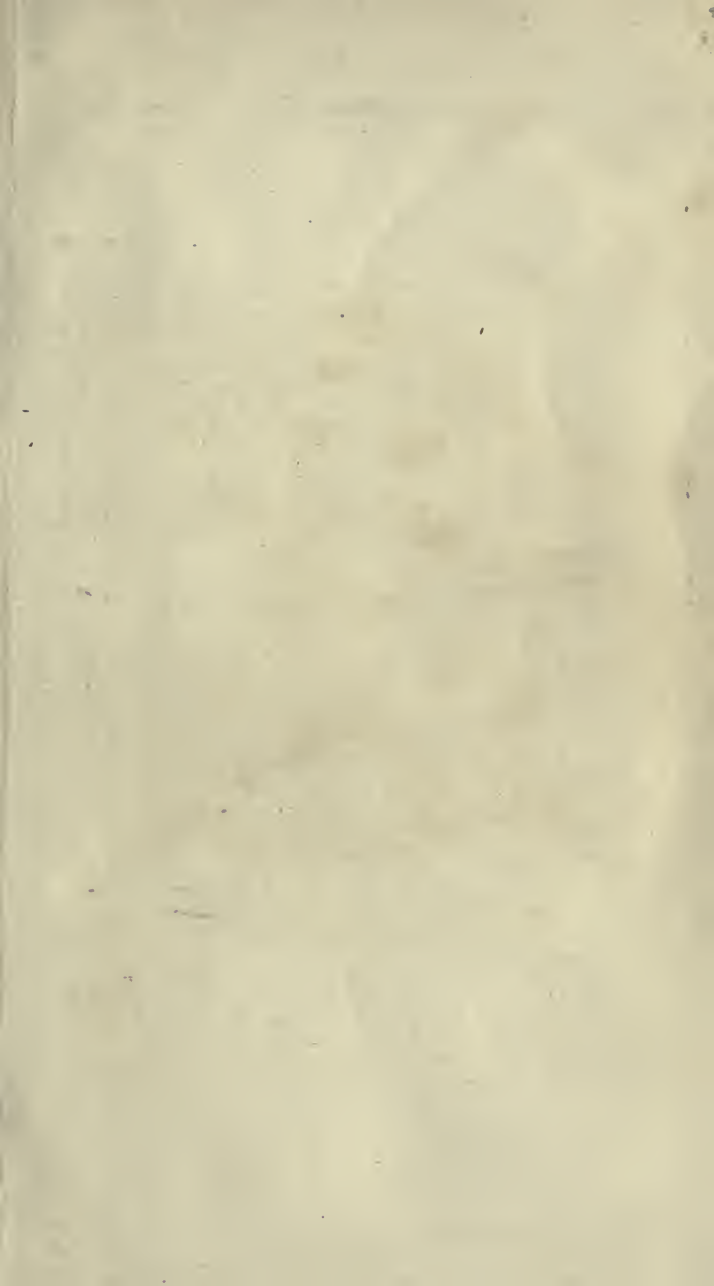
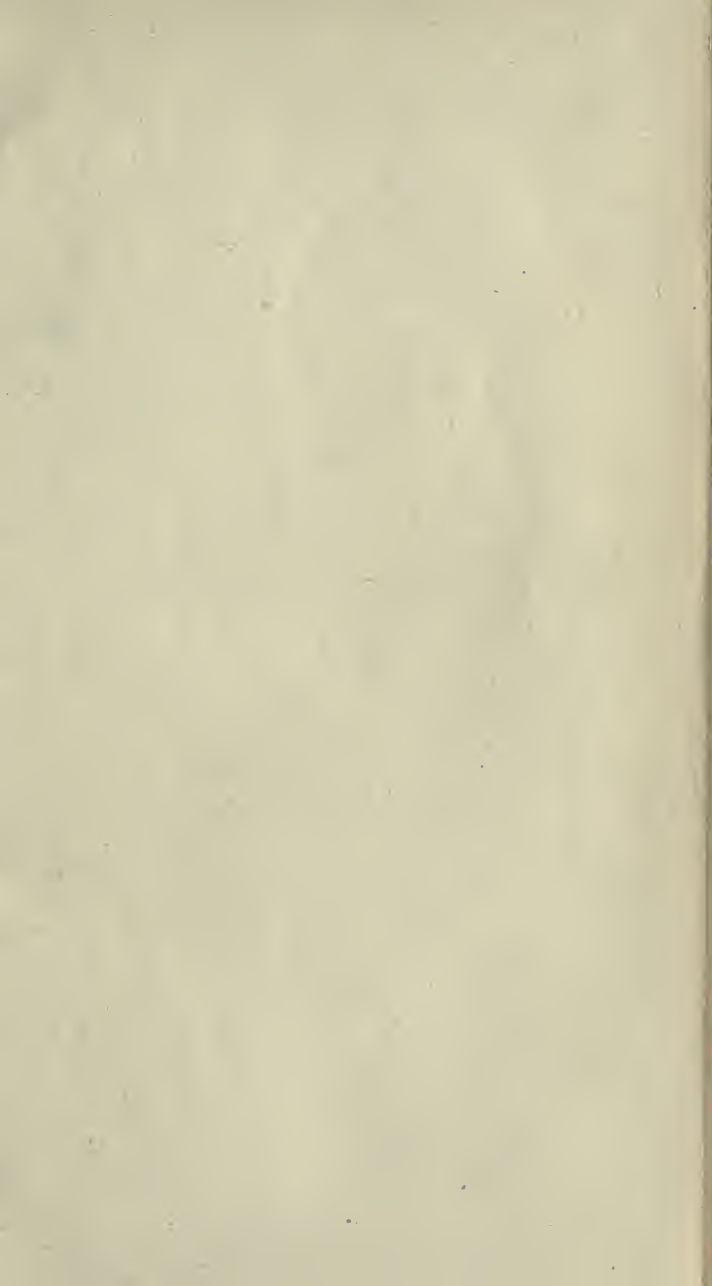


