcome sound  
Of bitter lamentation ; o'er the meads  
Groans inarticulate were poured around :  
Beneath the rocky cave, dear scene of past delight,  
Some Naiad thus bewails Pan's hasty flight.

## HELEN.

## II. 1.

Ye Grecian nymphs, whom those barbarians caught,  
 And from your native land reluctant bore,  
     The tidings which yon sailor brought  
 Call forth these tears; for Ilion is no more,  
 By him of Ida, that predicted flame  
 Destroyed; through me, alas! have myriads bled,  
 If not through me, through my detested name.  
 By th' ignominious noose is Leda dead  
 Who my imaginary guilt deplored;  
 And doomed by the relentless Fates in vain  
 To tedious wanderings, my unhappy lord  
 At length hath perished 'midst the billowy main:  
 The twin protectors of their native land,  
 Castor and Pollux, from all human eyes  
 Are vanished, they have left Eurotas' strand,  
 And fields, in playful strife where each young wrestler vies.

## CHORUS.

## II. 2.

My royal mistress, your disastrous fate  
 With many a groan and fruitless tear I mourn.  
     I from that hour your sorrows date  
 When amorous Jove on snowy pinions borne,  
 In form a swan, by Leda was carest.  
 Is there an evil you have not endured?  
 Your mother is no more, through you unbiest  
 Are Jove's twin sons. Nor have your vows procured  
 Of your dear country the enchanting sight.  
 A rumour too through various realms hath spread,  
 Caught by the envious vulgar with delight,  
 Assigning you to the barbarian's bed.  
 Amid the waves, far from the wished-for shore,  
 Your husband hath been buried in the main.  
 You shall behold your native walls no more  
 Nor under burnished roofs your wonted state maintain.

## HELEN.

## III.

What Phrygian artist on the top of Ide,  
     Or vagrant of a Grecian line,  
     Felled that inauspicious pine,  
 To frame the bark which Paris o'er the tide  
     Dared with barbaric oars to guide,

When to my palace, in an evil hour  
 Caught by beauty's magic power,  
 He came to seize me for his bride ?  
 But crafty Venus, authoress of these broils,  
 Marched thither, leagued with death, t' annoy  
 Triumphant Greece and vanquished Troy,  
 (Wretch that I am, consumed with endless toils !)  
 And Juno seated on her golden throne,  
 Consort of thundering Jove,  
 Sent Hermes from the realms above,  
 Who found me, when I carelessly had strewn  
 Leaves plucked from roses in my vest,  
 As Minerva's votary drest ;  
 He bore me through the paths of air  
 To this loathed, this dreary land,  
 Called Greece, and Priam's friends the strife to share,  
 And roused to bloody deeds each rival band ;  
 Where Simois' current glides, my name  
 Hence is marked with groundless shame.  
 CHOR. Your woes I know are grievous : but to bear  
 With tranquil mind the necessary ills  
 Of life, is most expedient.

HEL. To what ills  
 Have I been subject, O my dear companions !  
 Did not my mother, as a prodigy  
 Which wondering mortals gaze at, bring me forth ?  
 For neither Grecian nor barbaric dame  
 Till then produced an egg, in which her children  
 Enveloped lay, as they report, from Jove  
 Leda engendered. My whole life and all  
 That hath befallen me, but conspires to form  
 One series of miraculous events ;  
 To Juno some, and to my beauty some,  
 Are owing. Would to Heaven, that, like a tablet  
 Whose picture is effaced, I could exchange  
 This form for one less comely, since the Greeks  
 Forgetting those abundant gifts showered down  
 By prosperous Fortune which I now possess,  
 Think but of what redounds not to my honour,  
 And still remember my ideal shame.  
 Whoever therefore, with one single species  
 Of misery is afflicted by the gods,  
 Although the weight of Heaven's chastising hand  
 Be grievous, may with fortitude endure  
 Such visitation : but by many woes  
 Am I oppressed, and first of all exposed  
 To slanderous tongues, although I ne'er have erred.  
 It were a lesser evil e'en to sin  
 Then be suspected falsely. Then the gods,

'Midst men of barbarous manners, placed me far  
 From my loved country : torn from every friend,  
 I languish here, to servitude consigned  
 Although of free born race : for 'midst barbarians  
 Are all enslaved but one, their haughty lord.  
 My fortunes had this single anchor left,  
 Perchance my husband might at length arrive  
 To snatch me from my woes ; but he, alas !  
 Is now no more, my mother too is dead,  
 And I am deemed her murd'ress, though unjustly,  
 Yet am I branded with this foul reproach ;  
 And she who was the glory of our house,  
 My daughter in the virgin state grown grey,  
 Still droops unwedded : my illustrious brothers,  
 Castor and Pollux, called the sons of Jove,  
 Are now no more. But I impute my death,  
 Crushed as I am by all these various woes,  
 Not to my own misdeeds, but to the power  
 Of adverse fortune only : this one danger  
 There yet remains, if at my native land  
 I should again arrive, they will confine me  
 In a close dungeon, thinking me that Helen  
 Who dwelt in Ilion, till she thence was borne  
 By Menelaus. Were my husband living,  
 We might have known each other, by producing  
 Those tokens to which none beside are privy :  
 But this will never be, nor can he e'er  
 Return in safety. To what purpose then  
 Do I still lengthen out this wretched being ?  
 To what new fortunes am I still reserved ?  
 Shall I select a husband, but to vary  
 My present ills, to dwell beneath the roof  
 Of a barbarian, at luxurious boards  
 With wealth abounding, seated ? for the dame  
 Whom wedlock couples with the man she hates  
 Death is the best expedient. But with glory  
 How shall I die ? the fatal noose appears  
 To be so base, that e'en in slaves 'tis held  
 Unseemly thus to perish ; in the poniard  
 There's somewhat great and generous. But to me  
 Delays are useless : welcome instant death ;  
 Into such depth of misery am I plunged.  
 For beauty renders other women blest,  
 But hath to me the source of ruin proved.

CHOR. O Helen, whosoe'er the stranger be  
 Who hither came, believe not that the whole  
 Of what he said, is truth.

HEL. But in plain terms  
 Hath he announced my dearest husband's death.

CHOR. The false assertions which prevail, are many.

HEL. Clear is the language in which honest Truth  
Loves to express herself.

CHOR. You are inclined  
Rather to credit inauspicious tidings  
Than those which are more favourable.

HEL. By fears  
Encompassed, am I hurried to despair.

CHOR. What hospitable treatment have you found  
Beneath these roofs?

HEL. All here, except the man  
Who seeks to wed me, are my friends.

CHOR. You know  
How then to act : leave this sepulchral gloom,

HEL. What are the counsels, or the cheering words  
You wish to introduce?

CHOR. Go in, and question  
The daughter of the Nereid, her who knows  
All hidden truths, Theonoe, if your lord  
Yet live, or view the solar beams no more :  
And when you have learnt this, as suit your fortunes  
Indulge your joys, or pour forth all your tears :  
But ere you know aught fully, what avail  
Your sorrows? therefore listen to my words ;  
Leaving this tomb, attend the maid : from her  
Shall you know all. But why should you look farther  
When truth is in these mansions to be found ?  
With you the doors I'll enter ; we together  
The royal virgin's oracles will hear.

For 'tis a woman's duty to exert  
Her utmost efforts in a woman's cause.

HEL. My friends, your wholesome counsels I approve :  
But enter ye these doors, that ye, within  
The palace, my calamities may hear

CHOR. You summon her who your commands obeys  
Without reluctance.

HEL. Woeful day ! ah me,  
What lamentable tidings shall I hear ?

CHOR. Forbear these plaintive strains, my dearest queen,  
Nor with presaging soul anticipate  
Evils to come.

HEL. What hath my wretched lord  
Endured? Doth he yet view the light, the sun  
Borne in his radiant chariot, and the paths  
Of all the starry train? Or hath he shared  
The common lot of mortals, is he plunged  
Among the dead, beneath th' insatiate grave?

CHOR. O construe what time yet may bring to pass  
In the most favourable terms.

HEL. On thee  
I call to testify, and thee adjure,  
Eurotas, on whose verdant margin grow  
The waving reeds : O tell me, if my lord  
Be dead, as fame avers.

CHOR. Why do you utter  
These incoherent ditties ?

HEL. Round my neck  
The deadly noose will I entwine, or drive  
With my own hand a poinard through my breast ;  
For I was erst the cause of bloody strife ;  
But now am I a victim, to appease  
The wrath of those three goddesses who strove  
On Ida's mount, when 'midst the stalls where fed  
His lowing herds, the son of Priam waked  
The sylvan reed, to celebrate my beauty.

CHOR. Cause these averted ills, ye gods, to light  
On other heads ; but, O my royal mistress,  
May you be happy.

HEL. Thou, O wretched Troy,  
To crimes which thou hast ne'er committed, ow'st  
Thy ruin, and those horrible disasters  
Thou hast endured. For as my nuptial gifts,  
Hath Venus caused an intermingled stream  
Of blood and tears to flow, she, griefs to griefs  
And tears to tears hath added ; all these sufferings  
Have been the miserable Iliion's lot.  
Of their brave sons the mothers were bereft  
The virgin sisters of the mighty dead  
Strewed their shorn tresses on Scamander's banks,  
While, by repeated shrieks, victorious Greece  
Her woes expressing, smote her laurelled head,  
And with her nails deep furrowing tore her cheeks.  
Happy Calisto, thou Arcadian nymph  
Who didst ascend the couch of Jove, transformed  
To a four-footed savage, far more blest  
Art thou than she to whom I owe my birth :  
For thou beneath the semblance of a beast,  
Thy tender limbs with shaggy hide o'erspread,  
And glaring with stern visage, by that change  
Didst end thy griefs. She too whom Dian drove  
Indignant from her choir, that hind whose horns  
Were tipped with gold, the bright Titanian maid,  
Daughter of Merops, to her beauty owed  
That transformation : but my charms have ruined  
Both Troy and the unhappy Grecian host.

[*Exeunt* HELEN and CHORUS.]

## MENELAUS.

O Pelops, in the strife on Pisa's field,  
 Who didst outstrip the fiery steeds that whirled  
 The chariot of Oenomaus, would to Heaven  
 That when thy severed limbs before the gods  
 Were at the banquet placed, thou then thy life  
 Amidst the blest immortal powers hadst closed,  
 Ere thou my father Atreus didst beget,  
 Whose issue by his consort *Ærope*  
 Were Agamemnon and myself, two chiefs  
 Of high renown. No ostentatious words  
 Are these ; but such a numerous host, I deem,  
 As that which we to Ilion's shore conveyed,  
 Ne'er stemmed the tide before ; these troops their king  
 Led not by force to combat, but bore rule  
 O'er Grecian youths his voluntary subjects,  
 And among these, some heroes, now no more,  
 May we enumerate ; others from the sea  
 Who 'scaped with joy, and to their homes returned,  
 E'en after fame had classed them with the dead.  
 But I, most wretched, o'er the briny waves  
 Of ocean wander, since I have o'erthrown  
 The battlements of Troy, and though I wish  
 Again to reach my country ; by the gods  
 Am I esteemed unworthy of such bliss.  
 E'en to the Libyan deserts have I sailed,  
 And traversed each inhospitable scene  
 Of brutal outrage ; still as I approach  
 My country, the tempestuous winds repel me,  
 Nor hath a prosperous breeze from Heaven yet filled  
 My sails, to waft me to the Spartan coast :  
 And now a shipwrecked, miserable man,  
 Reft of my friends, I on these shores am cast,  
 My vessel hath been shivered 'gainst the rocks  
 Into a thousand fragments : on the keel,  
 The only part which yet remains entire  
 Of all that fabric, scarce could I and Helen,  
 Whom I from Troy have borne, escape with life  
 Through fortunes unforeseen : but of this land  
 And its inhabitants, the name I know not :  
 For with the crowd I blushed to intermingle  
 Lest they my squalid garments should observe,  
 Through shame my wants concealing. For the man  
 Of an exalted station, when assailed  
 By adverse fortune, having never learned  
 How to endure calamity, is plunged  
 Into a state far worse than he whose woes  
 Have been of ancient date. But pinching need



Torments me : for I have not either food  
 Or raiment to protect my shivering frame,  
 Which may be guessed from these vile rags I wear  
 Cast up from my wrecked vessel : for the sea  
 Hath swallowed up my robes, my tissued vests,  
 And every ensign of my former state.  
 Within the dark recesses of a cave  
 Having concealed my wife, that guilty cause  
 Of all my woes, and my surviving friends  
 Enjoined to guard her, hither am I come.  
 Alone, in quest of necessary aid  
 For my brave comrades whom I there have left,  
 If by my search I haply can obtain it,  
 I roam ; but when I viewed this house adorned  
 With gilded pinnacles, and gates that speak  
 The riches of their owner, I advanced :  
 For I have hopes that from this wealthy mansion  
 I, somewhat for my sailors, shall obtain.  
 But they who want the necessary comforts  
 Of life, although they are disposed to aid us,  
 Yet have not wherewithal. Ho ! who comes forth  
 From yonder gate, my doleful tale to bear  
 Into the house ?

FEMALE SERVANT, MENELAUS.

FEMALE SER. Who at the threshold stands ?  
 Wilt thou not hence depart, lest thy appearance  
 Before these doors give umbrage to our lords ?  
 Else shalt thou surely die, because thou cam'st  
 From Greece, whose sons shall never hence return.

MEN. Well hast thou spoken, O thou aged dame.  
 Wilt thou permit me ? For to thy behests  
 Must I submit : but suffer me to speak.

FEMALE SER. Depart : for 'tis my duty to permit  
 No Greek to enter this imperial dome.

MEN. Lift not thy hand against me, nor attempt  
 To drive me hence by force.

FEMALE SER. Thou wilt not yield  
 To my advice, thou therefore art to blame.

MEN. Carry my message to thy lords within.

FEMALE SER. I fear lest somewhat dreadful might ensue,  
 Should I repeat your words.

MEN. I hither come  
 A shipwrecked man, a stranger, one of those  
 Whom all hold sacred.

FEMALE SER. To some other house,  
 Instead of this, repair.

MEN. I am determined  
 To enter : but comply with my request.

FEMALE SER. Be well assured thou art unwelcome here,  
And shalt ere long by force be driven away.

MEN. Alas ! alas ! where are my valiant troops ?

FEMALE SER. Elsewhere, perhaps, thou wert a mighty man ;  
But here art thou no longer such.

MEN. O Fortune,  
How am I galled with undeserved reproach !

FEMALE SER. Why are those eyelids moist with tears, why  
griev'st thou ?

MEN. Because I once was happy.

FEMALE SER. Then depart,  
And mingle social tears with those thou lov'st.

MEN. But what domain is this, to whom belong  
These royal mansions ?

FEMALE SER. Proteus here resides ;  
This land is Egypt.

MEN. Egypt ? wretched me !  
Ah, whither have I sailed !

FEMALE SER. But for what cause  
Scorn'st thou the race of Nile ?

MEN. I scorn them not :  
My own disastrous fortunes I bewail.

FEMALE SER. Many are wretched, thou in this respect  
Art nothing singular.

MEN. Is he, the king  
Thou speak'st of, here within ?

FEMALE SER. To him belongs  
This tomb ; his son is ruler of this land.

MEN. But where is he : abroad, or in the palace ?

FEMALE SER. He's not within : but to the Greeks he bears  
The greatest enmity.

MEN. Whence rose this hate,  
Productive of such bitter fruits to me ?

FEMALE SER. Beneath these roofs Jove's daughter Helen  
dwells.

MEN. What mean'st thou ? Ha ! what words with wonder  
fraught

Are these which thou hast uttered ? O repeat them.

FEMALE SER. The child of Tyndarus, she who in the realm  
Of Sparta erst abode.

MEN. Whence came she hither ?  
How can this be ?

FEMALE SER. From Lacedæmon's realm.

MEN. When ? Hath my wife been torn from yonder cave ?

FEMALE SER. Before the Greeks, O stranger, went to Troy  
Retreat then from these mansions, for within  
Hath happened a calamitous event,  
By which the palace is disturbed. Thou com'st  
Unseasonably, and if the king surprise thee,

Instead of hospitable treatment, death  
 Must be thy portion. To befriend the Greeks  
 Though well inclined, yet thee have I received  
 With these harsh words, because I fear the monarch.

[Exit FEMALE SERVANT.]

MEN. What shall I say? For I, alas! am told  
 Of present sorrows added to the past.  
 Come I not hither, after having borne  
 From vanquished Troy my consort, whom I left  
 Within yon cave well guarded? Yet here dwells  
 Another Helen, whom that woman called  
 Jove's daughter. Lives there on the banks of Nile  
 A man who bears the sacred name of Jove?  
 For in the heavens there's only one. What country,  
 But that where glides Eurotas' stream beset  
 With waving reeds, is Sparta? Tyndarus' name  
 Suits him alone. But is there any land  
 Synonymous with Lacedæmon's realm,  
 And that of Troy? I know not how to solve  
 This doubt; for there are many, it appears,  
 In various regions of the world, who bear  
 Like appellations; city corresponds  
 With city; woman borrows that of woman:  
 Nor must we therefore wonder. Yet again  
 Here will I stay, though danger be announced  
 By yonder aged servant at the door:  
 For there is no man so devoid of pity  
 As not to give me food, when he the name  
 Of Menelaus hears. That dreadful fire  
 By which the Phrygian bulwarks were consumed  
 Is memorable, and I who kindled it  
 Am known in every land. I'll therefore wait  
 Until the master of this house return.  
 But I have two expedients, and will practise  
 That which my safety shall require; of soul  
 Obdurate, if he prove, in my wrecked bark  
 Can I conceal myself, but if the semblance  
 Which he puts on, be mild, I for relief  
 From these my present miseries, will apply.  
 But this of all the woes that I endure  
 Is the most grievous, that from other kings  
 I, though a king myself, should be reduced  
 To beg my food: but thus hath Fate ordained.  
 Nor is it my assertion, but a maxim  
 Among the wise established, that there's nought  
 More powerful than the dread behests of Fate.

HELEN, CHORUS, MENELAUS.

CHOR. I heard what yon prophetic maid foretold,  
 Who in the palace did unfold  
 The oracles ; that to the shades profound  
 Of Erebus, beneath the ground  
 Interred, not yet hath Menelaus ta'en  
 His passage : on the stormy main  
 Still tossed, he cannot yet approach the strand,  
 The haven of the Spartan land :  
 The chief, who now his vagrant life bewails,  
 Without a friend, unfurls his sails,  
 From Ilion's realm to every distant shore  
 Borne o'er the deep with luckless oar.

HEL. I to this hallowed tomb again repair,  
 Now I have heard the grateful tidings uttered  
 By sage Theonoe, who distinctly knows  
 All that hath happened ? for she says my lord  
 Is living, and yet views the solar beams :  
 But after passing o'er unnumbered straits  
 Of ocean, to a vagrant's wretched life  
 Full long inured, on these Ægyptian coasts,  
 When he his toils hath finished, shall arrive.  
 Yet there is one thing more, which she hath left  
 Unmentioned, whether he shall come with safety.  
 This question I neglected to propose,  
 O'erjoyed when she informed me he yet lives ;  
 She also adds, that he is near the land,  
 From his wrecked ship, with his few friends, cast forth,  
 O mayst thou come at length ; for ever dear  
 To me wilt thou arrive. Ha ! who is that ?  
 Am not I caught, through some deceitful scheme  
 Of Proteus' impious son, in hidden snares ?  
 Like a swift courser, or the madding priestess  
 Of Bacchus, shall I not with hasty step  
 Enter the tomb, because his looks are fierce  
 Who rushes on, and strives to overtake me ?

MEN. On thee I call, who to the yawning trench  
 Around that tomb, and blazing altars hiest  
 Precipitate. Stay : wherefore dost thou fly ?  
 With what amazement doth thy presence strike  
 And almost leave me speechless !

HEL. O my friends,  
 I suffer violence ; for from the tomb  
 I by this man am dragged, who to the king  
 Will give me, from whose nuptial couch I fled.

MEN. We are no pirates, nor the ministers  
 Of lustful villany.

- HEL. Yet is the vest  
You wear unseemly.
- MEN. Stay thy rapid flight,  
Dismiss thy fears.
- HEL. I stop, now I have reached  
This hallowed spot.
- MEN. Say, woman, who thou art ;  
What face do I behold ?
- HEL. But who are you ?  
For I by the same reasons am induced  
To ask this question.
- MEN. Never did I see  
A greater likeness.
- HEL. O ye righteous gods !  
For 'tis a privilege the gods alone  
Confer, to recognize our long-lost friends,
- MEN. Art thou a Grecian or a foreign dame ?
- HEL. Of Greece: but earnestly I wish to know  
Whence you derive your origin.
- MEN. In thee  
A wonderful resemblance I discern  
Of Helen.
- HEL. Menelaus' very features  
These eyes in you behold, still at a loss  
Am I for words t' express my thoughts.
- MEN. Full clearly  
Hast thou discovered a most wretched man.
- HEL. O to thy consort's arms at length restored !
- MEN. To what a consort ? O forbear to touch  
My garment !
- HEL. E'en the same, whom to your arms,  
A noble bride, my father Tyndarus gave.
- MEN. Send forth, O Hecate, thou orb of light,  
Some more benignant spectre.
- HEL. You in me  
Behold not one of those who minister  
At Hecate's abhorred nocturnal rites.
- MEN. Nor am I sure the husband of two wives.
- HEL. Say, to whom else in wedlock are you joined ?
- MEN. To her who lies concealed in yonder cave,  
The prize I hither bring from vanquished Troy.
- HEL. You have no wife but me.
- MEN. If I retain  
My reason yet, these eyes are sure deceived.
- HEL. Seem you not then, while me you thus behold,  
To view your real consort ?
- MEN. Though your person  
Resemble hers, no positive decision  
Can I presume to form.

HEL. Observe me well,  
And mark wherein we differ. Who can judge  
With greater certainty than you?

MEN. Thou bear'st  
Her semblance, I confess.

HEL. Who can inform you  
Better than your own eyes?

MEN. What makes me doubt  
Is this; because I have another wife.

HEL. To the domains of Troy I never went:  
It was my image only.

MEN. Who can fashion  
Such bodies, with the power of sight endued?

HEL. Composed of ether, you a consort have,  
Heaven's workmanship.

MEN. Wrought by what plastic god?  
For the events thou speak'st of are most wondrous.

HEL. Lest Paris should obtain me, this exchange  
Was made by Juno.

MEN. How couldst thou be here,  
At the same time, and in the Phrygian realm?

HEL. The name, but not the body, can be present  
At once in many places.

MEN. O release me;  
For I came hither in an evil hour.

HEL. Will you then leave me here, and bear away  
That shadow of a wife?

MEN. Yet, O farewell,  
Because thou art like Helen.

HEL. I'm undone:  
For though my husband I again have found,  
Yet shall not I possess him.

MEN. My conviction,  
From all those grievous toils I have endured  
At Ilium, I derive, and not from thee.

HEL. Ah, who is there more miserable than I am?  
My dearest friends desert me: I, to Greece,  
To my dear native land, shall ne'er return.

MESSENGER, MENELAUS, HELEN, CHORUS.

MES. After a tedious search, O Menelaus,  
At length have I with difficulty found you,  
But not till over all the wide extent  
Of this barbaric region I had wandered;  
Sent by the comrades whom you left behind.

MEN. Have ye been plundered then by the barbarians?

MES. A most miraculous event hath happened,  
Yet less astonishing by far in name  
Than in reality.

MEN. Speak, for thou bring'st  
Important tidings by this breathless haste.

MES. My words are these : in vain have you endured  
Unnumbered toils.

MEN. Those thou bewail'st are ills  
Of ancient date. But what hast thou to tell me ?

MES. Borne to the skies your consort from our sight  
Hath vanished, in the heavens is she concealed,  
Leaving the cave in which we guarded her,  
When she these words had uttered : "O ye sons  
Of hapless Phrygia, and of Greece : for me  
Beside Scamander's conscious stream ye died,  
Through Juno's arts, because ye falsely deemed  
Helen by Phrygian Paris was possess't :  
But after having here remained on earth  
My stated time, observing the decrees  
Of Fate, I to my sire the liquid ether  
Return : but Tyndarus' miserable daughter,  
Though guiltless, hath unjustly been accused."  
Daughter of Leda hail ! wert thou then here ?  
While I as if thou to the starry paths  
Hadst mounted, through my ignorance proclaimed  
Thou from this world on rapid wings wert borne.  
But I no longer will allow thee thus  
To sport with the afflictions of thy friends ;  
For in thy cause thy lord and his brave troops  
On Ilion's coast already have endured  
Abundant toils.

MEN. These are the very words  
She uttered ; and by what ye both aver  
The truth is ascertained. O happy day  
Which gives thee to my arms !

HEL. My dearest lord,  
O Menelaus, it is long indeed  
Since I have seen you : but joy comes at last.  
My friends, transported I receive my lord  
Whom I once more with these fond arms enfold,  
After the radiant chariot of the sun  
Hath oft the world illumined.

MEN. I embrace  
Thee too : but having now so much to say  
I know not with what subject to begin.

HEL. Joy raises my exulting crest, these tears  
Are tears of ecstasy, around your neck  
My arms I fling with transport, O my husband,  
O sight most wished for !

MEN. I acquit the Fates,  
Since Jove's and Leda's daughter I possess,  
On whom her brothers borne on milk-white steeds

Erst showered abundant blessings, when the torch  
 Was kindled at our jocund nuptial rite ;  
 Though from my palace her the gods conveyed.  
 But evil now converted into good  
 To me thy husband hath at length restored  
 My long-lost consort : grant, O bounteous Heaven,  
 That I these gifts of fortune may enjoy.

HEL. May you enjoy them, for my vows concur  
 With yours ; nor, of us two, can one be wretched  
 Without the other. O my friends, I groan  
 No longer, I no longer shed the tear  
 For my past woes : my husband I possess  
 Whom I from Troy expected to return  
 Full many, many years.

MEN. I still am thine,  
 And thee with these fond arms again enfold.  
 But oft the chariot of the sun revolved  
 Through his diurnal orbit, ere the frauds  
 Of Juno I discerned. Yet more from joy  
 Than from affliction rise the tears I shed.

HEL. What shall I say ? what mortal could presume  
 E'er to have hoped for such a blest event ?  
 An unexpected visitant once more  
 I clasp you to my bosom.

MEN. And I thee  
 Who didst appear to sail for Ida's town,  
 And Ilion's wretched turrets. By the gods,  
 Inform me, I conjure thee, by what means  
 Thou from my palace hither wert conveyed.

HEL. Alas ! you to the source of all my woes  
 Ascend, and search into most bitter tidings.

MEN. Speak : for what'er hath been ordained by Heaven  
 Ought to be published.

HEL. I abhor the topic  
 On which I now am entering.

MEN. Yet relate  
 All that thou know'st ; for pleasing 'tis to hear  
 Of labours that are past.

HEL. I never went  
 To that barbarian youth's adulterous couch  
 By the swift oar impelled : but winged love  
 Those hapless spousals formed.

MEN. What god, what fate  
 Hath torn thee from thy country ?

HEL. O my lord,  
 The son of Jove hath placed me on the banks  
 Of Nile.

MEN. With what amazement do I hear  
 This wondrous tale of thy celestial guide !



HEL. Oft have I wept, and still the tear bedews  
These eyes : to Juno, wife of Jove, I owe  
My ruin.

MEN. Wherefore wished she to have heaped  
Mischiefs on thee ?

HEL. Ye sources of what'er  
To me hath been most dreadful, O ye baths  
And fountains, where those goddesses adorned  
Their rival beauties, from whose influence rose  
That judgment !

MEN. Were those curses on thy head  
By Juno showered, that judgment to requite ?

HEL. To rescue me from Venus.

MEN. What thou mean'st  
Inform me.

HEL. Who to Paris had engaged——

MEN. O wretched woman !

HEL. Wretched, wretched me !  
Thus did she waft me to th' Egyptian coast.

MEN. Then in thy stead to him that image gave,  
As thou inform'st me.

HEL. But alas ! what woes  
Thence visited our wretched house ! ah mother !  
Ah me !

MEN. What sayst thou ?

HEL. Leda is no more.  
Around her neck she fixed the deadly noose  
On my account, through my unhappy nuptials  
O'erwhelmed with foul disgrace.

MEN. Alas ! But lives  
Hermione our daughter ?

HEL. Yet unwedded,  
Yet childless, O my husband, she bewails  
My miserable 'spousals, my disgrace.

MEN. O Paris, who hast utterly o'erthrown  
All my devoted house, these curst events,  
Both thee, and myriads of the Grecian troops  
With brazen arms refulgent, have destroyed.

HEL. But from my country in an evil hour,  
From my loved native city, and from you,  
Me hath the goddess driven, a wretch accursed  
In that I left our home, and bridal bed,  
Which yet I left not, for those base espousals.

CHOR. If ye hereafter meet with happier fortune,  
This may atone for all ye have endured  
Already.

MES. To me too, O Menelaus,  
Communicate a portion of that joy  
Which I perceive, but know not whence it springs.

MEN. Thou too, old man, shalt in our conference share.

MES. Was not she then the cause of all the woes  
Endured at Troy?

MEN. Not she: we were deceived  
By those immortal Powers, whose plastic hand  
Moulded a cloud into that baleful image.

MES. What words are these you utter? have we toiled  
In vain, and only for an empty cloud?

MEN. These deeds were wrought by Juno, and the strife  
'Twixt the three goddesses.

MES. But is this woman  
Indeed your wife?

MEN. E'en she: and thou for this  
On my assertion safely mayst depend.

MES. My daughter, O how variable is Jove,  
And how inscrutable! for he with ease  
Whirls us around, now here, now there; one suffers  
Full many toils; another, who ne'er knew  
What sorrow was, is swallowed up at once  
In swift perdition, nor in Fortune's gifts  
A firm and lasting tenure doth enjoy.  
Thou and thy husband have endured a war,  
Of slander thou, but he of pointed spears:  
For by the tedious labours he endured  
He nothing could obtain, but now obtains  
The greatest and the happiest of all boons,  
Which comes to him unsought. Thou hast not shamed  
Thy aged father, and the sons of Jove,  
Nor acted as malignant rumour speaks.  
I now renew thy hymeneal rite,  
And still am mindful of the torch I bore,  
Running before the steeds, when in a car  
Thou with this favoured bridegroom wert conveyed  
From thy paternal mansion's happy gates.  
For worthless is that servant who neglects  
His master's interests, nor partakes their joys,  
Nor feels for their afflictions. I was born  
Indeed a slave, yet I with generous slaves  
Would still be numbered, for although the name  
I bear is abject, yet my soul is free.  
Far better this, than if I had at once  
Suffered two evils, a corrupted heart,  
And vile subjection to another's will.

MEN. Courage, old man: for thou hast borne my  
shield,

And in my cause endured unnumbered toils,  
Sharing my dangers: now partake my joys;  
Go tell the friends I left, what thou hast seen,  
And our auspicious fortunes: on the shore

Bid them remain, till our expected conflict  
Is finished ; and observe how we may sail  
From this loathed coast ; that, with our better fortune  
Conspiring, we, if possible, may 'scape  
From these barbarians.

MES. Your commands, O king,  
Shall be obeyed. But I perceive how vain  
And how replete with falsehood is the voice  
Of prophets : no dependence can be placed  
Upon the flames that from the altar rise,  
Or on the voices of the feathered choir.  
It is the height of folly to suppose  
That birds are able to instruct mankind.  
For Calchas, to the host, nor by his words  
Nor signs, declared, "I for a cloud behold  
My friends in battle slain." The seer was mute,  
And Troy in vain was taken. But perhaps  
You will rejoin, "'Twas not the will of Heaven  
That he should speak." Why then do we consult  
These prophets? We by sacrifice should ask  
For blessings from the gods, and lay aside  
All auguries. This vain delusive bait  
Was but invented to beguile mankind.  
No sluggard e'er grew rich by divination,  
The best of seers are Prudence and Discernment.

[Exit MESSENGER.]

CHOR. My sentiments on prophets well accord  
With those of this old man. He whom the gods  
Th' immortal gods befriend, in his own house  
Hath a response that never can mislead.

HEL. So be it. All thus far is well. But how  
You came with safety, O unhappy man,  
From Troy, 'twill nought avail for me to know ;  
Yet with the sorrows of their friends, have friends  
A wish to be acquainted.

MEN. Thou hast asked  
A multitude of questions in one short  
And blended sentence. Why should I recount  
To thee our sufferings on the Ægean deep,  
Those treacherous beacons, by the vengeful hand  
Of Nauplius kindled on Eubœa's rocks,  
The towns of Crete, or in the Libyan realm,  
Which I have visited, and the famed heights  
Of Perseus? never could my words assuage  
Thy curiosity, and, by repeating  
My woes to thee, I should but grieve the more,  
And yet a second time those sufferings feel.

HEL. You in your answer have been more discreet  
Than I who such a question did propose.

But pass o'er all beside, and only tell me  
How long you wandered o'er the briny main.

MEN. Year after year, besides the ten at Troy,  
Seven tedious revolutions of the sun.

HEL. The time you speak of, O unhappy man,  
Is long indeed : but from those dangers saved  
You hither come to bleed.

MEN. What words are these?  
What dost thou mean? O, how hast thou undone me!

HEL. Fly from these regions with your utmost speed :  
Or he to whom this house belongs will slay you.

MEN. What have I done that merits such a fate?

HEL. You hither come an unexpected guest,  
And are a hindrance to my bridal rite.

MEN. Is there a man then who presumes to wed  
My consort?

HEL. And with arrogance to treat me,  
Which I, alas! have hitherto endured.

MEN. Of private rank, in his own strength alone  
Doth he confide, or rules he o'er the land?

HEL. Lord of this region, royal Proteus' son.

MEN. This is the very riddle which I heard  
From yonder female servant.

HEL. At which gate  
Of this barbarian palace did you stand?

MEN. Here, whence I like a beggar was repelled.

HEL. What, did you beg for food! ah wretched me!

MEN. The fact was thus: though I that abject name  
Assumed not.

HEL. You then know, it seems, the whole  
About my nuptials.

MEN. This I know: but whether  
Thou has escaped th' embraces of the king  
I still am uninformed.

HEL. That I have kept  
Your bed still spotless, may you rest assured.

MEN. How canst thou prove the fact? if thou speak  
truth  
To me, it will give pleasure.

HEL. Do you see,  
Close to the tomb, my miserable seat?

MEN. I on the ground behold a couch: but what  
Hast thou to do with that, O wretched woman?

HEL. Here I a suppliant bowed, that I might 'scape  
From those espousals.

MEN. Couldst thou find no altar,  
Or dost thou follow the barbarian mode?

HEL. Equally with the temples of the gods  
Will this protect me.

MEN. Is not then my bark  
 Allowed to waft thee to the Spartan shore?  
 HEL. Rather the sword than Helen's bridal bed  
 Awaits you.

MEN. Thus should I of all mankind  
 Be the most wretched.

HEL. Let not shame prevent  
 Your 'scaping from this land.

MEN. And leaving thee,  
 For whom I laid the walls of Ilium waste?

HEL. 'Twere better than to perish in the cause  
 Of me your consort.

MEN. Such unmanly deeds  
 As these thou speak'st of would disgrace the chief  
 Who conquered Troy.

HEL. You cannot slay the king,  
 Which is perhaps the project you have formed.

MEN. Hath he then such a body as no steel  
 Can penetrate?

HEL. My reasons you shall know.  
 But it becomes not a wise man t' attempt  
 What cannot be performed.

MEN. Shall I submit  
 My hands in silence to the galling chain?

HEL. You know not how to act in these dire straits  
 To which we are reduced: but of some plot  
 Must we avail ourselves.

MEN. 'Twere best to die  
 In some brave action than without a conflict.

HEL. One only hope of safety yet remains.

MEN. By gold can it be purchased, or depends it  
 On dauntless courage, or persuasive words?

HEL. Of your arrival if the monarch hear not:

MEN. Who can inform him? he will never sure  
 Know who I am.

HEL. He hath a sure associate,  
 Within his palace, equal to the gods.

MEN. Some voice which from its inmost chambers  
 sounds?

HEL. No: 'tis his sister, her they call Theonoe

MEN. She bears indeed a most prophetic name;  
 But say, what mighty deeds can she perform?

HEL. All things she knows, and will inform her brother  
 That you are here.

MEN. We both, alas! must die,  
 Nor can I possibly conceal myself.

HEL. Could our united supplications move her?

MEN. To do what action? Into what vain hope  
 Wouldst thou mislead me?

HEL. Not to tell her brother  
That you are in the land.

MEN. If we prevail  
Thus far, can we escape from these domains ?

HEL. With ease, if she concur in our design,  
But not without her knowledge.

MEN. This depends  
On thee : for woman best prevails with woman.

HEL. Around her knees these suppliant hands I'll twine.

MEN. Go then ; but what if she reject our prayer ?

HEL. You certainly must die ; and I by force  
Shall to the king be wedded.

MEN. Thou betray'st me ;  
That force thou talk'st of is but mere pretence.

HEL. But by your head that sacred oath I swear.

MEN. What sayst thou, wilt thou die, and never change  
Thy husband ?

HEL. By the self-same sword : my corse  
Shall lie beside you.

MEN. To confirm the words  
Which thou hast spoken, take my hand.

HEL. I take  
Your hand, and swear that after you are dead  
I will not live.

MEN. And I will put an end  
To my existence, if deprived of thee.

HEL. But how shall we die so as to procure  
Immortal glory ?

MEN. Soon as on the tomb  
Thee I have slain, myself will I destroy.  
But first a mighty conflict shall decide  
Our claims who to thy bridal bed aspire.  
Let him who dares, draw near : for the renown  
I won at Troy, I never will belie,  
Nor yet returning to the Grecian shore  
Suffer unnumbered taunts for having reft  
Thetis of her Achilles, and beheld  
Ajax the Telamonian hero slain,  
With Neleus' grandson, though I dare not bleed  
To save my consort. Yet on thy behalf  
Without regret, will I surrender up  
This fleeting life : for if the gods are wise  
They lightly scatter dust upon the tomb  
Of the brave man who by his foes is slain,  
But pile whole mountains on the coward's breast.

CHOR. O may the race of Tantalus, ye gods,  
At length be prosperous, may their sorrows cease !

HEL. Wretch that I am ! for such is my hard fate :  
O Menelaus, we are lost for ever.