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SOPHOCLES



# Homer to Theocritus

An Outline History of Classical Greek  
Literature with Selected Translations

BY

EDWARD CAPPS, Ph. D.



NEW YORK CLEVELAND CHICAGO

The Chautauqua Press

**READING ROOM**

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## PREFACE

The literature of ancient Greece is too precious a heritage of our race to be reserved for those alone who read Greek freely. The number of these in the United States is growing rapidly, but the growth is hardly keeping pace with the increase in the attendance upon our schools and colleges. I conceive it to be the duty of every true Hellenist to encourage, to the best of his ability, not only the study of the Greek literature through the Greek language—and in this effort the scope of his influence is limited, in these days of elective studies and overcrowded curricula—but also of the Greek literature through the standard translations which have a place in English literature. Not that a translation can ever adequately reproduce Homer or Plato. Even the best translation of the *Iliad* seems a cold and lifeless thing when compared with the wingéd words of Homer himself. But the *Iliad* of Lang,<sup>o</sup> Leaf, and Myers and Jowett's *Plato* are great works, considered simply as literature, even if they do not reproduce all of the qualities of Homer and Plato. It is to be hoped that the time is not far distant when those who arrange our schemes of education will emulate the example of France in providing, for those who do not, from choice or necessity, pursue the study of Greek in the schools and colleges, a sort of Golden Treasury of the masterpieces of the world's literatures, in which the great poets and prose



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writers of Greece will find a place. A beginning has already been made in this direction by the inclusion of Pope's *Iliad* in the list of English classics required for admission to most of our colleges.

It was with the purpose of furthering this cause that this book was undertaken, not without hope that the younger student who is not far advanced in the study of the Greek language might also find help and stimulus in its use. The choice of selections has been determined in many instances by the accessibility of the translation to the general public. I have tried, as far as space would permit, to place each branch of literature and each author in its proper setting, keeping constantly in mind the course of development of the literature as a whole. Three chapters which are needed to make the outline complete—viz., the Homeric Hymns and Hesiod, the Lost Writers of the Fourth Century (especially the early poets of the New Comedy), and Aristotle—have been omitted in order to bring the book within the desired limits. They will be added, together with some selections from the anthology and more extended quotations, especially from the prose writers, in an enlarged edition which will appear in the near future.

CHICAGO, June 1, 1900.



# HOMER TO THEOCRITUS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

General Characteristics of Greek Literature—Originality—Universality—Normal Growth—Freedom from Outside Influences—Influence Upon Modern Literatures and Modern Thought—Literature a Product—The Greek People—Achæans—Æolians—Dorians—Ionians—The Attic Dialect—Political Organization—Diversity of Political Conditions—Physical Environment—Love of Nature—Publication of Greek Literature—Periods of Greek Literature.

The literature of ancient Greece forms an ideal introduction to the study of literature in general, not only because it is the earliest literature of Europe and has exercised a powerful influence upon all succeeding literatures, and not simply because it is still and always will be one of the great world literatures, but also because, as an object of study, it presents certain general characteristics the consideration of which cannot but prove instructive to all students.