The prophetess Theonoe, from the palace  
Comes forth ; I hear the sounding gates unbarred.  
Fly from this spot. But whither can you fly ?  
For your arrival here, full well she knows,  
Absent, or present. How, O wretched me,  
Am I undone ! in safety you return  
From Troy, from a barbarian land, to rush  
Again upon the swords of fresh barbarians.

THEONOE, MENELAUS, HELEN, CHORUS.

THEON. [*to one of her Attendants.*]  
Lead thou the way, sustaining in thy hand  
The kindled torch, and fan the ambient air,  
Observing every due and solemn rite,  
That we may breathe the purest gales of Heaven.  
Meanwhile do thou, if any impious foot  
Have marked the path, with lustral flames efface  
The taint, and wave the pitchy brand around,  
That I may pass; and when we have performed  
Our duteous homage to th' immortal powers,  
Into the palace let the flame be borne,  
Restore it to the Lares. What opinion  
Have you, O Helen, of th' events foretold  
By my prophetic voice? Your husband comes,  
Your Menelaus in this land appears,  
Reft of his ships, and of your image reft.  
'Scaped from what dangers, O unhappy man,  
Art thou arrived, although thou know'st not yet  
Whether thou e'er shalt to thy home return,  
Or here remain. For there is strife in Heaven ;  
And Jove on thy account this day will hold  
A council ; Juno who was erst thy foe,  
Now grown benignant, with thy consort safe  
To Sparta would convey thee, that all Greece  
May understand that the fictitious nuptials  
Of Paris, were the baleful gift of Venus.  
But Venus wants to frustrate thy return,  
Lest she should be convicted, or appear  
At least the palm of beauty to have purchased  
By vending Helen for a wife to Paris.  
But this important question to decide,  
On me depends ; I either can destroy thee,  
Which is the wish of Venus, by informing  
My brother thou art here ; or save thy life  
By taking Juno's side, and thy arrival  
Concealing from my brother, who enjoined me  
To inform him whensoever thou on these shores  
Shouldst land. Who bears the tidings to my brother,

That Menelaus' self is here, to save me  
From his resentment ?

HEL. At thy knees I fall,  
O virgin, as a suppliant, and here take  
My miserable seat, both for myself,  
And him whom, scarce restored to me, I see  
Now on the verge of death. Forbear t' inform  
Thy brother, that to these fond arms my lord  
Again is come. O save him, I implore thee ;  
Nor gratify thy brother, by betraying  
The feelings of humanity, to purchase  
A wicked and unjust applause : for Jove  
Detests all violence, he bids us use  
What we possess, but not increase our stores  
By rapine. It is better to be poor,  
Than gain unrighteous wealth. For all mankind  
Enjoy these common blessings, Air and Earth ;  
Nor ought we our own house with gold to fill,  
By keeping fraudfully another's right,  
Or seizing it by violence. For Hermes,  
Commissioned by the blest immortal powers,  
Hath, at my cost, consigned me to thy sire,  
To keep me for this husband, who is here  
And claims me back again : but by what means  
Can he receive me after he is dead ?  
Or how can the Ægyptian king restore me  
A living consort to my breathless lord ?  
Consider therefore, both the will of Heaven  
And that of thy great father. Would the god,  
Would the deceased, surrender up or keep  
Another's right ? I deem they would restore it.  
Hence to thy foolish brother shouldst not thou  
Pay more respect than to thy virtuous sire.  
And sure if thou, a prophetess, who utter'st  
Th' oracular responses of the gods,  
Break'st through thy father's justice, to comply  
With an unrighteous brother : it were base  
In thee to understand each mystic truth  
Revealed by the immortal powers, the things  
That are, and those that are not ; yet o'erlook  
The rules of justice. But O stoop to save  
Me, miserable me, from all those ills  
In which I am involved ; this great exertion  
Of thy benignant aid, my fortunes claim.  
For there is no man who abhors not Helen ;  
'Tis rumoured through all Greece that I betrayed  
My husband, and abode beneath the roofs  
Of wealthy Phrygia. But to Greece once more  
Should I return, and to the Spartan realm ;



When they are told, and see, how to the arts  
 Of these contending goddesses they owe  
 Their ruin ; but that I have to my friends  
 Been ever true, they to the rank I held  
 'Midst chaste and virtuous matrons, will restore me :  
 My daughter too, whom no man dares to wed,  
 From me her bridal portion shall receive ;  
 And I, no longer doomed to lead the life  
 Of an unhappy vagrant, shall enjoy  
 The treasures that our palaces contain.  
 Had Menelaus died, and been consumed  
 In the funereal pyre, I should have wept  
 For him far distant in a foreign realm ;  
 But now shall I for ever be bereft  
 Of him who lives, and seem to have escaped  
 From every danger. Virgin, act not thus ;  
 To thee I kneel a suppliant ; O confer  
 On me this boon, and emulate the justice  
 Of your great sire. For fair renown attends  
 The children, from a virtuous father sprung,  
 Who equal their hereditary worth.

THEON. Most piteous are the words which you have  
 spoken ;

You also claim my pity : but I wish  
 To hear what Menelaus yet can plead  
 To save his life.

MEN. I cannot at your knees  
 Fall prostrate, or with tears these eyelids stain :  
 For I should cover all the great exploits  
 Which I achieved at Ilion with disgrace,  
 If I became a dastard ; though some hold  
 'Tis not unworthy of the brave to weep  
 When wretched. But this honourable part  
 (If such a part can e'er be honourable)  
 I will not act, because the prosperous fortunes  
 Which erst were mine, are present to my soul.  
 If then you haply are disposed to save  
 A foreigner who justly claims his wife,  
 Restore her, and protect us : if you spurn  
 Our suit, I am not now for the first time,  
 But have been often wretched, and your name  
 Shall be recorded as an impious woman.  
 These thoughts, which I hold worthy of myself,  
 And just, and such as greatly must affect  
 Your inmost heart, I at your father's tomb  
 With energy will utter. Good old man,  
 Beneath this marble sepulchre who dwell'st,  
 To thee I sue, restore my wife, whom Jove  
 Sent hither to thy realm, that thou for me

Might'st guard her. Thou, I know, since thou art dead,  
 Canst ne'er have power to give her back again :  
 But she, this holy priestess, will not suffer  
 Reproach to fall on her illustrious sire,  
 Whom I invoke amid the shades beneath :  
 For this depends on her. Thee too I call,  
 O Pluto, to my aid, who hast received  
 Full many a corse, which fell in Helen's cause  
 Beneath my sword, and still retain'st the prize :  
 Either restore them now to life, or force  
 Her who seems mightier than her pious father,  
 To give me back my wife. But of my consort  
 If ye resolve to rob me, I will urge  
 Those arguments which Helen hath omitted.  
 Know then, O virgin, first I by an oath  
 Have bound myself, your brother to encounter,  
 And he, or I, must perish ; the plain truth  
 Is this. But foot to foot in equal combat,  
 If he refuse to meet me, and attempt  
 To drive us suppliants from the tomb by famine,  
 My consort will I slay, and with the sword  
 Here on this sepulchre my bosom pierce,  
 That the warm current of our blood may stream  
 Into the grave. Thus shall our corsers lie  
 Close to each other on this polished marble :  
 To you eternal sorrow shall they cause,  
 And foul reproach to your great father's name.  
 For neither shall your brother wed my Helen,  
 Nor any man beside : for I with me  
 Will bear her ; if I cannot bear her home,  
 Yet will I bear her to the shades beneath.  
 But why complain ? If I shed tears, and act  
 The woman's part, I rather shall become  
 An object of compassion, than deserve  
 To be esteemed a warrior. If you list,  
 Slay me, for I can never fall inglorious.  
 But rather yield due credence to my words,  
 So will you act with justice, and my wife  
 Shall I recover.

CHOR. To decide the cause  
 On which we speak, belongs to thee, O virgin :  
 But so decide as to please all.

THEON. By nature  
 And inclination am I formed to act  
 With piety, myself too I revere :  
 Nor will I e'er pollute my sire's renown,  
 Or gratify my brother by such means  
 As might make me seem base. For from my birth,  
 Hath justice in this bosom fixed her shrine :

And since from Nereus I inherited  
 This temper, Menelaus will I strive  
 To save. But now since Juno is disposed  
 To be your friend, with her will I accord :  
 May Venus be propitious, though her rites  
 I never have partaken, and will strive  
 For ever to remain a spotless maid.  
 But I concur with thee, O Menelaus,  
 In all thou to my father at his tomb  
 Hast said : for with injustice should I act  
 If I restored not Helen : had he lived,  
 My sire on thee again would have bestowed  
 Thy consort, and her former lord on Helen.  
 For vengeance, in the shades of Hell beneath,  
 And among all that breathe the vital air,  
 Attends on those who break their plighted trust.  
 The soul of the deceased, although it live  
 Indeed no longer, yet doth still retain  
 A consciousness which lasts for ever, lodged  
 In the eternal scene of its abode,  
 The liquid ether. To express myself  
 Concisely, all that you requested me  
 Will I conceal, nor with my counsels aid  
 My brother's folly ; I to him shall show  
 A real friendship, though without the semblance,  
 If I his vicious manners can reform  
 And make him more religious. Therefore find  
 Means to escape yourselves ; for I will hence  
 Depart in silence. First implore the gods ;  
 To Venus sue, that she your safe return  
 Would suffer ; and to Juno, not to change  
 The scheme which she hath formed, both to preserve  
 Your lord and you. O my departed sire,  
 For thee will I exert my utmost might,  
 That on thy honoured name no foul reproach  
 May ever rest. [Exit THEONOE.]

CHOR. No inipious man e'er prospered :  
 But fairest hopes attend an honest cause.

HEL. O Menelaus, as to what depends  
 Upon the royal maid, are we secure :  
 But next doth it become you to propose  
 Some means our safety to effect.

MEN. Now listen  
 To me ; thou in this palace long hast dwelt,  
 An inmate with the servants of the king.

HEL. Why speak you thus ? for you raise hopes, as  
 though

You could do somewhat for our common good.

MEN. Canst thou prevail on any one of those

Who guide the harnessed steeds, to furnish us  
With a swift car ?

HEL. Perhaps I might succeed  
In that attempt. But how shall we escape  
Who to these fields and this barbarian land  
Are strangers? An impracticable thing  
Is this you speak of.

MEN. Well, but in the palace  
Concealed, if with this sword the king I slay.

HEL. His sister will not suffer this in silence  
If you attempt aught 'gainst her brother's life.

MEN. We have no ship in which we can escape ;  
For that which we brought hither, by the waves  
Is swallowed up.

HEL. Now hear what I propose ;  
From woman's lips if wisdom ever flow.  
Will you permit a rumour of your death  
To be dispersed ?

MEN. This were an evil omen :  
But I, if any benefit arise  
From such report, consent to be called dead  
While I yet live.

HEL. That impious tyrant's pity  
Our female choir shall move, with tresses shorn,  
And chaunt funereal strains.

MEN. What tendency  
Can such a project have to our deliverance ?

HEL. I will allege that 'tis an ancient custom ;  
And of the monarch his permission crave,  
That I on you, as if you in the sea  
Had perished, may bestow a vacant tomb.

MEN. If he consent, how can this feigned interment  
Enable us to fly without a ship ?

HEL. I will command a bark to be prepared,  
From whence into the bosom of the deep  
Funereal trappings I may cast.

MEN. How well  
And wisely hast thou spoken ! but the tomb  
If he direct thee on the strand to raise,  
Nought can this scheme avail.

HEL. But I will say  
'Tis not the usage, in a Grecian realm,  
With earth to cover the remains of those  
Who perished in the waves.

MEN. Thou hast again  
Removed this obstacle : I then with thee  
Will sail, and the funereal trappings place  
In the same vessel.

HEL. 'Tis of great importance

That you, and all those mariners who 'scaped  
The shipwreck, should be present.

MEN. If we find  
A bark at anchor, with our falchions armed  
In one collected band will we assail  
And board it.

HEL. To direct all this, belongs  
To you; but may the prosperous breezes fill  
Our sails, and guide us o'er the billowy deep.

MEN. These vows shall be accomplished; for the gods  
At length will cause my toils to cease: but whence  
Wilt thou pretend thou heard'st that I was dead?

HEL. Yourself shall be the messenger; relate  
How you alone escaped his piteous doom,  
A partner of the voyage with the son  
Of Atreus, and the witness of his death.

MEN. This tattered vest will testify my shipwreck.

HEL. How seasonable was that which seemed at first  
To be a grievous loss! but the misfortune  
May end perhaps in bliss.

MEN. Must I with thee  
Enter the palace, or before this tomb  
Sit motionless?

HEL. Here stay: for if the king  
By force should strive to tear you hence, this tomb  
And your drawn sword will save you. But I'll go  
To my apartment, shear my flowing hair,  
For sable weeds this snowy vest exchange,  
And rend with bloody nails these livid cheeks:  
For 'tis a mighty conflict, and I see  
These two alternatives: if in my plots  
Detected, I must die; or to my country  
I shall return, and save your life. O Juno,  
Thou sacred queen, who shar'st the couch of Jove,  
Relieve two wretches from their toils; to thee  
Our suppliant arms uplifting high t'wards Heaven  
With glittering stars adorned, thy blest abode,  
We sue: and thou, O Venus, who didst gain  
The palm of beauty through my promised 'spousals,  
Spare me, thou daughter of Dione, spare;  
For thou enough hast injured me already;  
Exposing not my person, but my name,  
To those barbarians; suffer me to die,  
If thou wilt slay me, in my native land.  
Why art thou still insatiably malignant?  
Why dost thou harass me by love, by fraud,  
By the invention of these new deceits,  
And by thy magic philtres plunge in blood  
Our miserable house? If thou hadst ruled

With mildness, thou to man hadst been most grateful  
 Of all the gods. I speak not this at random.  
 [HELEN and MENELAUS retire behind the tomb.]

## CHORUS.

## ODE.

## I. I.

On thee who build'st thy tuneful seat  
 Protected by the leafy groves, I call,  
 O nightingale, thy accents ever sweet  
 Their murmuring melancholy fall  
 Prolong! O come, and with thy plaintive strain  
 Aid me to utter my distress,  
 Thy woes, O Helen, let the song express,  
 And those of Troy now levelled with the plain  
 By Grecian might. From hospitable shores,  
 Relying on barbaric oars,  
 The spoiler Paris fled,  
 And o'er the deep to Priam's realm with pride  
 Bore his imaginary bride,  
 Fancying that thou hadst graced his bed,  
 To nuptials fraught with shame by wanton Venus led.

## I. 2.

Unnumbered Greeks, transpierced with spears,  
 Or crushed beneath the falling ramparts, bled:  
 Hence with her tresses shorn, immersed in tears  
 The matron wails her lonely bed,  
 But Nauplius, kindling near th' Eubœan deep  
 Those torches, o'er our host prevailed;  
 Though with a single bark the traitor sailed,  
 He wrecked whole fleets against Caphareus' steep,  
 And the Ægean coasts, the beacon seemed  
 A star, and through Heaven's conclave gleamed,  
 Placed on the craggy height.  
 While flushed with conquest, from the Phrygian strand  
 They hastened to their native land,  
 Portentous source of bloody fight,  
 The cloud by Juno formed, beguiled their dazzled sight.

## II. I.

Whether the image was divine,  
 Drew from terrestrial particles its birth,  
 Or from the middle region, how define  
 By curious search, ye sons of earth?

Far from unravelling Heaven's abstruse intents,  
 We view the world tost to and fro,  
 Mark strange vicissitudes of joy and woe,  
 Discordant and miraculous events.  
 Thou, Helen, art indeed the child of Jove.  
 The swan, thy sire, inflamed by love,  
 To Leda's bosom flew :  
 Yet with imputed crimes malignant fame  
 Through Greece arraigns thy slandered name.  
 Of men I know not whom to trust,  
 But what the gods pronounce have I found ever just.

## II. 2.

Frantic are ye who seek renown  
 Amid the horrors of th' embattled field,  
 Who masking guilt beneath a laurel crown  
 With nervous arm the falchion wield,  
 Not slaughtered thousands can your fury sate.  
 If still success the judgment guide,  
 If bloody battle right and wrong decide,  
 Incessant strife must vex each rival state :  
 Hence from her home departs each Phrygian wife,  
 O Helen, when the cruel strife  
 Which from thy charms arose,  
 One conference might have closed : now myriads dwell  
 With Pluto in the shades of Hell,  
 And flames, as when Jove's vengeance throws  
 The bolt, have caught her towers and finished Ilion's woes.

THEOCLYMENUS, CHORUS (HELEN *and* MENELAUS  
*behind the tomb*).

THEOC. Hail, O thou tomb of my illustrious sire !  
 For thee have I interred before my gate,  
 That with thy shade I might hold frequent conference,  
 O Proteus ; Theoclymenus thy son  
 Thee, O my father, oft as he goes forth,  
 Oft as he enters these abodes, accosts.  
 But to the palace now convey those hounds  
 And nets, my servants. I full many a time  
 Have blamed myself, because I never punished  
 With death such miscreants ; now I am informed  
 That publicly some Greek to these domains  
 Is come unnoticed by my guards, a spy,  
 Or one who means to carry Helen off  
 By stealth : but if I seize him, he shall die.  
 Methinks I find all over : for the daughter  
 Of Tyndarus sits no longer at the tomb,  
 But from these shores hath fled, and now is crossing

The billowy deep. Unbar the gates, bring forth  
 My coursers from the stalls, and brazen cars;  
 Lest through my want of vigilance the dame  
 Whom I would make my consort, should escape me,  
 Borne from this land. Yet stay; for I behold  
 Those we pursue still here beneath this roof,  
 Nor are they fled. Ho! why in sable vest  
 Hast thou arrayed thyself, why cast aside  
 Thy robes of white, and from thy graceful head  
 With ruthless steel thy glowing ringlets shorn,  
 And wherefore bathed thy cheek with recent tears?  
 Groan'st thou, by visions of the night apprized  
 Of some calamity, or hast thou heard  
 Within, a rumour that afflicts thy soul?

HEL. My lord (for I already by that name  
 Accost you), I am utterly undone,  
 My former bliss is vanished, and I now  
 Am nothing.

THEOC. Art thou plunged into distress  
 So irretrievable? what cruel fate  
 Hath overtaken thee?

HEL. My Menelaus,  
 (Ah, how shall I express myself?) is dead.

THEOC. Although I must not triumph in th' event  
 Thou speak'st of, yet to me 'tis most auspicious.  
 How know'st thou? Did Theonoe tell thee this?

HEL. She and this mariner, who when he perished  
 Was present, both concur in the same tale.

THEOC. Is there a man arrived, who for the truth  
 Of that account can vouch?

HEL. He is arrived:  
 And would to Heaven that such auspicious fortune  
 As I could wish attended him.

THEOC. Who is he?  
 Where is he? I would know the real fact.

HEL. 'Tis he who stupefied with sorrow sits  
 Upon the tomb.

THEOC. In what unseemly garb  
 Is he arrayed, O Phœbus!

HEL. In that dress,  
 Ah me! methinks my husband I behold.

THEOC. But in what country was the stranger born,  
 And whence did he come hither?

HEL. He's a Greek,  
 One of those Greeks who with my husband sailed.

THEOC. How doth he say that Menelaus died?

HEL. Most wretchedly, engulfed amid the waves.

THEOC. Where? as he passed o'er the barbarian  
 seas?



HEL. Dashed on the rocks of Libya, which affords  
No haven.

THEOC. But whence happened it, that he  
This partner of his voyage did not perish?

HEL. The worthless are more prosperous than the brave.

THEOC. Where left he the wrecked fragments of his ship  
When he came hither?

HEL. There, where would to Heaven  
Perdition had o'ertaken him, and spared  
The life of Menelaus.

THEOC. He, it seems,  
Is then no more : but in what bark arrived  
This messenger?

HEL. Some sailors, as he says,  
By chance passed by, and snatched him from the waves.

THEOC. But where's that hateful pest which in thy stead  
Was sent to Ilium?

HEL. Speak you of a cloud,  
Resembling me? it mounted to the skies.

THEOC. O Priam, for how frivolous a cause  
Thou with thy Troy didst perish!

HEL. In their woes  
I too have been involved.

THEOC. But did he leave  
Thy husband's corpse unburied, or strew dust  
O'er his remains?

HEL. He left them uninterred,  
Ah, wretched me!

THEOC. And didst thou for this cause  
Sever the ringlets of thy auburn hair?

HEL. Still is he dear, lodged in this faithful breast

THEOC. Hast thou sufficient reason then to weep  
For this calamity?

HEL. Could you bear lightly  
Your sister's death?

THEOC. No surely. But what means  
Thy still residing at this marble tomb?

HEL. Why do you harass me with taunting words,  
And why disturb the dead?

THEOC. Because, still constant  
To thy first husband, from my love thou fliest.

HEL. But I will fly no longer : haste, begin  
The nuptial rite.

THEOC. 'Twas long ere thou didst come  
To this : but I such conduct must applaud.

HEL. Know you then how to act? let us forget  
All that has passed.

THEOC. Upon what terms? with kindness  
Should kindness be repaid.

- HEL. Let us conclude  
The peace, and O be reconciled.
- THEOC. All strife  
With thee I to the winds of heaven consign.
- HEL. Now, since you are my friend, I by those knees  
Conjure you.
- THEOC. With what object in thy view,  
To me an earnest suppliant dost thou bend?
- HEL. I my departed husband would inter.
- THEOC. What tomb can be bestowed upon the absent  
Wouldst thou inter his shade?
- HEL. There is a custom  
Among the Greeks established, that the man  
Who in the ocean perishes——
- THEOC. What is it?  
For in such matters Pelops' race are wise.
- HEL. To bury in their stead an empty vest.
- THEOC. Perform funeral rites, and heap the tomb  
On any ground thou wilt.
- HEL. We in this fashion  
Bury not the drowned mariner.
- THEOC. How then?  
I am a stranger to the Grecian customs.
- HEL. Each pious gift due to our breathless friends  
We cast into the sea.
- THEOC. On the deceased  
What presents for thy sake can I bestow?
- HEL. I know not: for in offices like these  
Am I unpractised, having erst been happy.
- THEOC. An acceptable message have you brought,  
O stranger.
- MEN. Most ungrateful to myself  
And the deceased.
- THEOC. What funeral rites on those  
Ocean hath swallowed up, do ye bestow?
- MEN. Such honours as each individual's wealth  
Enables us to pay him.
- THEOC. Name the cost,  
And for her sake receive whate'er you will.
- MEN. Blood is our first libation to the dead.
- THEOC. What blood? inform me, for with your  
instructions  
I will comply.
- MEN. Determine that thyself,  
For whatsoever thou giv'st will be sufficient.
- THEOC. The customary victims 'mong barbarians  
Are either horse or bull.
- MEN. Whate'er thou giv'st,  
Let it be somewhat princely.

- THEOC. My rich herds  
With these are amply furnished.
- MEN. And the bier  
Without the corse is borne in solemn state.
- THEOC. It shall : but what is there beside which custom  
Requires to grace the funeral.
- MEN. Brazen arms :  
For war was what he loved.
- THEOC. We will bestow  
Such presents as are worthy of the race  
Of mighty Pelops.
- MEN. And those budding flowers  
Th' exuberant soil produces.
- THEOC. But say, how  
And in what manner ye these offerings plunge  
Into the ocean.
- MEN. We must have a bark  
And mariners to ply the oars.
- THEOC. How far  
Will they launch forth the vessel from the strand ?
- MEN. So far as from the shore thou scarce wilt see  
The keel divide the waves.
- THEOC. But why doth Greece  
Observe this usage ?
- MEN. Lest the rising billows  
Cast back to land th' ablutions.
- THEOC. Ye shall have  
A swift Phœnician vessel.
- MEN. This were kind,  
And no small favour shown to Menelaus.
- THEOC. Without her presence, cannot you perform  
These rites alone ?
- MEN. Such task or to a mother,  
Or wife, or child, belongs.
- THEOC. 'Tis then her duty,  
You say, to bury her departed lord ?
- MEN. Sure, piety instructs us not to rob  
The dead of their accustomed dues.
- THEOC. Enough :  
On me it is incumbent to promote  
Such virtue in my consort. I will enter  
The palace, and from thence for the deceased  
Bring forth rich ornaments ; with empty hands  
You from this region will not I send forth,  
That you may execute what she desires.  
But having brought me acceptable tidings,  
Instead of these vile weeds shall you receive  
A decent garb and food, that to your country  
You may return : for clearly I perceive

That you are wretched now. But torture not  
 Thy bosom with unprofitable cares,  
 O hapless woman, for thy Menelaus  
 Is now no more, nor can the dead revive.

MEN. Thee it behoves, O blooming dame, to love  
 Thy present husband, and to lay aside  
 The fond remembrance of thy breathless lord ;  
 For such behaviour suits thy fortunes best.  
 But if to Greece with safety I return,  
 That infamy which erst pursued thy name  
 I'll cause to cease, if thou acquit thyself  
 Of these great duties like a virtuous consort.

HEL. I will ; nor shall my husband e'er have cause  
 To blame me : you too, who are here, shall witness  
 The truth of my assertions. But within  
 Go lave your wearied limbs, O wretched man,  
 And change your habit ; for without delay  
 To you will I become a benefactress.  
 Hence too with greater zeal will you perform  
 The rites my dearest Menelaus claims,  
 If all due honours you from me receive.

[*Exeunt* THEOCLYMENUS, HELEN, and MENELAUS.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

O'er mountains erst with hasty tread  
 Did the celestial mother stray,  
 Nor stop where branching thickets spread,  
 Where rapid torrents crossed her way,  
 Or on the margin of the billowy deep ;  
 Her daughter whom we dread to name  
 She wept, while hailing that majestic dame,  
 Cymbals of Bacchus from the craggy steep  
 Sent forth their clear and piercing sound,  
 Her car the harnessed dragons drew ;  
 Following the nymph torn from her virgin crew.  
 Amidst her maidens swift of foot were found  
 Diana skilled the bow to wield,  
 Minerva, who in glittering state  
 Brandished the spear and raised her Gorgon shield ;  
 But Jove looked down from Heaven t' award another fate.

I. 2.

Soon as the mother's toils were o'er,  
 When she had finished her career,  
 And sought the ravished maid no more,  
 To caves where drifted snows appear,

By Ida's nymphs frequented, did she pass,  
 And threw herself in sorrow lost,  
 On rocks and herbage crusted o'er with frost,  
 Despoiled the wasted champaign of its grass,  
 Rendered the peasant's tillage vain,  
 Consuming a dispeopled land  
 With meagre famine ; Spring at her command  
 Denied the flocks that sickened on the plain  
 The leafy tendrils of the vine ;  
 Whole cities died, no victims bled,  
 No frankincense perfumed Heaven's vacant shrine ;  
 Nor burst the current from the Spring's obstructed head.

## II. 1.

Then ceased the banquet, wont to charm  
 Both gods above and men below :  
 The mother's anger to disarm,  
 And mitigate the stings of woe,  
 Till in these words Jove uttered his behests :  
 " Let each benignant grace attend  
 Sweet music's sympathizing aid to lend,  
 And drive corrosive grief from Ceres' breast  
 Indignant for her ravished child :  
 Now, O ye Muses, with the lyre  
 Join the shrill hymns of your assembled choir,  
 The brazen trumpet fill with accents wild,  
 And beat the rattling drums amain."  
 Then first of the immortal band,  
 Venus with lovely smile approved the strain,  
 And raised the deep-toned flute in her enchanting hand.

## II. 2.

The laws reprov'd such foul desire,  
 Yet 'gainst religion didst thou wed ;  
 Thy uncle caught love's baleful fire,  
 And rushed to thy incestuous bed.  
 Thee shall the mighty mother's wrath confound,  
 Because, through thee, before her shrine  
 No victims slain appease the powers divine.  
 Great virtue have hinds' hides, and ivy wound  
 Upon a consecrated rod ;  
 And youths, with virgins in a ring,  
 When high from earth with matchless force they spring,  
 Loose streams their hair, they celebrate that god  
 The Bacchanalian votaries own,  
 And waste in dance the sleepless night.  
 But thou, confiding in thy charms alone,  
 Forgett'st the moon that shines with more transcendent  
 light.

## HELEN, CHORUS.

HEL. Within the palace, O my friends, we prosper  
 For Proteus' royal daughter, in our schemes  
 Conspiring when her brother questioned her  
 About my lord, no information gave  
 Of his arrival: to my interests true  
 She said, that cold in death he views no longer  
 The radiant sun. But now my lord hath seized  
 A vengeful falchion, in that mail designed  
 To have been plunged beneath the deep arrayed,  
 With nervous arm he lifts an orb'd shield,  
 In his right hand protended gleams the spear,  
 As if with me he was prepared to pay  
 To the deceased due homage. Furnished thus  
 With brazen arms, he's ready for the battle,  
 And numberless barbarians will subdue  
 Unaided, soon as we the ship ascend.  
 Exchanging those unseemly weeds which clothe  
 The shipwrecked mariner, in splendid robes  
 Have I arrayed him, from transparent springs  
 The laver filled, and bathed his wearied limbs  
 But I must now be silent, for the man  
 Who fancies I am ready to become  
 His consort, leaves the palace. O my friends,  
 In your attachment too I place my trust,  
 Restrain your tongues, for we, when saved ourselves,  
 If possible will save you from this thralldom.

## THEOCLYMENUS, HELEN, MENELAUS, CHORUS.

THEOC. Go forth, in such procession as the stranger  
 Directs you, O my servants, and convey  
 These gifts funereal to the briny deep.  
 But if thou dissapprove not what I say,  
 Do thou, O Helen, yield to my persuasions,  
 And here remain. For whether thou attend,  
 Or art not present at the obsequies  
 Of thy departed husband, thou to him  
 Wilt show an equal reverence. Much I dread  
 Lest hurried on by wild desire thou plunge  
 Into the foaming billows, for the sake  
 Of him on whom thou doat'st, thy former lord,  
 Since thou his doom immoderately bewail'st  
 Though he be lost, and never can return.

HEL. O my illustrious husband, I am bound  
 To pay due honours to the man whom first  
 I wedded, of our ancient nuptial joys  
 A memory still retaining, for so well  
 I loved my lord that I could even die

With him. But what advantage would result  
 To the deceased, should I lay down my life?  
 Yet let me go myself, and to his shade  
 Perform each solemn rite. But may the gods,  
 On you, and on the stranger who assists me  
 In this my pious task, with liberal hand  
 Confer the gifts I wish. But you in me  
 Shall such a consort to your palace bear  
 As you deserve, to recompense your kindness  
 To me and Menelaus. Such events  
 In some degree are measured by the will  
 Of Fortune: but give orders for a ship  
 To be prepared, these trappings to convey,  
 So shall your purposed bounty be complete.

THEOC. [*to one of his Attendants.*]

Go thou, and furnish them a Tyrian bark  
 Of fifty oars, with skilful sailors manned.

HEL. But may not he who decorates the tomb  
 Govern the ship?

THEOC. My sailors must to him  
 Yield an implicit deference.

HEL. This injunction  
 Repeat, that they may clearly understand it.

THEOC. A second time, will I, and yet a third,  
 Issue this self-same mandate, if to thee  
 This can give pleasure.

HEL. May the gods confer  
 Blessings on you, and prosper my designs!

THEOC. Waste not thy bloom with unavailing tears.

HEL. To you this day my gratitude will prove.

THEOC. All these attentions to the dead are nought  
 But unavailing toil.

HEL. My pious care  
 Not to those only whom the silent grave  
 Contains, but to the living too extends.

THEOC. In me thou mayst expect to find a husband  
 Who yields not to the Spartan Menelaus.

HEL. I censure not your conduct, but bewail  
 My own harsh destiny.

THEOC. Bestow thy love  
 On me, and prosperous fortunes shall return.

HEL. It is a lesson I have practised long,  
 To love my friends.

THEOC. Shall I my navy launch,  
 To join in these funereal rites?

HEL. Dread lord,  
 Pay not unseemly homage to your vassals.

THEOC. Well! I each sacred usage will allow  
 Practised by Pelops' race, for my abodes

Are undefiled with blood; thy Menelaus  
 In Ægypt died not. But let some one haste  
 And bid the nobles bear into my house  
 The bridal gifts: for the whole earth is bound  
 To celebrate in one consenting hymn  
 My blest espousals with the lovely Helen.  
 But go, embark upon the briny main,  
 O stranger, and as soon as ye have paid  
 All decent homage to her former lord  
 Bring back my consort hither: that with me  
 When you have feasted at our nuptial rite  
 You to your native mansion may return,  
 Or here continue in a happy state. [*Exit THEOCLYMENUS.*]

MEN. O Jove, thou mighty father, who art called  
 A god supreme in wisdom, from thy heaven  
 Look down, and save us from our woes: delay not  
 To aid us: for we drag the galling yoke  
 Of sorrow and mischance: if with thy finger  
 Thou do but touch us, we shall soon attain  
 The fortune which we wish for, since the toils  
 We have endured already are sufficient.  
 Ye gods, I now invoke you, from my mouth  
 So shall ye hear full many joyful accents  
 Mixed with these bitter plaints: for I deserve not  
 To be for ever wretched; but to tread  
 At length secure. O grant me this one favour,  
 And make my future life completely blest.

[*Exeunt MENELAUS and HELEN.*]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. I.

Swift bark of Sidon, by whose dashing oars  
 Divided oft, the frothy billows rise,  
 Propitious be thy voyage from these shores:  
     In thy train the dolphins play,  
     O'er the deep thou lead'st the way,  
 While motionless its placid surface lies.  
     Soon as Serenity the fair,  
     That azure daughter of the main,  
     Shall in this animating strain  
 Have spoken: "To the gentle breeze of air  
     Expand each undulating sail,  
     Row briskly on before the gale,  
 Ye mariners, in Perseus' ancient seat  
     Till Helen rest her wearied feet."



## I. 2.

Those sacred nymphs shall welcome thy return  
 Who guard the portals of Minerva's fane  
 Or speed the current from its murmuring urn :  
 Choral dances of delight  
 That prolong the jocund night,  
 At Hyacinthus' banquet shalt thou join,  
 Fair stripling, whom with luckless hand  
 Unwitting did Apollo slay  
 At games that crowned the festive day,  
 Hurling his quoit on the Laconian strand ;  
 To him Jove's son due honours paid :  
 At Sparta too, that lovely maid  
 Shalt thou behold, whom there thou left'st behind,  
 Still to celibacy consigned.

## II. I.

O might we cleave the air, like Libyan cranes,  
 Who fly in ranks th' impending wintry storm ;  
 When their shrill leader bids them quit the plains,  
 They the veteran's voice obey,  
 O'er rich harvests wing their way,  
 Or where parched wastes th' unfruitful scene deform.  
 With lengthened neck, ye feathered race  
 Who skim the clouds in social band,  
 Where the seven Pleiades expand  
 Their radiance, and Orion heaves his mace,  
 This joyous embassy convey  
 As near Eurotas' banks ye stray ;  
 That Menelaus to his subject land  
 Victorious comes from Phrygia's strand.

## II. 2.

Borne in your chariot down th' ethereal height,  
 At length, ye sons of Tyndarus, appear,  
 While vibrates o'er your heads the starry light :  
 Habitants of heaven above,  
 Now exert fraternal love,  
 If ever Helen to your souls was dear,  
 A calm o'er th' azure ocean spread,  
 Bridle the tempests of the main,  
 Propitious gales from Jove obtain,  
 Your sister snatch from the barbarian's bed :  
 Commenced on Ida's hill, that strife,  
 Embittered with reproach her life,  
 Although she never viewed proud Ilion's tower  
 Reared by Apollo's matchless power.

THEOCLYMENUS, MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MES. O king, I have discovered in the palace,  
Events most inauspicious: what fresh woes  
Is it my doleful office to relate!

THEOC. Say what hath happened?

MES. Seek another wife,  
For Helen hath departed from this realm.

THEOC. Borne through the air on wings, or with swift foot  
Treading the ground?

MES. Her o'er the briny main  
From Ægypt's shores, hath Menelaus wafted,  
Who came in person with a feigned account  
Of his own death.

THEOC. O dreadful tale! what ship  
From these domains conveys her? thou relat'st  
Tidings the most incredible.

MES. The same. The same  
You to that stranger gave, and in one word  
To tell you all, he carries off your sailors.

THEOC. How is that possible? I wish to know:  
For such an apprehension never entered  
My soul, as that one man could have subdued  
The numerous band of mariners, with whom  
Thou wert sent forth.