Apart from the intrinsic excellence in form and thought of the Greek masterpieces, upon which it would be superfluous to dwell here, we may emphasize first the originality of the Greek literature. Inheriting no literary traditions, surrounded by peoples who could furnish them with no literary models, they wrought out, practically unaided, through the force of their

own genius, most of the literary forms which the races of Europe have accepted as typical and universal. To appreciate fully the significance of this achievement we must bear in mind that even the chief types of prose, to say nothing of poetry, have of course no existence in the nature of things, but are the results of repeated experimentation and of conscious effort to present the subject-matter in the most appropriate and effective artistic form. Now the most perfect orations of Demosthenes and the dialogues of Plato embody the results of such experiments extending over several generations in Greece. The orations of Demosthenes and the dialogues of Plato were accordingly distinctively Greek creations. Cicero, on the other hand, depended upon his Greek models rather than upon his predecessors in Rome. Roman oratory, therefore, and the dialogue as exemplified in Cicero, were not distinctively Roman creations. The originality of the Greeks in literature was shown in every branch which they attempted, both in prose and in poetry.

But their originality would not be a matter of such importance were it not for the further fact that the forms and types which the Greeks originated were themselves of an essentially universal character. Other races also have brought certain literary forms to perfection. The Vedic hymns of the early Hindus, the penitential psalms of the Babylonians, the prophetic writings of the Hebrews, and the satires in verse of the Romans, are all creations original with these peoples, and to them were satisfactory forms of literary expression. But these types have not appealed to the artistic sense of other races in the same way,

but have remained peculiar to the peoples which originated them. They are unique and sometimes really great, but in no sense universal. The great creations of the Greeks, on the other hand, have furnished the western hemisphere with its highest ideals in literary form in many branches. This is due to the fact that the Greeks had above all other peoples, ancient or modern, an artistic sense for what was beautiful in form and appropriate in expression, as is well illustrated by their temples and statues. They did not achieve their ideals all at once, but only after ages of effort. But every step in the progress toward perfection was directed by instincts which rarely erred.

Perhaps the most instructive characteristic of Greek literature, considered in the course of its development, is the fact that its progress toward perfection was a normal growth. Changes were slow and regular, never taking on the character of a revolution. This is the result, largely, of the fact to which we have already alluded, the relative freedom from outside influences. Consequently the causes which determined the development of this literature are more easily discerned and the course of the changes traced with greater precision than in the case of any other literature. The Greeks were, of course, indebted to other nations in various ways, and we may not overlook such influences as we may detect with certainty. Along with the alphabet they doubtless received intellectual stimulus from the Phœnicians; from the oriental races of Asia Minor they derived important ideas in music and religion which exercised no little influence upon their poetry and morals;

Egypt, Assyria, Persia, and Rome in turn were responsible for accessions of knowledge and extended their horizon. The Greeks were far from insensible to the merits of other peoples, and gladly laid them under contribution. But after taking all these things into consideration, Greek literature as a whole can be studied as essentially the product of a single people; for from without they received but impulses, never a fully developed principle nor a perfected literary form. Consequently the growth of the literature as a whole was regular and normal, and the various kinds of literature, corresponding to successive stages in the social, political, and moral development, were produced in an orderly succession. Epic poetry, for example, reflects the patriarchal stage in Greek civilization; Lyric poetry, the aristocratic; the Drama, the democratic; while Prose, representing the period of highest popular culture, came to its flower after Poetry.

We have referred to the influence of the Greek literature upon the literatures of modern Europe. Directly or indirectly, it has been the predominating influence. This influence has been exerted partly through the medium of the Latin literature, especially upon the literatures of southern Europe, and for a long time upon those of northern Europe, and in part directly, especially, perhaps during the last two centuries, owing to the revival of Greek studies in England, Germany, and France. The poetry of Tennyson and Browning, to take English examples, is permeated by Greek influences, and can be properly studied and fully appreciated only by going back to the Greek masterpieces which furnished inspiration and suggestion in rhythms, style, and

imagery. The same is true of the great classical writers of Germany and France. Nor can we overlook the value of a knowledge of Greek literature on the purely intellectual side, for its practical bearing on modern thought. Almost every department of modern life has received impulse and direction from the great thinkers of Greece—religion, ethics, philosophy, politics, and science.