MES. When from the royal mansion  
Jove's daughter to the shore was borne, she trod  
With delicate and artful step, pretending  
To wail her husband's loss, though he was present,  
And yet alive. But when we reached the haven,  
Sidonia's largest vessel we hauled forth,  
Furnished with benches, and with fifty oars;  
But a fresh series of incessant toil  
Followed this toil; for while one fixed the mast,  
Another ranged the oars, and with his hand  
The signal gave, the sails were bound together,  
Then was the rudder fastened to the stern  
With thongs, cast forth: while they observed us busied  
In such laborious task, the Grecian comrades  
Of Menelaus to the shore advanced,  
Clad in their shipwrecked vestments. Though their form  
Was graceful, yet their visages were squalid:  
But Atreus' son, beholding their approach,  
Under the semblance of a grief that masked  
His treacherous purpose, in these words addressed them:  
"How, O ye wretched sailors, from what bark  
Of Greece that hath been wrecked upon this coast  
Are ye come hither? will ye join with us  
In the funereal rites of Menelaus,

Whom Tyndarus's daughter, to an empty tomb  
Consigns, though absent?" Simulated tears  
They shed, and went aboard the ship, conveying  
The presents to be cast into the sea  
For Menelaus. But to us these things  
Appeared suspicious, and we made remarks  
Among ourselves upon the numerous band  
Of our intruding passengers; but checked  
Our tongues from speaking openly, through deference  
To your commands. For when you to that stranger  
Trusted the guidance of the ship, you caused  
This dire confusion. All beside, with ease  
Had we now lodged aboard, but could not force  
The sturdy bull t' advance; he bellowing rolled  
His eyes around, bending his back and low'ring  
Betwixt his horns, nor dared we to approach  
And handle him. But Helen's husband cried:  
"O ye who laid Troy waste, will ye forget  
To act like Greeks? why scruple ye to seize  
And on your youthful shoulders heave the beast  
Up to the rising prow, a welcome victim  
To the deceased?" His falchion, as he spoke,  
The warrior drew. His summons they obeyed,  
Seized the stout bull, and carried him aboard:  
But Menelaus stroked the horse's neck  
And face, and with this gentle usage led him  
Into the bark. At length when all its freight  
The vessel had received, with graceful foot  
Helen, the steps ascending, took her seat  
On the mid deck; and Menelaus near her,  
E'en he who they pretended was no more.  
But some on the right side, and on the left  
Others in equal numbers, man to man  
Opposed, their station took, their swords concealing  
Beneath their garments. We distinctly heard  
The clamorous sailors animate each other  
To undertake the voyage. But from land  
When a convenient distance we had steered,  
The pilot asked this question: "Shall we sail,  
O stranger, any farther from the coast,  
Or is this right? for 'tis my task to guide  
The vessel." He replied: "Enough for me."  
Then seized with his right hand the falchion, leaped  
Upon the prow, and standing o'er the bull  
The victim (without mentioning the name  
Of any chief deceased; but as he drove  
The weapon through his neck) thus prayed: "O Neptune,  
Who in the ocean dwell'st, and ye chaste daughters  
Of Nereus, to the Nauplian shore convey

Me and my consort, from this hostile land,  
 In safety." But a crimson tide of blood,  
 Auspicious to the stranger, stained the waves ;  
 And some exclaimed : " There's treachery in this voyage,  
 Let us sail homewards, issue thy commands,  
 And turn the rudder." But the son of Atreus,  
 Who had just slain the bull, to his companions  
 Called loudly : " Why delay, O ye the flower  
 Of Greece, to smite, to slaughter those barbarians,  
 And cast them from the ship into the waves ?"  
 But to your sailors our commander spoke  
 A different language : " Will not some of you  
 Tear up a plank, or with a shattered bench,  
 Or ponderous oar, upon the bleeding heads  
 Of those audacious foreigners our foes,  
 Impress the ghastly wound ?" But on their feet  
 All now stood up ; our hands with nautic poles  
 Were armed, and theirs with swords : a tide of slaughter  
 Ran down the ship. But Helen from the poop  
 The Greeks encouraged ; " Where is the renown  
 Ye gained at Troy ? display 'gainst these barbarians  
 The same undaunted prowess." In their haste  
 Full many fell, some rose again, the rest  
 Might you have seen stretched motionless in death.  
 But Menelaus, sheathed in glittering mail,  
 Wherever his confederates he descried  
 Hard pressed, rushed thither with his lifted sword,  
 Driving us headlong from the lofty deck  
 Into the waves, and forced your mariners  
 To quit their oars. But the victorious king  
 Now seized the rudder, and to Greece declared  
 He would convey the ship : they hoisted up  
 The stately mast : propitious breezes came ;  
 They left the land : but I from death escaping,  
 Let myself gently down into the waves  
 Borne on the cordage which sustains the anchor ;  
 My strength began to fail, when some kind hand  
 Threw forth a rope, and brought me safe ashore,  
 That I to you these tidings might convey.  
 There's nought more beneficial to mankind  
 Than wise distrust.

CHOR. I never could have thought  
 That Menelaus who was here, O king,  
 Could have imposed so grossly or on you  
 Or upon us.

THEOC. Wretch that I am, ensnared  
 By woman's treacherous arts ! the lovely bride  
 I hoped for, hath escaped me. If the ship  
 Could be o'ertaken by our swift pursuit,

My wrongs would urge me with vindictive hand  
 To seize the strangers. But I now will punish  
 That sister who betrayed me ; in my house  
 Who when she saw the Spartan Menelaus  
 Informed me not : she never shall deceive  
 Another man by her prophetic voice.

CHOR. Ho ! whither, O my sovereign, would you go,  
 And for what bloody purpose ?

THEOC. Where the voice  
 Of rigid justice summons me. Retire,  
 And stand aloof.

CHOR. Yet will not I let loose  
 Your garment ; for you hasten to commit  
 A deed most mischievous.

THEOC. Wouldst thou, a slave,  
 Govern thy lord ?

CHOR. Here reason's on my side.

THEOC. That shall not I allow, if thou refuse  
 To quit thy hold.

CHOR. I will not then release you.

THEOC. To slay that worst of sisters.

CHOR. That most pious.

THEOC. Her who betrayed me.

CHOR. Glorious was the fraud  
 That caused so just a deed.

THEOC. When she bestowed  
 My consort on another.

CHOR. On the man  
 Who had a better claim——

THEOC. But who is lord  
 Of what belongs to me ?

CHOR. Who from her sire  
 Received her.

THEOC. She by Fortune was bestowed  
 On me.

CHOR. But ta'en away again by Fate.

THEOC. Thou hast no right to judge of my affairs.

CHOR. If I but speak to give you better counsels.

THEOC. I am thy subject then, and not thy king.

CHOR. For having acted piously, your sister  
 I vindicate.

THEOC. Thou seem'st to wish for death.

CHOR. Kill me. Your sister you with my consent  
 Shall never slay ; I rather would yield up  
 My life on her behalf. It is most glorious  
 To generous servants for their lords to die.

CASTOR *and* POLLUX, THEOCLYMENUS, CHORUS.

CAS. *and* POL. Restrain that ire that hurries thee away  
 Beyond the bounds of reason, O thou king  
 Of Ægypt's realm; and listen to the voice  
 Of us twin sons of Jove, whom Leda bore  
 Together with that Helen who is fled  
 From thy abodes. Thou rashly hast indulged  
 Thine anger, for the loss of her whom Fate  
 Ne'er destined to thy bed. Nor hath thy sister  
 Theonoe, from th' immortal Nereid sprung,  
 To thee done any injury; she reveres  
 The gods, and her great father's just behests.  
 For till the present hour, was it ordained  
 That Helen in thy palace should reside:  
 But when Troy's walls were from their bases torn,  
 And she had to the rival goddesses  
 Furnished her name, no longer was it fit  
 That she should for thy nuptials be detained,  
 But to her ancient home return, and dwell  
 With her first husband. In thy sister's breast  
 Forbear to plunge the sword, and be convinced  
 That she in this affair hath acted wisely.  
 We long ere this our sister had preserved,  
 Since Jove hath made us gods, but were too weak  
 At once to combat the behests of Fate,  
 And the immortal powers, who had ordained  
 That these events should happen. This to thee,  
 O Theoclymenus, I speak. These words  
 Next to my lovely sister, I address;  
 Sail with your husband, for a prosperous breeze  
 Your voyage shall attend. We your protectors  
 And your twin brothers, on our coursers borne  
 Over the waves, will guide you to your country,  
 But after you have finished life's career,  
 You shall be called a goddess, shall partake  
 With us the rich oblations, and receive  
 The gifts of men: for thus hath Jove decreed.  
 But where the son of Maia placed you first,  
 When he had borne you from the Spartan realm,  
 And formed by stealth from the ærial mansions  
 An image of your person, to prevent  
 Paris from wedding you, there is an isle  
 Near the Athenian realm, which men shall call  
 Helen in future times, because that spot  
 Received you, when in secrecy conveyed  
 From Sparta. The Heavens also have ordained  
 The wanderer Menelaus shall reside  
 Among the happy islands. For the gods

To those of nobler minds no hatred bear ;  
At their command though grievous toil await  
The countless multitude.

THEOC.                      Ye sons of Jove  
And Leda, I the contest will decline  
Which I at first so violently urged,  
Hoping your lovely sister to obtain,  
And my own sister's life resolve to spare :  
Let Helen to her native shores return,  
If 'tis the will of Heaven : but be assured,  
The same high blood ye spring from with the best  
And chastest sister : hail then, for the sake  
Of Helen with a lofty soul endued,  
Such as in female bosoms seldom dwells.

CHOR. A thousand shapes our varying fates assume  
The gods perform what least we could expect,  
And oft the things for which we fondly hoped  
Come not to pass ; but Heaven still finds a clue  
To guide our steps through life's perplexing maze,  
And thus doth this important business end.





# ANDROMACHE.

## PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

|                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| ANDROMACHE.       | MOLOSSUS.          |
| ATTENDANT.        | PELEUS.            |
| CHORUS OF PHTHIAN | NURSE OF HERMIONE. |
| WOMEN.            | ORESTES.           |
| HERMIONE.         | MESSENGER.         |
| MENELAUS.         | THETIS.            |

SCENE.—THE VESTIBULE OF THETIS' TEMPLE BETWEEN  
PHTHIA AND PHARSALIA IN THESSALY.

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### ANDROMACHE.

O THEBES, thou pride of Asia, from whose gate  
I came resplendent with a plenteous dower,  
To Priam's regal house, the fruitful wife  
Of Hector : his Andromache was erst  
An envied name : but now am I more wretched  
Than any woman, or already born,  
Or to be born hereafter ; for I saw  
My husband Hector by Achilles slain,  
And that unhappy son whom to my lord  
I bore, Astyanax, from Troy's high towers  
Thrown headlong ; when our foes had sacked the city,  
Myself descended from a noble line  
Of freeborn warriors, reached the Grecian coast,  
On Neoptolemus that island prince  
For the reward of his victorious arms  
Bestowed : selected from the Phrygian spoils.  
'Twixt Phtia and Pharsalia, in these fields,  
I dwell, where Thetis from the haunts of men  
Retreating, with her Peleus erst abode.  
By Thessaly's inhabitants, this spot  
Is from th' auspicious nuptials of that goddess  
Called Thetidæum : here Achilles' son  
Residing, suffers Peleus still to rule  
Pharsalia's land, nor will assume the sceptre  
While lives his aged grandsire. In these walls

A son, who to th' embraces of my lord  
 Achilles' offspring, owes his birth, I bore,  
 And though I had been wretched, a fond hope  
 Still cherished, that while yet the boy was safe  
 I some protection and relief might find  
 In my calamities ; but since my lord  
 (Spurning my servile couch) that Spartan dame  
 Hermione espoused, with ruthless hate  
 By her am I pursued ; for she pretends  
 That I, by drugs endued with magic power,  
 Administered in secret, make her barren  
 And odious to her lord, because I wish  
 To occupy this mansion in her stead,  
 And forcibly to drive her from his couch,  
 To which, at first I with reluctance came,  
 But now have left it : mighty Jove can witness  
 That I became the partner of his bed  
 Against my own consent. But she remains  
 Deaf to conviction, and attempts to slay me :  
 In this design her father Menelaus  
 Assists his daughter, he is now within,  
 And on such errand left the Spartan realm :  
 Fearing his rage, I near the palace take  
 My seat, in Thetis' temple, that the goddess  
 From death may save me ; for both Peleus' self,  
 And the descendants of that monarch, hold  
 This structure reared in memory of his wedlock  
 With the fair Nereid, in religious awe.  
 But hence, in secret, trembling for his life,  
 My only child have I conveyed away,  
 Because his noble father is not present  
 To aid me, and avails not now to guard  
 His son, while absent in the Delphic land,  
 To expiate there the rage with which he sought  
 The Pythian tripod, and from Phœbus claimed  
 A reparation for his father's death.  
 If haply he can deprecate the curses  
 Attendant on his past misdeeds, and make  
 The god propitious to his future days.

FEMALE ATTENDANT, ANDROMACHE.

ATT. My queen, for still I scruple not to use  
 The same respectful title which I gave you  
 When we in Ilium dwelt ; you and your lord  
 While he was living, shared my duteous love,  
 And now I with important tidings fraught  
 To you am come, trembling indeed lest one  
 Of our new rulers overhear the tale,

Yet greatly pitying your disastrous fate :  
For Menelaus and his daughter form  
Dire plots against you ; of these foes beware.

AND. O my dear fellow-servant (for thou shar'st  
Her bondage who was erst thy queen, but now  
Is wretched), ah ! what mean they ? what fresh schemes  
Have they devised to take away my life,  
Who am by woes encompassed ?

ATT. They intend,  
O miserable dame, to kill your son,  
Whom privately you from this house conveyed.

AND. Are they informed I sent the child away ?  
Ah me ! who told them ? in what utter ruin  
Am I involved !

ATT. I know not ; but thus much  
Of their designs I heard ; in quest of him  
Is Menelaus from these doors gone forth.

AND. Then am I lost indeed : for, O my child,  
These two relentless vultures mean to seize thee,  
And take away thy life, while he who bears  
A father's name, at Delphi still remains.

ATT. You had not fared so ill, I am convinced,  
If he were present, but now every friend  
Deserts you.

AND. Is there not a rumour spread  
Of Peleus' coming ?

ATT. He, though he were here,  
Is grown too old to aid you.

AND. More than once  
I sent to him.

ATT. Suppose you that he heeds  
None of your messengers ?

AND. What means this question ?  
Wilt thou accept such office ?

ATT. What pretext  
To colour my long absence from this house  
Shall I allege ?

AND. Full many are the schemes  
Which thou, who art a woman, can devise.

ATT. 'Twere dangerous ; for Hermione is watchful.

AND. Dost thou perceive the danger, and renounce  
Thy friends in their distress ?

ATT. Not thus : forbear  
To brand me with so infamous a charge :  
I go ; for of small value is the life  
(Whate'er befall me) of a female slave.

[Exit ATTENDANT.

AND. Proceed : meanwhile I to the conscious air  
Those plaints and bitter wailings will repeat,

On which I ever dwell. Unhappy women  
 Find comfort in perpetually talking  
 Of what they suffer. But my groans arise  
 Not from one ill, but many ills : the walls  
 Of my loved country razed, my Hector slain,  
 And that hard fortune, in whose yoke bound fast,  
 Thus am I fallen into th' unseemly state  
 Of servitude. We never ought to call  
 Frail mortals happy, at their latest hour  
 Till we behold them to the shades descend.

## ELEGY.

In Helen sure, to Troy's imperial towers  
 Young Paris wafted no engaging bride,  
 But when he led her to those nuptial bowers,  
 Some fiend infernal crossed the billowy tide.  
 With brandished javelin and devouring flame,  
 For her the Grecian warriors to thy shore,  
 O Ilion, in a thousand vessels came,  
 And drenched thy smould'ring battlements with gore.  
 Around the walls, my Hector, once thy boast,  
 Fixed to his car, was by Achilles borne,  
 And from my chamber hurried to the coast  
 I veiled my head in servitude forlorn.  
 Much wept these streaming eyes, when in the dust  
 My city, palace, husband, prostrate lay.  
 Subject to fierce Hermione's disgust,  
 Why should I still behold the hated day?  
 Harassed with insults from that haughty dame,  
 Round Thetis' bust my suppliant arms I fling,  
 And here with gushing tears bewail my shame,  
 As from the rock bursts forth the living spring.

## CHORUS, ANDROMACHE.

## CHORUS.

## ODE.

## I. 1.

O thou, who seated in this holy space,  
 Hast Thetis' temple thy asylum made,  
 Though Phthia gave me birth, to aid  
 Thee, hapless dame of Asiatic race,

I hither come; would I from direful harms  
 Could guard, could heal the strife  
 'Twixt thee and that indignant wife  
 Hermione, whom ruthless discord aims  
 To punish thee the rival of her charms,  
 A captive, to the genial bed,  
 Who by Achilles' son wert led.

## I. 2.

Aware of fate, th' impending evil weigh,  
 A helpless Phrygian nymph, thou striv'st in vain  
 'Gainst her of Sparta's proud domain :  
 Cease, to this sea-born goddess, cease to pray,  
 And at her blazing shrine no longer stay :  
 For how can it avail  
 To thee with hopeless sorrow pale  
 To suffer all thy beauties to decay,  
 Because thy rulers with oppression sway ?  
 Thou to superior might must bend.  
 Why, feeble as thou art, contend ?

## II. 1.

Yet hasten from the Nereid's lofty seat,  
 Consider that thou tread'st a foreign plain,  
 And that these hostile walls detain  
 In strictest bondage thy reluctant feet,  
 Here none of all those friends, that numerous band,  
 Who shared thy greatness, is at hand,  
 To cheer thee in these days of shame,  
 O wretched, wretched dame.

## II. 2.

A miserable matron thou art come  
 From Troy to our abodes, unwilling guest ;  
 Though mine the sympathizing breast,  
 Yet I through reverence to our lords am dumb,  
 Lest she, who springs from Helen, child of Jove,  
 Should be a witness of that love  
 Which I to thee whose griefs I share,  
 Impelled by pity bear.

## HERMIONE, ANDROMACHE, CHORUS.

HER. The gorgeous ornaments of gold, these brows  
 Encircling, and the tissued robes I wear,  
 I from Achilles', or from Peleus' stores,  
 As chosen presents when I hither came,  
 Received not, but from Sparta's realm, these gifts  
 My father Menelaus hath bestowed

With a large dower, that I might freely speak  
 Such is the answer which to you I make,  
 O Phthian dames. But thou, who art a slave  
 And captive, wouldst in these abodes usurp  
 Dominion, and expel me; to my lord  
 Thy drugs have made me odious, hence ensues  
 My barrenness: the Asiatic dames,  
 For these abhorred devices are renowned;  
 But thee will I subdue, nor shall this dome  
 Of the immortal Nereid, nor her altar  
 Or temple save thee from impending death;  
 If either man or god should be disposed  
 To rescue thee, 'twere fit, that to atone  
 For the proud thoughts thou in thy happier days  
 Didst nourish, thou shouldst tremble, at my knees  
 Fall low, and sweep the pavement of my house,  
 Sprinkling the waters from a golden urn.  
 Know where thou art: no Hector governs here,  
 No Phrygian Priam doth this sceptre wield;  
 This is no Chrysa, but a Grecian city.  
 Yet thou, O wretched woman, art arrived  
 At such a pitch of madness, that thou dar'st  
 To sleep e'en with the son of him who slew  
 Thy husband, and a brood of children bear  
 To him whose hands yet reek with Phrygian gore,  
 Such is the whole abhorred barbarian race;  
 The father with his daughter, the vile son  
 With his own mother, with her brother too  
 The sister, sins, friends by their dearest friends  
 Are murdered; deeds like these no wholesome law  
 Prohibits: introduce not among us  
 Such crimes, for 'tis unseemly that one man  
 Possess two women; the fond youth who seeks  
 Domestic harmony, confines his love  
 To one fair partner of the genial bed.

CHOR. The female sex are envious, and pursue  
 With an incessant hatred those who share  
 Their nuptial joys.

AND. Alas! impetuous youth  
 Proves baleful to mankind, and there are none  
 Who act with justice in their blooming years.  
 But what I dread is this, lest slavery curb  
 My tongue, though I have many truths to utter:  
 In this dispute with you, if I prevail,  
 That very triumph may become my bane:  
 For those of haughty spirits ill endure  
 The most prevailing arguments when urged  
 By their inferiors. Yet my better cause  
 I will not thus betray. Say, youthful princess,

What reasons of irrefragable force  
 Enable me to drive you from the couch  
 Of your own lawful husband? to the Phrygians  
 Is Sparta grown inferior, and hath fortune  
 On us conferred the palm? Do you behold me  
 Still free? elate with youth, a vigorous frame,  
 The wide extent of empire I possess,  
 And number of my friends, am I desirous  
 To occupy these mansions in your stead,  
 That in your stead I might bring forth a race  
 Of slaves, th' appendages of my distress?  
 Will any one endure (if you produce  
 No children) that my sons should be the kings  
 Of Phthia?—the Greeks love me for the sake  
 Of Hector, I too was forsooth obscure,  
 And not a queen, in Troy. Your husband's hate,  
 Not from my drugs, but from your soul, unsuited  
 For social converse, springs: there is a philtre  
 To gain his love. Not beauty, but the virtues,  
 O woman, to the partners of our bed  
 Afford delight. But if it sting your pride  
 That Sparta's a vast city, while you treat  
 Scyros with scorn, amidst the poor, display  
 Your riches, and of Menelaus speak  
 As greater than Achilles; hence your lord  
 Abhors you. For a woman, though bestowed  
 On a vile mate, should learn to yield, nor strive  
 For the pre-eminence. In Thrace o'erspread  
 With snow, if you were wedded to a king,  
 Who to his bed takes many various dames,  
 Would you have slain them? you would cast disgrace  
 On your whole sex by such unsated lust;  
 Base were the deed: for though our souls are warmed  
 With more intense desires than those of men  
 We modestly conceal them. For thy sake  
 I, O my dearest Hector, loved the objects  
 Of thy affections, whene'er Venus' wiles  
 Caused thee to err, and at my breast full oft  
 Nourished thy spurious children, that in nought  
 Thy joys I might embitter: acting thus  
 I wou'd him by my virtues. But you tremble  
 E'en if the drops of Heaven's transparent dew  
 Rest on your husband. Strive not to transcend  
 Your mother in a wild excess of love,  
 O woman. For the children, if endued  
 With reason, such examples should avoid  
 Of those who bore them, as corrupt the soul.

CHOR. As far as possible, O queen, comply  
 With my advice, and in mild terms accost her.

HER. What mean'st thou by this arrogance of speech,  
This vain debate, as if thou still wert chaste,  
And I had strayed from virtue's path?

AND. The words  
You have been using, now at least are void  
Of modesty.

HER. O woman, may this breast  
Harbour no soul like thine.

AND. Though bashful youth  
Glow on your cheek, indecent is your language.

HER. Thou by thy actions more than by thy words  
Hast proved the malice which to me thou bear'st.

AND. Why will you not conceal th' inglorious pangs  
Of jealous love?

HER. What woman but resents  
Such wrongs, and deems them great?

AND. The use some make  
Of these misfortunes adds to their renown :  
But shame waits those who are devoid of wisdom.

HER. We dwell not in a city where prevail  
Barbarian laws.

AND. In Phrygia or in Greece  
Base actions are with infamy attended.

HER. Though most expert in every subtle art,  
Yet die thou must.

AND. Behold you Thetis' image  
Turning its eyes on you?

HER. She loathes thy country  
Where her Achilles treacherously was slain.

AND. Your mother Helen caused his death, not I.

HER. Wouldst thou retrace still farther the sad tale  
Of our misfortunes?

AND. I restrain my tongue.

HER. Speak to me now on that affair which caused  
My coming hither.

AND. All I say is this :  
You have not so much wisdom as you need.

HER. From this pure temple of the sea-born goddess  
Wilt thou depart?

AND. Not while I live : you first  
Must slay, then drag me hence.

HER. I am resolved  
How to proceed, and wait my lord's return  
No longer.

AND. Nor will I before he come  
Surrender up myself.

HER. With flaming brands  
Hence will I drive thee, and no deference pay  
To thy entreaties.



AND. Kindle them; the gods  
Will view the deed.

HER. The scourge too is prepared.

AND. Transpierce this bosom, deluge with my gore  
The altar of the goddess, you by her  
Shall be at length o'ertaken.

HER. From thy cradle,  
Trained up and hardened in barbarian pride,  
Canst thou endure to die? from this asylum  
Soon will I rouse thee by thy own consent,  
I with such baits am furnished, but conceal  
My purpose, which th' event itself ere long  
Will make conspicuous. Keep a steady seat,  
For though by molten lead thou wert enclosed  
Hence would I rouse thee, ere Achilles' son,  
Whom thou confid'st in, to this land return.

[Exit HERMIONE.]

AND. In him I place my still unshaken trust.  
Yet is it strange that the celestial powers,  
To heal the serpent's venom, have assigned  
Expedients, but no remedy devised  
Against an evil woman who surpasses  
Or vipers' stings or the consuming flame :  
Thus baleful is our influence on mankind.

### CHORUS.

#### ODE.

##### I. 1.

The winged son of Maia and of Jove  
To many sorrowful events gave birth,  
And scattered discord o'er the bleeding earth,  
When he through sacred Ida's piny grove  
Guided the car of three immortal dames,  
(The golden prize of beauty to obtain,  
In hateful strife engaged, who urged their claims) ;  
To where in his mean hut abode a lonely swain.

##### I. 2.

No sooner had they reached the destined bower,  
Than in the limpid spring her snowy frame  
Each goddess laved; to Priam's son then came  
With artful speeches of such winning power  
As might beguile the rash and amorous boy :  
Venus prevailed; her words, though sweet their sound,  
Proved of destructive consequence to Troy,  
Whose stately bulwarks hence lie levelled with the ground.

## II. 1.

When new-born Paris first beheld the light,  
 Would that his mother, o'er her head, this brand  
 Ordained by Heaven to fire his native land,  
 Had cast, before he dwelt on Ida's height.  
 Unheeded from the bay's prophetic shade  
 Exclaimed Cassandra : " Let the child be slain ;  
 Kill him, or Priam's empire is betrayed."  
 Frantic she raved and sued to every prince in vain.

## II. 2.

Deaf was each prince, or Ilion ne'er had felt  
 The servile yoke, nor hadst thou, hapless fair,  
 Beneath these roofs, encompassed by despair,  
 And subject to a rigid master, dwelt.  
 O had he died, the fated toil of Greece,  
 That stubborn war through ten revolving years,  
 Had roused no heroes from the lap of peace,  
 Nor caused the widow's shrieks, the hoary father's tears.

MENELAUS, MOLOSSUS, ANDROMACHE, CHORUS.

MEN. Your son I hither bring, whom from this fane  
 With secrecy, you to another house,  
 Without my daughter's knowledge, had removed.  
 You boasted that this image of the goddess  
 To you, and those who hid him, would afford  
 A sure asylum : but your deep-laid craft,  
 O woman, cannot baffle Menelaus.  
 If you depart not hence, he in your stead  
 Shall be the victim ; therefore well revolve  
 Th' important question ; had you rather die,  
 Or, with his streaming gore, let him atone  
 The foul offence 'gainst me and 'gainst my daughter  
 By you committed ?

AND. Thou, O vain opinion,  
 Hast with renown puffed up full many men  
 Who were of no account. I deem those blest  
 On whom with truth such honour is bestowed :  
 But them who by fallacious means obtain it  
 I hold unworthy of possessing fame,  
 When all their seeming wisdom but arises  
 From Fortune's gifts. Thou with the bravest chiefs  
 Of Greece, from Priam erst didst wrest his Troy ;  
 E'en thou who art so mean as to inspire  
 Thy daughter with resentment 'gainst a child,  
 And strive with me a miserable captive :  
 Unworthy of thy conquest over Troy

Thee do I hold, and Troy yet more disgraced  
By such a victor. Some indeed there are  
To all appearance upright, who awhile  
Outwardly glitter, though they in their hearts  
Are on a level with the worthless bulk  
Of mortals, and superior but in wealth  
Whose power is great. This conference let us end,  
O Menelaus, be it now supposed  
I by thy daughter am already slain :  
'Twill be impossible for her to 'scape  
From the pollution ruthless murder brings ;  
Thou too by many tongues wilt be accused  
Of this vile deed, with her will they confound  
Thee the abettor. But if I preserve  
My life, are ye resolved to slay my son ?  
How will the father tamely bear the death  
Of his loved offspring ? he was not esteemed  
At Troy so void of courage. He is gone  
Whither his duty calls. Soon will the chief  
Act worthy of the race from which he springs,  
The hoary Peleus, and his dauntless sire  
Achilles, he from these abodes will cast  
Thy daughter forth, and when thou to another  
In marriage giv'st her, what hast thou to say  
On her behalf ? "That from a worthless lord  
Her wisdom drove her ?" This would be a falsehood  
Too gross. But who would wed her ? till grown grey  
In widowhood, shall she beneath thy roofs  
Fix her loathed residence ? O wretched man,  
The rising conflux of unnumbered woes  
Behold'st thou not ? hadst thou not rather find  
Thy daughter wronged by concubines, than suffering  
Th' indignities I speak of ? we from trifles  
Such grievous mischiefs ought not to create ;  
Nor if we women are a deadly bane,  
To the degenerate nature of our sex  
Should men conform. If I pernicious drugs  
Have to thy daughter ministered, and been,  
As she pretends, the cause of her abortion,  
Immediately will I without reluctance,  
And without grovelling at this altar's base,  
To any rigid punishment submit  
Inflicted by thy son-in-law, from whom  
I surely merit as severe revenge  
For having made him childless. Such am I :  
But in thy temper I perceive one cause  
Of just alarm, since in that luckless strife  
About a woman, and a vile one too,  
Thou the famed Phrygian city didst destroy.

CHOR. Too freely hast thou spoken, in a tone  
Which ill becomes thy sex, and that high soul  
The bounds of wisdom hath o'erleaped.

MEN.

O woman,

So small an object, as you rightly judge,  
Deserves not the attention of my realm,  
Nor that of Greece. But learn this obvious truth :  
To any man whate'er he greatly needs,  
Is of more worth by far than taking Troy.  
My daughter I assist, because I deem it  
A wrong of great importance should she lose  
Her bridal rights : for every woman looks  
On all beside as secondary ills :  
But if she from her husband's arms be torn,  
Seems rest of life itself. That Phthia's prince  
Direct my servants, and that his obey  
Me and my race, is fitting : for true friends  
Have no distinct possessions, but hold all  
In common. While I wait for the return  
Of her long absent lord, should I neglect  
My daughter's interests, I were weak, not wise.  
But leave this shrine of Thetis : for the child  
Shall if you bleed escape th' impending doom :  
Him, if you die not, will I slay, since fate  
Of you or him the forfeit life demands.

AND. Ah me ! a bitter and unwelcome choice  
Of life on terms like these hast thou proposed ;  
Wretch that I am ! for whether I decline  
Or make such option, I am wretched still.  
O thou, who by a trifling wrong provoked,  
Committ'st great crimes, attend : for what offence  
Wouldst thou bereave me of my life ? what city  
Have I betrayed ? what child of thine destroyed ?  
What mansion fired ? I to my master's bed  
By force was dragged : yet me alone, not him  
The author of that crime, thou mean'st to slay.  
Thou, the first cause o'erlooking, on th' effect  
Which it produces, vent'st thy rage. What woes  
Encompass wretched me ! alas ! my country !  
How dreadful are the wrongs which I endure !  
But wherefore was I doomed to bear a child,  
And to the burden under which I groan  
Add a new burden ? what delight can life  
To me afford ? or on what fortunes past  
Or present should I turn these eyes which saw  
The corse of Hector by the victor's car  
Whirled round the walls, and wretched Troy a heap  
Of blazing ruins ? I meantime a slave  
By my dishevelled hair was dragged aboard  
The Argive navy ; when I reached the coast

Of Phthia, and cohabited with those  
 Who slew my Hector ; (but why lavish plaints  
 On past calamities, without deploring  
 Or taking a due estimate of those  
 Which now impend ? ) I had this only son  
 My life's last comfort left, and they who take  
 Delight in deeds of cruelty, would slay him ;  
 Yet to preserve my miserable life  
 He shall not perish ; for auspicious hopes,  
 Could he be saved, his future days attend :  
 But if I died not for my son, reproach  
 Would be my portion. Lo ! I leave the altar  
 And now am in thy hands, stab, slay me, bind,  
 Strain hard the deadly noose. My son, thy mother,  
 To rescue thee from an untimely grave,  
 Descends the shades beneath ; if thou escape  
 The ruthless grasp of fate, remember me  
 How miserably I suffered ; and with kisses,  
 At his return, when thou goest forth to meet  
 Thy father, when a flood of tears thou shedd'st,  
 And cling'st around him with those pliant arms,  
 Inform him how I acted. All men hold  
 Their children dear as life ; but he who scorns them  
 Because he ne'er experienced what it is  
 To be a father, though with fewer griefs  
 Attended, but enjoys imperfect bliss.

*[Rises, and advances from the altar.]*

CHOR. I with compassion to this moving tale  
 Have listened ; for distress, to all mankind,  
 Though strangers, must seem piteous : but on thee,  
 O Menelaus, 'tis incumbent now  
 To reconcile thy daughter, and this captive,  
 That she may from her sorrows be released.

MEN. Seize her, and bind her hands ; for she shall hear  
 No pleasing language : I proposed to slay  
 Your son, that you might leave that hallowed altar  
 Of Thetis, and thus craftily induced you  
 To fall into my hands, and meet your death ;  
 Be well assured, such is the present state  
 Of your affairs : as for that boy, on him  
 My daughter shall pass judgment, or to kill,  
 Or spare him : but now enter these abodes,  
 That you may learn, slave as you are, to treat  
 Those who are free no longer with disdain.

AND. Thou hast o'erreached me by thy treacherous arts ;  
 Alas ! I am betrayed.

MEN. Proclaim these tidings  
 To all men ; for I shall not contradict them.

AND. By those who dwell beside Eurotas' stream  
 Are such base frauds called wisdom ?

MEN. Both at Troy  
And there, 'tis just the injured should retaliate.  
AND. Believ'st thou that the gods are gods no longer,  
Nor wield the bolt of vengeance?

MEN. We must look  
To that: but you shall die.

AND. And wilt thou seize  
This unfledged bird, to slay him?

MEN. No, I will not,  
But give him to my daughter, who must act  
As she thinks fit.

AND. Then how, alas, my son!  
Can I sufficiently bewail thy fate?

MEN. "Him," 'twas but now with arrogance you said,  
"Auspicious hopes attend."

AND. Ye worst of foes  
To all mankind, inhabitants of Sparta!  
Expert in treacherous counsels, still devising  
New falsehoods, curst artificers of mischief,  
Your paths are crooked, yet though void of worth,  
Through Greece by circumspection ye uphold  
An undeserved pre-eminence. What crimes,  
What murders, what a thirst for abject gain  
Characterize your realm! with specious tongue  
Uttering a language foreign to your heart,  
Are ye not ever caught? Perdition seize you!  
Death is less grievous than thou deem'st to me  
Who date my utter ruin from that hour  
When Iliion's wretched city was involved  
In the same fate with my illustrious lord,  
Whose spear oft drove thee trembling from the field  
Into thy ships: but now against his wife  
A formidable warrior art thou come  
To murder me: strike, for this coward tongue  
Shall never leave thine and thy daughter's shame  
Unpublished. If in Sparta thou art great,  
So was I erst in Iliion; but exult not  
In my disasters, for on thee ere long  
The same reverse of fortune may attend.

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. I.

Two rival consorts ne'er can I approve,  
Or sons, the source of strife, their birth who owe  
To different mothers; hence connubial love  
Is banished, and the mansion teems with woe.

One blooming nymph let cautious husbands wed,  
And share with her alone an unpolluted bed.

I. 2.

No prudent city, no well-governed state,  
More than a single potentate will own ;  
Their subjects droop beneath the grievous weight  
When two bear rule, and discord shakes the throne ;  
And if two bards awake their sounding lyres  
E'en the harmonious Muse a cruel strife inspires,

II. I.

To aid the bark, when prosperous gales arise,  
Two jarring pilots shall misguide the helm :  
Weak is a multitude when all are wise,  
One simpler monarch could have saved the realm.  
Let a sole chief the house or empire sway,  
And all who hope for bliss their lord's behests obey.

II. 2.

This truth hath Menelaus' daughter shown,  
Furious she comes the victim to destroy ;  
And, that their blood may nuptial wrongs atone,  
The Phrygian captive, and that hapless boy,  
With impious rage unjust would cause to bleed ;  
May pity, awful queen, thy lifted arm impede !

But I before these doors behold the pair  
On whom the fatal sentence now is passed.  
Thou wretched dame, and wretched child who diest  
Because thy mother to a foreign bed  
By force was dragged, in her imputed guilt  
Thou wert not an accomplice, thou thy lords  
Hast not offended.

AND. To the realms beneath,  
Lo, I am hurried, with these bloody hands  
Fast bound in galling chains.

MOL. I too, O mother,  
Under thy wing, to those loathed shades descend  
A victim. O ye lords of Phthia's land,  
And thou, my father, succour those thou lov'st.

AND. Cling to thy mother's bosom, O my child,  
Together let us die.

MOL. Ah me ! how grievous  
My sufferings are ! too clearly I perceive  
That I, and thou my mother, both are wretched.

MEN. Go both together to th' infernal realm :  
For ye from hostile turrets hither came.  
Although the cause why you and he must bleed  
Is not the same, my sentence takes away

Your life, and my Hermione's your son's.  
 The highest folly were it to permit  
 A foe to live and vex us, whom with ease  
 We might despatch, and from our house remove  
 Such danger.

AND. O my husband, would to Heaven  
 I had thy arm to aid me ; and thy spear,  
 Thou son of Priam.

MOL. Wretched me ! what charm  
 Can I devise t' avert impending fate ?

AND. My son, implore the mercy of our lord  
 Clasp his knees.

MOL. Dear monarch, spare my life,

AND. Tears from these eyes burst forth like trickling drops  
 By the sun's heat forced from a solid rock,  
 Wretch that I am !

MOL. What remedy, alas !  
 For these dire evils can my soul devise ?

MEN. Why dost thou idly grovel at my feet  
 With fruitless supplications, while I stand  
 Firm as a rock, or as th' un pitying wave ?  
 Such conduct serves my interests: no affection  
 To thee I bear, because my morn of life  
 Was wasted in the conflict, ere I took  
 Troy and thy mother, whose society  
 Thou in the realms of Pluto shalt enjoy.

PELEUS, MENELAUS, ANDROMACHE, MOLOSSUS, CHORUS.

CHOR. Peleus, I see, draws near, his aged feet  
 With eager haste advancing.

PEL. You, and him  
 Who stands presiding o'er a murderous deed,  
 What means this uproar that disturbs the house,  
 I question, and what practices are these  
 Ye carry on unauthorized by law ?  
 O Menelaus, stay thy furious hand,  
 And let not execution thus outstrip  
 All righteous judgment. O my friends, lead on ;  
 For such a dread emergency appears  
 T' admit of no delay. Could I regain  
 That youthful vigour which I erst enjoyed  
 As prosperous breezes aid the floating sails,  
 This captive would I favour. Say, what right  
 Have they to bind your hands, and drag along  
 You and your son ? for like the bleating mother,  
 Led forth to slaughter with her lamb, you perish,  
 While I and your unwitting lord are absent.

AND. They, as thou seest, O venerable man,  
 Me and my son thus bear to instant death.



What shall I say to thee, whom I with speed  
 Not by one single messenger but thousands  
 Have sent for? sure thou, of the fatal strife  
 In these divided mansions, with his daughter,  
 To which I owe my ruin, must have heard :  
 And from the violated shrine of Thetis,  
 Who bore to thee a noble son, the goddess  
 Whom thou rever'st e'en now with brutal force  
 Me have they torn, nor judged my cause, nor wait  
 For absent Neoptolemus, but, knowing  
 That I and that this child who hath committed  
 No fault, are left alone and unprotected,  
 Would slay us both. But, O thou aged man,  
 Thus prostrate on my knees, to thee I sue,  
 And, though this hand must not presume to touch  
 Thy honoured beard, conjure thee by the gods,  
 Rescue us, or to thy eternal shame  
 Both he and I must miserably bleed.