The life of a great man can not be rightly understood without a knowledge of his ancestry, early training, the social, political, and religious conditions of his time—in short, all of the influences which helped to mould his character and determine his conduct. A mere chronological account of his doings would be wholly inadequate as a biography. So it is with the literature of a people. While we may get enjoyment and profit from the reading of a certain book without knowing its author or the age whose characteristics are reflected in it, yet the advantage of this sort of reading is, after all, but slight in comparison with that to be had from a study of the same book as the expression of an individual and of a people, the product of a certain civilization. The more remote from our own time the people whose literary products we study, and the more extensive and varied the literature, the more necessary it becomes to gain the vantage-ground from which our view will be least obstructed, our vision most true. To this end we should know as much as possible of the people, of their racial characteristics as moulded by their environment, their religious beliefs and practices, their view of nature, their social and family life, their institutions, language, art, history. Within the limits of

this book we shall have to confine ourselves to a few suggestions and general topics, and to short accounts of the various branches of literature and of the several authors. But the right point of view should be constantly kept in mind, and the reader should have frequent recourse to some of the manuals of history, art, mythology, and social life to which reference is made in the bibliographies.

In prehistoric times, probably as late as fifteen hundred years before Christ, the branch of the Indo-European race which we know as the Greeks was confined to the little peninsula of Greece and the outlying islands, to which they had migrated at some earlier period. But Greece is small and its soil too poor to support a large population. The surplus population soon took to the sea, and planted colonies on the most inviting sites all over the shores of the Mediterranean. Southern Italy and Sicily, the Ionian and Ægæan islands were occupied; colonies were established far up the Nile and along the northern shores of Africa, as far west as Marseilles and beyond the Dardanelles in the east. Greek civilization followed each colony, and intercourse with the mother country, intellectual as well as commercial, was never allowed to cease. All the important offshoots of the early stock contributed something to Greek culture and to the common literature.

Before the period of emigration and colonization the dominant people in Greece were the Achæans. This is the name by which Homer designates the people who went against Troy. In the historical period, however, we find three great divisions of the Greeks, distinguished from each other by dialect, customs,

and racial qualities—Æolians, Dorians, and Ionians. Since each of these families had its own distinctive part in Greek literature, it is necessary to know where they were settled, and, briefly, how they differed from each other.

The main seat of the Æolians, when literary history begins, was the island of Lesbos and the adjoining coasts of Asia Minor. But the early home of the stock was in northern Greece, where the Thessalians, Bœotians, and Ætolians remained their chief representatives. Only the Æolians of Asia Minor and the Bœotians on the mainland were fertile in literature, and these two branches, through being long separated and subject to widely different conditions, had retained few common characteristics, except in speech, at the time when writers appeared among them. The atmosphere of Bœotia is heavy and moist, and the inhabitants came to be regarded by their neighbors as sluggish and dull. These qualities certainly do not appear, however, in the few great writers and generals who sprang from Bœotian soil. As for the Lesbians, as the climate of that part of Asia Minor is mild and relaxing, conducive to luxury and ease, so the people were impressionable, luxurious, and imaginative. Lesbos became the home of the poetry of passion and intense personal feeling.

Some time after the Homeric age the Dorians migrated southward from northern Greece, driving out or making subject a part of the old Achæan population. In historical times the chief Dorian settlements were Megara and Corinth on the isthmus; Argolis, Laconia, and Messena in the Peloponnesus; Crete and Rhodes in the Ægæan Sea, and the south-

west portions of Asia Minor; Syracuse in Sicily, and Tarentum in southern Italy. The Spartans of Laconia were regarded as the Dorians of the Dorians. Keeping themselves aloof from alien influences, they developed, certainly, the most typical Dorian civilization, whereas the Corinthians and Syracusans mixed freely with the rest of the world and lost more of the family characteristics. The Spartans were warlike and reserved, devoutly religious, intolerant of innovations, unemotional. The terse and rugged Dorian dialect, with its prevailing broad vowel-sounds, always seemed to the Greeks peculiarly appropriate to the stately choral odes in honor of the gods, which the Spartans first brought to perfection.