PEL. My orders are that you those galling chains  
 Unbind and loose her hands, else will I make  
 The disobedient weep.

MEN. But I, your equal,  
 Who have much more authority o'er her,  
 Forbid them.

PEL. Com'st thou hither to direct  
 My household? is it not enough for thee  
 To rule thy Spartans?

MEN. Her I took at Troy.

PEL. She, to reward his valour, was bestowed  
 Upon my grandson.

MEN. Doth not all he owns,  
 To me, and what is mine, to him belong?

PEL. For honest purposes, but not for crimes  
 And murderous violence.

MEN. You ne'er shall take her  
 Out of my hands.

PEL. Thy head I with this sceptre  
 Will smite.

MEN. Draw near; if you presume to touch me,  
 Soon shall you rue such outrage.

PEL. O thou villain,  
 Sprung from a race of impious sires, what right  
 To be accounted an illustrious man,  
 And numbered with the truly brave, hast thou,  
 Who by a Phrygian wanderer wert deprived  
 Of thy fair consort, after thou hadst left  
 Thy house unbarred and destitute of guards,  
 As if thou in thy mansions hadst possessed  
 A virtuous dame, though she of all her sex

Was the most dissolute? nor if she would  
Can any Spartan nymph be chaste? for wandering  
From their own homes, distinguished by bare legs,  
And zoneless vest, they with young men contend  
In swiftness and in wrestling; I such customs  
Hold in abhorrence. Is there any room  
For wonder if the women prove unchaste  
Whom thus you educate? thy Helen ought  
To have proposed these questions, ere she left  
Her native realm, regardless of thy love,  
And by that youthful paramour seduced,  
Wantonly fled into a foreign land.  
Yet for her sake didst thou that numerous host  
Of Greeks collect, and lead them to assail  
The Phrygian ramparts. Thou that beauteous dame  
Shouldst rather have despised, nor in her cause  
Wielded the javelin, when thou found'st her worthless,  
But suffered her in Ilium to remain,  
And sent rich gifts to Paris on these terms,  
That to thy house she never should return.  
But thou, instead of suffering these just motives  
To make their due impression on thy soul,  
Full many valiant warriors hast destroyed,  
Made th' aged matron childless, and deprived  
Of his illustrious sons the hoary sire.  
Numbered with those who owe to thee thy ruin  
Am wretched I: for like some evil genius  
In thee do these indignant eyes behold  
The murderer of Achilles: thou alone,  
Save by the missile shaft, unwounded cam'st  
From Ilium's hostile shores; in burnished chests  
Didst thou bear thither the same glittering arms  
Which thou bear'st back again. Before he wedded,  
I warned my grandson to form no connection  
With thee, nor into these abodes admit  
The brood of that adult'ress; for the daughters  
Their mother emulate in deeds of shame.  
Look well to this, ye suitors, and select  
The damsel with maternal worth endued.  
Then with what scorn didst thou thy brother treat,  
Commanding him 'gainst reason to transgress,  
And sacrifice his daughter. Thou such fears,  
Lest thou that execrable wife shouldst lose,  
Didst entertain. When thou hadst taken Troy,  
This too I urge against thee, though thou hadst  
Thy consort in thy power, thou didst not slay her,  
But when her throbbing bosom thou beheld'st  
Didst cast away thy sword, receive her kisses,  
And soothe the fears of her who had betrayed thee.

O worthless miscreant, whom the Cyprian Queen  
 Hath thus debased ! thou after this intrud'st  
 Into my grandson's palace, in his absence  
 Committ'st these outrages, and basely slay'st  
 A miserable woman, and her child,  
 Thee and thy daughter who shall cause to weep  
 Though trebly illegitimate his birth.  
 Oft the parched heath, when duly tilled, exceeds  
 The richest soil, and greater instances  
 Of virtue are in many a bastard found  
 Than in the lawfully begotten race.  
 But take thy daughter hence. Far better is it  
 To form affinity and strictest friendship  
 With a poor man of worth, than him who joins  
 Iniquity with wealth : but as for thee,  
 Thou art a thing of nought.

CHOR.                   Among mankind,  
 Oft from a small beginning doth the tongue  
 Great strife occasion : but the wise beware  
 Of entering on a contest with their friend.

MEN. Why do we speak in such exalted terms  
 Of aged men, as if they were endued  
 With wisdom, though in former days supposed  
 By the whole Grecian race to judge aright ?  
 When you, O Peleus, who derive your birth  
 From an illustrious sire, and with my house  
 So nearly are connected, hold a language  
 Disgraceful to yourself, and slander me,  
 For a barbarian dame, whom from this land  
 You ought to banish far beyond the Nile,  
 Beyond the Phasis, and applaud my vengeance ;  
 Because she comes from Asiatic shores,  
 Where many valiant Grecian chiefs lie slain.  
 And hath in part been guilty of the blood  
 Of your famed son ; for Paris, by whose shaft,  
 Transpierced, Achilles perished, was the brother,  
 And she the wife of Hector : yet you enter  
 The same abode with her, the genial board  
 With her partake, allow her to bring forth  
 Under your roofs an execrable brood.  
 These mischiefs both to you and me, old man,  
 Foreseeing, have I snatched her from your hands  
 With a design to kill her. But, O say,  
 (For there is nought of meanness in our holding  
 This conference), if my daughter bear no child,  
 And she have sons, will you appoint them lords  
 Of this your Phthian land ? shall they who spring  
 From a barbarian race, o'er Greeks bear rule ?  
 Am I, because I hate injustice, void

Of understanding, and are you discreet?  
 Reflect on this; had you bestowed your daughter  
 On any citizen, were she thus treated,  
 Would you sit down and bear her wrongs in silence?  
 I deem you would not. Why then with such harshness  
 Speak you in favour of a foreign dame  
 Against your nearest friends? as great a right  
 To vengeance as her husband, hath the wife  
 Whom her lord injures: for while he whose doors  
 An unchaste consort enters, in his hands  
 Hath power to right himself, a woman's strength  
 Lies only in her parents and her friends.  
 My daughter, therefore, am I bound to aid:  
 You show the marks of age: for while you talk  
 Of that famed war I waged, you more befriend me  
 Than if you had been silent. Deep in woe  
 Was Helen plunged, not by her own consent  
 But by the gods: and this event hath proved  
 To Greece most advantageous, for its sons  
 Who knew not how till then to wield the spear,  
 Grew valiant. From experience, best of tutors,  
 Men gather all the knowledge they possess.  
 But when I saw my consort, in forbearing  
 To take away her life, I acted wisely:  
 And would that you had done like me, nor slain  
 Your brother Phocus; this to you I speak  
 Through mere benevolence, and not in wrath:  
 But if resentment o'er your soul usurp  
 An empire, such intemperance of the tongue  
 Will be in you more shameful, while my wishes  
 I by a prudent forethought shall attain.

CHOR. Now both desist (for this were better far)  
 From such unprofitable strife of words,  
 O ye will both offend.

PEL. Ah me! through Greece  
 What mischievous opinions have prevailed!  
 When with the spoils of vanquished foes, the host  
 A trophy rear, they think not how 'twas gained  
 By those brave soldiers who endure the toil  
 Of battle, while their general bears away  
 All the renown: though he was only one  
 Who stood 'midst thousands brandishing his spear,  
 Nor any single combatant surpassed,  
 He gains a larger portion of applause.  
 The venerable rulers of a city,  
 Placed in exalted stations, yet devoid  
 Of any real merit, overlook  
 The populace, though many in the crowd  
 Of their inferiors are more wise than they,

If haply courage and an honest zeal  
 Unite to place them in the public view.  
 Thou and thy brother thus are swollen with pride,  
 From having led those troops to conquer Troy,  
 And triumph in the sufferings of your friends.  
 But henceforth will I teach thee not to look  
 On Paris, Ida's shepherd, as a foe,  
 More terrible than Peleus. If with speed  
 Thou quit not these abodes, and take away  
 Thy childless daughter, my indignant grandson,  
 By her dishevelled hair around the palace  
 Will drag this barren dame, who stung with envy,  
 Cannot endure the fruitful mother's joys.  
 But, if she prove so luckless as to bare  
 No issue, ought she therefore to deprive us  
 Of our posterity? Begone, ye slaves,  
 That I may see who dares obstruct my loosing  
 Her hands. Rise up: though trembling with old age,  
 Your chains can I unbind. O worthless man,  
 Hast thou thus galled her hands? didst thou suppose  
 Thou held'st a bull or lion in the snare?  
 Or didst thou shudder lest she should snatch up  
 A sword, and wreak just vengeance on thy head?  
 Come hither to these sheltering arms, my child,  
 Unbind thy mother's chains; in Phthia, thee  
 I'll educate, to them a bitter foe.  
 Should Sparta's sons by the protended spear  
 Obtain no fame, nor in th' embattled field  
 Their prowess signalize, be well assured  
 Ye have no other merit.

CHOR. Old men talk  
 With freedom, and their vehemence of soul  
 Is hard to be restrained.

MEN. Extremely prone  
 Are you to slander; much against my will  
 I came to Phthia, and am here resolved  
 That I will neither do nor suffer aught  
 Disgraceful: but to my own home with speed  
 Am I returning, and have little time  
 In vain debates to lavish: for a city  
 Not far from Sparta's gates and erst a friend  
 Is waging war against us: I would lead  
 My hardy squadrons forth t' assail the foe,  
 And utterly subdue them. To my wish  
 Soon as this great affair I shall have settled,  
 Hither will I return, and face to face,  
 When I my reasons to my son-in-law  
 Have in the clearest terms proposed, will hear  
 What he can urge; and if he punish her,

And for the future courteously to me  
 Demean himself, from me he in return  
 Shall meet with courtesy; but if he rage,  
 He of my rage the dire effects shall feel:  
 For still such treatment as his deeds deserve  
 Shall he experience. But I am not hurt  
 By these injurious words of yours; for like  
 Some disembodied ghost, you have a voice,  
 Although you are not able to do aught  
 But merely speak. [Exit MENELAUS.]

PEL. Lead on, my boy; here take  
 Thy station under these protecting arms;  
 And thou too, O thou miserable dame,  
 Driven hither by the furious storm; at length  
 Into a quiet haven are ye come.

AND. On thee and thy descendants may the gods  
 Shower every blessing, venerable man,  
 For having saved this child, and wretched me;  
 Yet O beware, lest in some lonely spot  
 They suddenly assail us, and by force  
 Drag me away, perceiving thou art old,  
 That I am a weak woman, and my son  
 Is but an infant: all precautions use,  
 Else we, who have escaped them, may again  
 Be caught.

PEL. Forbear to utter, in such language  
 As this, the dictates of a woman's fear.  
 Advance, who dares to touch you? he shall weep.  
 For with the blessing of th' immortal gods,  
 And by unnumbered troops of valiant horse,  
 And infantry supported, I bear rule  
 Over the Phthian land. I am robust,  
 Nor, as you deem, impaired by palsied age.  
 Were I, opposed in battle, but to look  
 On such a man as this, old as I am,  
 An easy conquest soon should I obtain.  
 Superior is the veteran, if with courage  
 Inspired, to many youths: for what avails  
 A vigorous body with a coward's heart?

[Exit PELEUS, ANDROMACHE, and MOLOSSUS.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I.

My wish were this; or never to be born,  
 Or to descend from generous sires, and share  
 The blessings which attend a wealthy heir.  
 If heaviest woes assail, ne'er left forlorn

Without a friend are they of nobler race,  
 Hereditary trophies deck their head :  
 The records of the brave with joy we trace,  
 No distant age their memory can efface,  
 For virtue's torch unquenched pours radiance o'er the dead.

## II.

Better is conquest, when we gain our right  
 By no reproachful means, no deeds of shame,  
 Than if to envy we expose our fame,  
 And trample on the laws with impious might.  
 Such laurels which at first too sweetly bloom,  
 Ere long are withered by the frost of time,  
 And scorn pursues their wearers to the tomb.  
 I in my household or the state presume  
 To seek that power alone which rules without a crime.

## III.

O veteran, sprung from Æacus, thy spear  
 Chilled the Lapithæ with fear,  
 And from their hills the Centaurs drove.  
 When glory called, and prosperous gales  
 Swelled the Argo's daring sails,  
 Intrepid didst thou pass that strait  
 Where ruin oft the crashing bark attends,  
 And ocean's foam descends  
 From the Symplegades' obstructing height.  
 Next didst thou land on perjured Ilion's shore,  
 With Hercules illustrious son of Jove,  
 Then first its bulwarks streamed with gore :  
 Till crowned with fame a partner of his toil,  
 Europe again thou sought'st and Phthia's frozen soil.

## THE NURSE OF HERMIONE, CHORUS.

NUR. How doth a rapid series of events  
 The most disastrous, O my dearest friends,  
 This day invade us ! for within these doors  
 Hermione my mistress, by her sire  
 Forsaken, and grown conscious of the guilt  
 She hath incurred, by that attempt to murder  
 Andromache and her unhappy son,  
 Resolves to die, because she dreads, lest fired  
 With indignation at her guilt, her lord  
 Should cast her forth with scorn, or take away  
 Her life, because she purposed to have slain  
 The innocent. The servants who attend  
 Can hardly by their vigilance prevent her  
 From fixing round her neck the deadly noose,  
 Or snatch the dagger from her hand, so great

Is her affliction, and she now confesses  
 That she has done amiss. My strength's exhausted  
 In striving to withhold my royal mistress  
 From perishing by an ignoble death.  
 But enter ye these mansions, and attempt  
 To save her life, for strangers can persuade  
 Far better than old friends.

CHOR. We hear the voice  
 Of her attendants from within confirm  
 Th' intelligence thou hither cam'st to bring :  
 That hapless woman seems just on the point  
 Of showing with what rage she by her guilt  
 Is hurried on : for lo, she rushes forth  
 From yon abodes, already hath she 'scaped  
 Her servants' hands, and is resolved to die.

HERMIONE, NURSE, CHORUS.

HER. Ah me ! these ringlets how will I tear off,  
 How rend my cheeks !

NUR. What mean'st thou, O my daughter ?  
 Wilt thou thus injure that fair frame ?

HER. Away,  
 O thou slight veil, I pluck thee from my head,  
 And toss thy scattered fragments in the air.

NUR. Cover thy bosom with the decent robe.

HER. Why with a robe my bosom should I hide ?  
 The crimes I have committed 'gainst my lord  
 Are clear, well known, and cannot be concealed.

NUR. Griev'st thou because thou hast formed schemes  
 to slay  
 Thy rival ?

HER. I with many groans bewail  
 Those hostile darings, execrable wretch,  
 Wretch that I am, an object of just hate  
 To all mankind.

NUR. Thy husband such offence  
 Will pardon.

HER. From my hand why didst thou snatch  
 The sword ? Restore, restore it, O my friends,  
 That I this bosom may transpierce. Why force me  
 To quit yon pendant noose ?

NUR. In thy distraction  
 Shall I forsake and leave thee thus to die ?

HER. Where shall I find (inform me, O ye Fates)  
 The blazing pyre, ascend the craggy rock,  
 Plunge in the billows, or amidst the woods  
 On a steep mountain waste the life I loathe,  
 That after death the gods beneath may take me  
 To their protection ?



CHOR. Why wouldst thou make efforts  
So violent? some mischiefs sent by Heaven  
Sooner or later visit all mankind.

HER. Me like a stranded bark, thou, O my sire,  
Hast left forsaken and without an oar.  
To thee I owe my ruin. I no longer  
In these my bridal mansions can reside.  
To the propitious statues of what God  
With suppliant haste shall I repair, or fall  
At a slave's knees, myself an abject slave?  
I from the land of Phthia, like a bird  
Upborne on azure wings, would speed my flight,  
Or imitate that ship whose dashing oars  
'Twixt the Cyanean straits first urged their way.

NUR. As little, O my daughter, can I praise  
That vehemence which caused thee to transgress  
Against the Trojan dame, as these thy fears  
Which are immoderate. For such slight offence  
Thy lord, misled by the pernicious tongue  
Of a barbarian woman, from his couch  
Will not expel thee: for thou art not his  
By right of conquest, borne from vanquished Troy;  
But thee, the daughter of a mighty king,  
He with abundant dower, and from a city  
Most flourishing, received: nor will thy sire,  
His child forsaking, as thou dread'st, permit thee  
To be cast forth: but enter these abodes,  
Nor show thyself without, lest some affront  
Thou shouldst receive if haply thou art seen  
Before these doors. [Exit NURSE.]

CHOR. Behold a man, whose dress  
Is of such different fashion that it speaks  
The foreigner, comes swiftly from the gate.

ORESTES, HERMIONE, CHORUS.

ORE. Is this th' abode of great Achilles' son,  
The regal mansion, O ye foreign dames?

CHOR. It is as thou hast said. But who art thou  
That ask'st this question?

ORE. Agamemnon's son,  
And Clytemnestra's; but my name's Orestes:  
I to Dodona, th' oracle of Jove,  
Am on my road; but since I now have reached  
The land of Phthia, first would I inquire  
How fares Hermione, the Spartan dame,  
My kinswoman; doth she yet live and prosper?  
For though from me far distant be the land  
In which she now resides, she still is dear.

HER. O son of Agamemnon, who thus make

Your seasonable appearance, like the haven  
 To mariners amidst a furious storm,  
 Take pity, I implore you by those knees,  
 On me a wretch whose inauspicious fortunes  
 You witness. Hence around your knees I fling  
 These arms, which ought to prove of equal force  
 With hallowed branches by the suppliant borne.

ORE. What's this? am I deceived? or do my eyes  
 Indeed behold the queen of these abodes,  
 And Menelaus' daughter?

HER. Th' only child  
 Whom to the Spartan monarch Helen bore.  
 Mistake me not.

ORE. O Phœbus, healing power,  
 Protect us! But what dire mischance hath happened?  
 Or from the gods, or human foes, proceed  
 The evils thou endur'st?

HER. Some from myself,  
 But others from the husband whom I wedded  
 The rest from one of the immortal gods.  
 I utterly am ruined.

ORE. What afflictions  
 Can any woman who's yet childless feel  
 But those which from her nuptial union spring?

HER. Hence these distempers of the soul arise,  
 And well do you anticipate my words.

ORE. Enamoured with another, is thy lord  
 False to thy bed?

HER. He loves a captive dame,  
 The wife of Hector.

ORE. This of which thou speak'st  
 Is a great evil, when one man possesses  
 Two wives.

HER. 'Twas thus, till I avenged the wrong.

ORE. Didst thou with arts familiar to thy sex  
 Plot 'gainst thy rival's life?

HER. I would have killed  
 Her and her spurious son.

ORE. Hast thou despatched them?  
 Or were they screened from their impending fate?

HER. Old Peleus to these worthless objects showed  
 Too great a reverence.

ORE. Was there any friend  
 Ready to aid thee in the purposed slaughter?

HER. My sire, who for this cause from Sparta came.

ORE. Yet by that aged man was he subdued?

HER. Abashed he fled, and left me here alone.

ORE. I understand thee well: thy husband's wrath  
 Thou fear'st for what thou'st done.

HER. The fact you know :  
Hence justly will he take away my life.  
What can be said? yet by immortal Jove,  
Our grandsire, I conjure you, send me far  
From these domains, or to my father's house.  
Had but these walls a voice, they would proclaim  
The sentence of my exile, for the land  
Of Phthia hates me. If my lord return  
From Phœbus' oracle, for the misdeeds  
I have committed, he will strike me dead,  
Or force me to become that harlot's slave  
Whom erst I ruled.

ORE. By some will it be asked  
Whence then into such errors didst thou fall?

HER. My ruin I derive from the admission  
Of these vile women, who inflamed my pride  
By uttering these rash words : " Wilt thou endure  
Beneath thy roof that odious slave who shares  
Thy bridal couch? by Juno, awful queen,  
I would not suffer such a wretch to breathe  
In my polluted chamber." When I heard  
The language uttered by these crafty sirens,  
Artificers of mischief, who, to suit  
Their purpose, in persuasive strains displayed  
The power of eloquence, I was puffed up  
With folly : for what need had I to hold  
My lord in reverence while possessed of all  
That I could wish? abundant wealth was mine,  
O'er these abodes I reigned, and any children  
I to my husband might hereafter bare  
Would be legitimate ; but hers, by mine  
In strict subjection held, a spurious race.  
But never, never (I this truth repeat)  
Should wedded men, who have the gift of reason,  
Let women have a free access, and visit  
Their consort. For they teach her evil lessons :  
Urged by the hopes of lucre, one corrupts  
Her chastity ; a second hath already  
Transgressed herself, and wishes that her friend  
May be as vicious : many by their lust  
Are led astray ; hence to their husband's house  
A train of mischief rises. Guard the doors  
Of your abodes with locks and massive bars ;  
Since from the intrusion of these female guests,  
No good, but mischiefs numberless ensue.

CHOR. Thou to thy tongue hast given too free a  
scope  
In thus aspersing the whole female race :  
Thy present woes indeed our pardon claim ;

Yet every woman is in duty bound  
To gloss o'er the misconduct of her sex.

ORE. Wisdom pertained to him who taught mankind  
To hear the reasons by both parties urged  
In a debate. Aware of the confusion  
In these abodes, and of the strife 'twixt thee  
And Hector's wife, I stayed not to observe  
Whether thou in this house wouldst still remain,  
Or through a fear of yonder captive dame  
Abandon it: I therefore hither came,  
Nor waited for intelligence from thee.  
And if a satisfactory account  
Of thy proceedings thou to me canst give,  
I will convey thee hence. For thou, who erst  
Wert mine, with this thy present husband liv'st,  
Through the perfidious conduct of thy sire,  
Who ere he entered the domains of Troy  
Affianced thee to me, and then to him  
Who now possesses thee, again engaged,  
If he the Phrygian city should subdue.  
But I forgive thy father for this wrong,  
When hither great Achilles' son returned,  
And to the bridegroom sued that he would loose  
Thy plighted hand; of all my various fortunes  
Informing him, and of my present woes;  
How feasible it were for me to wed  
Among my friends, but that for such an exile  
As I am, driven from my paternal throne,  
'Twould not be easy to obtain a consort  
In any foreign land: on this he grew  
More arrogant, and bitterly reproached me  
Both with my mother's murder, and those Furies  
Whose blood-stained visages inspire dismay.  
By the misfortunes of my house bowed down  
To earth, I grieved indeed, but grieving bore  
The weight of these calamities, and rest  
Of thee my bride, reluctantly departed.  
But since thy fortunes now have undergone  
A change so unexpected, and involved  
In woe, thou stand'st aghast; from these abodes  
Thee will I take and to thy sire convey.  
For wondrous is the force of kindred ties;  
And in misfortunes nought exceeds the friend  
Who from the self-same house derives his birth.

HER. My father will take care how to dispose  
Of me in marriage, nor is it my province  
Such question to decide. But, O convey me  
From these loathed mansions with the utmost speed,  
Lest when my husband at his first return

Enters the doors, he intercept my flight ;  
Or, hearing that I leave his grandson's house,  
Peleus pursue me with his rapid steeds.

ORE. Be of good cheer against that aged man,  
And from thy furious lord, Achilles' son,  
Who treated me with scorn, fear nought ; this hand  
Hath with such cautious artifice prepared  
For him th' inevitable snares of death,  
Of which no previous mention will I make :  
But when it is accomplished, this exploit  
Shall on the rock of Delphi be proclaimed.  
I who my mother slew, if th' armed friends  
Whom I have stationed in the Pythian realm  
Observe their oaths, will teach him that he ought  
To have abstained from wedding any dame  
Betrothed to me. He in an evil hour  
Shall claim atonement for his father's death  
Of Phœbus mighty king ; nor shall repentance  
For these audacious blasphemies avail  
To save the miscreant on whose impious head  
Apollo wreaks just vengeance ; by his wrath  
O'ertaken, and entangled in my snares,  
He wretchedly shall perish. For the gods  
Subvert the prosperous fortunes of their foes  
Nor suffer pride to rear her towering crest.

[*Exeunt* ORESTES and HFRMIONE.]

CHORUS.

ODE.

I. 1.

Phœbus, thou god who with a mound  
Of stately towers didst Ilion's rock surround ;  
And thou, O Neptune, ruler of the main,  
Borne swiftly by thy azure steeds  
In a light car, who cleav'st the watery plain ;  
After exerting with unwearied toil  
Such skill as human works exceeds,  
'Gainst wretched Troy when Mars his javelin bore,  
Why, faithless to that chosen soil,  
Left ye your city drenched in gore ?

I. 2.

The steeds ye yoked on Simois' banks  
Whirled many a chariot through the broken ranks ;  
No hero gathered in that stubborn fray  
One laurel to adorn his head :  
Phrygia's illustrious rulers swept away,

Took their last voyage to a distant shore,  
 And mingled with the vulgar dead,  
 While the polluted altars ceased to gleam  
 Upwasting to the skies no more  
 Their frankincense in odorous steam.

## II. 1.

Slain by his wife Atreides fell ;  
 His furious son sent to the shades of Hell  
 The murderess, and returned th' unnatural deed,  
 That fatal stroke the god approved,  
 His oracles ordained that she should bleed,  
 When young Orestes at the inmost shrine  
 Was by a heavenly impulse moved,  
 His hands in gore maternal to imbrue.  
 O Phœbus, O thou power divine,  
 How shall I think th' assertion true ?

## II. 2.

In Greece doth many a dame complain  
 Chaunting rude dirges for her children slain ;  
 Others their native land reluctant leave,  
 And to a foreign lord are brought.  
 Nor yet hast thou alone just cause to grieve,  
 Nor to thy friends hath Heaven's peculiar hate  
 These signal miseries wrought :  
 Victorious Greece still feels as deep a wound,  
 From whence the thunderbolt of fate  
 Through Phrygia scattered deaths around.

## PELEUS, CHORUS.

PEL. Answer my questions, O ye Phthian dames,  
 For doubtful is the rumour I have heard,  
 That Menelaus' daughter, when she left  
 This house departed from the realm. I come  
 Anxious to learn if this account be true.  
 For 'tis their duty who remain at home  
 To guard the fortunes of their absent friends.

CHOR. What thou hast heard, O Peleus, is the truth,  
 And ill would it become me to conceal  
 The woes in which I deeply am involved :  
 Our royal mistress from these walls is fled.

PEL. What feared she ? say.

CHOR. The anger of her lord,  
 Lest he from these abodes should cast her forth.

PEL. Because she plotted to have slain the boy ?

CHOR. E'en so it was. Yon captive too she dreaded,

PEL. But from these mansions did she go, attended,  
 Or by her father or by whom ?

CHOR. The son  
Of Agamemnon from this land conveyed her.  
PEL. What are his views ? to take her for his bride ?  
CHOR. Thy grandson too he meditates to slay.  
PEL. Stationed in secret ambush, or resolved  
To meet the dauntless warrior face to face ?  
CHOR. Beneath Apollo's unpolluted fane  
With Delphi's citizens.  
PEL. Atrocious crime !  
Ah me ! will no one with his utmost speed  
Go to the altar of the Pythian god,  
And to our friends disclose what passes here,  
Ere by his foes Achilles' son is slain ?

## MESSENGER, PELEUS, CHORUS.

MES. What evil tidings do I bring to you,  
O aged man, and all my master's friends !  
PEL. By a sad presage which affects my soul  
I of th' impending evil am forewarned.  
MES. Know then, O Peleus, that your wretched grandson  
Is now no more, with such unnumbered wounds  
He by the Delphic citizens transpierced,  
And by that stranger from Mycene died.  
CHOR. Alas ! alas ! but what resource is left  
For thee, thou hoary veteran ? do not fall ;  
Raise thyself up.  
PEL. To very nothing now  
Am I reduced, I utterly am ruined :  
The power of speech deserts me, and these limbs  
Forget their office.  
MES. Hear me, and from earth  
Arise, if, with th' assistance of your friends,  
You for this murder wish to be revenged.  
PEL. How hast thou compassed wretched me, who stand  
On the last verge of spiritless old age,  
O cruel fate ! say how the only son  
Of my deceased, my only son, was slain.  
These tidings though unwelcome would I hear.  
MES. After we reached Apollo's sacred realm,  
While thrice the chariot of the sun performed  
Its bright career, we satiated our eyes  
With viewing all around. The circumstance  
Which raised suspicion first, was this : the people  
Who dwell within the temple of the god  
Held frequent meetings, and in crowds assembled.  
Meanwhile the son of Agamemnon went  
Through the whole city, and in every ear  
Whispered malignant words like these : " Behold

Him who is visiting the hallowed shrine  
Of Phœbus piled with gold, the treasures given  
By all mankind ; the miscreant comes again  
On the same purpose which first drew him hither,  
To overthrow the temple of the god.”  
Through the whole city hence an evil rumour  
Went forth, and all the magistrates, to whom  
The holy treasures were consigned, assembled,  
In secret councils held, and placed a guard  
Behind the massive columns in the fane.  
We, unapprized of this, meantime had caught  
Some sheep, that fed amid Parnassus’ grove,  
And with our Delphic friends and Pythian seers  
Approached the altar : some one said : “ Young man,  
What vows on thy behalf shall we address  
To Phœbus ? for what purpose art thou come ? ”  
He answered : “ To the god I wish to make  
A due atonement for my past offence,  
Because I erst from him with impious tongue  
Claimed satisfaction for my father’s blood.”  
Hence did Orestes’ calumnies appear  
To have great weight, suggesting that my lord  
Spoke an untruth, and that he hither came  
With vile designs. Beneath the holy roof,  
That to Apollo he might offer up  
His prayers in that oracular abode,  
He now advanced, and as they blazed, observed  
The victims : here a troop with falchions armed  
Screened by the branching laurels stood ; the son  
Of Clytemnestra was the sole contriver  
Of all these stratagems. Our lord stood forth,  
And, in the sight of this insidious band,  
Adored the god : while they with their keen swords,  
Ere he discerned them, pierced Achilles’ son  
Unsheathed in mail. He instantly retreated ;  
For he as yet had by no deadly wound  
Been smitten ; but snatched up in his retreat  
Those glittering arms which near the portals hung,  
And stood a champion terrible to view,  
Close to the blazing altar : with loud voice  
He questioned the inhabitants of Delphi :  
“ Me who a pious votary hither come,  
Why, or for what offences, would ye slay ! ”  
Although the number of his foes was great,  
None of them answered, but all hands hurled stones :  
On every side assaulted by a storm  
Thick as the falling snows, he warded off,  
Extending the broad margin of his shield,  
Each missile weapon : but of no avail



Was this resistance : for the spear, the shaft,  
 The dart, were thrown at once, and at his feet  
 Mixed instruments of sacrifice lay scattered.  
 Th' agility with which your grandson shunned  
 The blows they aimed, was wondrous to behold :  
 They in a circle gathering round, closed in,  
 Nor gave him space to breathe, till from the altar  
 Descending with a leap like that which bore  
 The hapless Grecian chief to Phrygia's coast,  
 He rushed among them : like a flock of doves  
 Who see the hawk appear, they turned and fled :  
 In heaps on heaps promiscuous, many fell,  
 Some in the narrow passage wounded lay,  
 While others o'er them trampled, and their groans  
 Unholy echoed through the hallowed dome.  
 But, tranquil as the waters in a calm,  
 In golden arms my lord resplendent stood,  
 Till from the inmost sanctuary burst forth  
 A deep-toned voice of horror, which impelled  
 The recreant warriors to renew the fight :  
 Achilles' son then smitten through the flank  
 With a keen sword, by one of Delphi fell,  
 Who slew him, yet ignobly, with the aid  
 Of multitudes. But after he to earth  
 Was fallen, what sword transpierced him not, what hand  
 Threw not a stone to smite him ? his whole frame,  
 So graceful erst, was with unnumbered wounds  
 Disfigured : till at length his mangled corse,  
 Which stained the altar's basis, from the fane  
 Drenched with the blood of victims they cast forth.  
 But gathering up with speed, his loved remains  
 To you we bear, O venerable man,  
 That o'er them you may shed the plenteous tear,  
 And grace them with sepulchral rites. Thus Phœbus,  
 Who prophesies to others, mighty king,  
 And deals out justice to th' admiring world,  
 Hath on Achilles' son revenged himself,  
 And, like some worthless human foe, revived  
 An ancient grudge : how then can he be wise ?

[*Exit* MESSENGER.]

CHOR. But lo ! our royal master, from the land  
 Of Delphi borne, approaches these abodes !  
 Wretched was he, by such untimely doom  
 O'ertaken : nor art thou, O aged man,  
 Less wretched than the slaughtered youth : for thou  
 Into thy doors receiv'st Achilles' son,  
 But not as thou couldst wish ; thou too art fallen  
 Into affliction's snare.

PEL.

What piteous object,

Ah me ! do I behold, and with these hands  
 Receive into my house ! we are undone,  
 We are undone, O thou Thessalian city ;  
 I have no children, no descendants left,  
 To occupy these mansions. On what friend  
 Shall I a wretched sufferer turn my eyes,  
 And hope to find relief ? O thou dear face,  
 Ye cheeks, ye hands ! thee would to Heaven that fate  
 In those embattled fields of Troy had slain  
 Beside the waves of Simois !

CHOR. He in death  
 Hence would have found renown ; thou too, old man,  
 Wouldst have been happier.

PEL. Thou, O wedlock, wedlock,  
 These mansions and my city hast o'erthrown.  
 My grandson, through the inauspicious nuptials  
 By thee contracted, would to heaven my gates  
 Had ne'er received that execrable fiend  
 Hermione, thy bane ! O had she first  
 With thunderbolts been smitten ! nor hadst thou,  
 Presumptuous mortal, charged the Delphic god  
 With having aimed the shaft which slew thy sire !

CHOR. I will awake the sad funereal dirge,  
 And wailing pay to my departed lord  
 Such customary tribute as attends  
 The shades of mighty chiefs,

PEL. Ah me ! at once  
 With misery and old age bowed down to earth,  
 I shed th' incessant tear.

CHOR. Thus hath the god  
 Ordained, the god's vindictive arm hath wrought  
 All these calamities.

PEL. O most beloved,  
 This house, ah me ! a desert hast thou left,  
 And me a miserable old man made childless.

CHOR. Before thy children, O thou aged man,  
 Thou shouldst have died.

PEL. Shall I not rend my hair,  
 And beat with desperate hands this hoary head ?  
 O city ! Phœbus hath of both my sons  
 Deprived me.

CHOR. O thou miserable old man,  
 What evils hast thou witnessed and endured !  
 How wilt thou pass the remnant of thy life ?

PEL. Childless, forlorn, no period to my woes  
 Can I discover, but till death must drink  
 The bitter potion.

CHOR. Sure the gods in vain  
 Showered blessings on thy nuptials.

PELL. Fled and withered  
Is all our ancient pomp.

CHOR. Alone thou mov'st  
Around thy lonely house.

PELL. I have no city.  
Thee, O my sceptre, to the ground I cast,  
And from yon dreary caverns of the main,  
Daughter of Nereus, me wilt thou behold  
Utterly ruined, grovelling in the dust.

CHOR. Ha ! who was it that moved ? what form divine  
Do I perceive ? look there ! ye nymphs, attend,  
With rapid passage through the fleecy clouds  
Borne onward, some divinity arrives  
At Phthia's pastures, famed for generous steeds.

THETIS, PELEUS, CHORUS.

THE. O Peleus, mindful of the ties which bound  
Our plighted love, I hither from the house  
Of Nereus come, and with these wholesome counsels  
Begin ; despair not, though thy present woes  
Are grievous : for e'en I who should have borne  
A race of children such as ne'er might cause  
My tears to stream, have lost the son who crowned  
Our hopes, Achilles, swift of foot, the first  
Of Grecian heroes. But to thee, the motives  
Which brought me hither, will I now relate ;  
O listen to my voice. Back to that altar  
Devoted to the Pythian god, convey  
This body of Achilles' slaughtered son,  
And bury it ; so shall his tomb declare  
The murderous violence Orestes' band  
Committed : but yon captive dame, I mean  
Andromache, on Helenus bestowed  
In marriage, in Molossia's land must dwell,  
And her young son, the only royal branch  
Which of the stem of Æacus remains ;  
From him in long succession shall a race  
Of happy kings Molossia's sceptre wield :  
Nor will our progeny, O aged man,  
Be utterly extinct, when blended thus  
With Ilium, still protected by the gods.  
Though by Minerva's stratagems it fell.  
But, as for thee, that thou mayst know the blessing  
Of having wedded me, who am by birth  
A goddess and the daughter of a god,  
From all the ills which wait on human life  
Releasing, thee immortal will I make  
And incorruptible ; with me a goddess  
In Nereus' watery mansions thou a god

Hereafter shalt reside, and from the waves  
 Emerging with dry feet, behold our son  
 Achilles, to his parents justly dear,  
 Inhabiting that isle whose chalky coasts  
 Are laved by the surrounding Euxine deep.  
 But go to Delphi's city by the gods  
 Erected, thither bear this weltering corse,  
 And when thou hast interred it, to this land  
 Return, and in that cave which through the rock  
 Of Sepia time hath worn, thy station keep  
 Till from the waves I with my sister choir  
 The fifty Nereids come, to bear thee hence.  
 Thou must endure the woes imposed by fate,  
 For thus hath Jove ordained. But cease to grieve  
 For the deceased: for by the righteous gods  
 The same impartial sentence is awarded  
 To the whole human race, and death's a debt  
 Which all must pay.

PEL. Hail, venerable dame,  
 Daughter of Nereus, my illustrious wife:  
 For what thou dost is worthy of thyself,  
 And of thy progeny. I cease to grieve  
 At thy command, O goddess, and will go,  
 Soon as my grandson's corse I have interred,  
 To Pelion's cave, where first thy beauteous form  
 I in these arms received. The man whose choice  
 Is by discretion guided, should select  
 A consort nobly born, and give his daughters  
 To those of virtuous families, nor wish  
 To wed a damsel sprung from worthless sires,  
 Though to his house a plenteous dower she bring:  
 So shall he ne'er incur the wrath of Heaven.

CHOR. A thousand shapes our varying fates assume,  
 The gods perform what we could least expect,  
 And oft the things for which we fondly hoped  
 Come not to pass: but Heaven still finds a clue  
 To guide our steps through life's perplexing maze.  
 And thus does this important business end.

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