By far the most important in the history of Greek literature were the Ionians, and of the Ionians the older branch which occupied Attica and Eubœa. The settlements along the coasts of Asia Minor between the Æolic cities in the north and the Doric on the south were Ionian, and also most of the islands of the Ægæan. The Ionians claimed numerous colonies besides in Italy, Sicily, and throughout the Mediterranean. The language of the Ionians was soft and flowing, abounding in vowel sounds, forming a striking contrast with the Doric. Even the prose writings of the Ionians seem to have a poetic flavor, due to the rich and varied grace inherent in the language itself. The Attic dialect, which gradually became to a large degree the universal language of cultured Greeks, is a modified form of the Ionic, uniting energy and dignity to softness and grace. The perfected Attic of the time of Demosthenes was distinctly a literary dialect, developed by generations of conscious effort



to improve it, and adapting itself in a wonderful degree to the demands of all varieties of prose and poetry. It is a peculiar feature of Attic poetry that it freely employs, along with the local dialect, also the Doric and the old Ionic in forms of composition in which the latter seemed more appropriate. In tragedy, for example, we may find Homeric forms in narrative portions that partake of the Homeric style, Doric in the lyric portions sung by the chorus, and the old Ionic in the dialogue. The Athenians instinctively associated certain styles of composition with the dialect in which each style had reached its highest development outside of Athens. In this way, either by imitation or by assimilation, they appropriated to their own use all forms of expression that would help to make their own language the most perfect literary instrument.

The three great families of which we have spoken were never united as separate political organisms. Even contiguous members of the same family were often independent of one another. The colonies also were self-governing. Owing to the configuration of the Grecian peninsula its inhabitants were cut up into numerous separate communities of liberty-loving folk, shut off from each other by mountain ranges and branches of the sea. The result was a large number of little governments, some democratic, some oligarchical, all imbued with the spirit of liberty and independence, furnished by nature with the best of fortifications for self-defense, and each determined to work out its own problem of polity and society for itself. Constantly quarreling with one another, the larger states trying to absorb the smaller and aspiring

each to the honor of being the acknowledged leader of all the Greeks, they yet opposed an almost united front to the barbarians in national crises. At the same time the states of Asia Minor were always under the shadow of the Persian Empire, either as tributary subjects or else fighting an unequal contest for independence; while in Sicily and Italy tyrants succeeded in establishing themselves for a longer period than elsewhere. This great diversity of social and political conditions was naturally not without its influence upon the literary productions of the various states, and in each state the constant political vicissitudes were in turn reflected in its literature. In this respect the literature of Greece presents a much more complex problem for the student than that of Rome, where for centuries every notable literary production emanated from the capital itself.

Foremost among the influences which helped to mould the Greek race, giving to all of its members certain common characteristics and ideals and to each member its own distinctive individuality, we must consider the land in which it lived. Never was a gifted people more fortunate in its habitation. By reason of its latitude, Greece has a southern climate; and yet the mountains, everywhere dominating the plains, temper the warm air and instill a northern vigor. In the low valleys and on the islands the palm and pomegranate flourish, while on the hills are found the hardy northern cereals, and still higher up the pine and the fir. No spot on the mainland is more than forty miles from the sea, which furnishes an easy means of communication between the various districts and with the outside world. The mountains and the

sea—these are the two leading facts in the geography of Greece. Add to these the remarkable clearness and brilliancy of the atmosphere and the exceptional beauty and variety of the scenery, and we have at once the key to the understanding of many things not only in the history of the Greek people, but also in the wonderful literature which they produced.

Greek literature reveals, especially in the poets, a profound and intimate sympathy with nature. The Greek lived in the open air, the inhabitant of the city no less than the countryman. He was a keen and discriminating observer, and none of nature's moods nor the significance of the phenomena of life about him, whether animate or inanimate, escaped him. Nature was not with him an object of conscious study and contemplation, as with us, but rather a daily companion, an intimate friend. Doubtless the passionate love of the beautiful, which the Greeks possessed to a greater extent than any other people, was inspired by the exceptionally beautiful surroundings in which they lived.

In studying the Greek literature we must constantly bear in mind a fundamental difference between it and other literatures in the means by which an author's works were brought to the knowledge of the public. Almost the whole body of classical Greek literature was presented to a hearing, not to a reading, public. The art of writing was known in Greece certainly as early as the eighth century, but at this early time the materials employed were stone and other hard materials. Even in the age of Pericles, when we first hear of libraries, it is doubtful if books could be made with sufficient ease and cheapness to enable any but the

few to buy them. The Homeric poems were at first chanted by bards at the courts of the chieftains, and were probably not committed to writing until long after the period of epic poetry had passed. The songs of the lyric poet were sung by the poet himself to his friends, or by choruses to a larger public. The drama was, of course, performed in the theatre, and in this way alone became familiar to the people. The tragedy composed with a view to being read, not acted, is a phenomenon which occurs only after the period of the decline had set in. So it was with early prose writing also. Herodotus recited a part of his history first at the Olympic festival. Oratory was necessarily oral. In short, we may safely say that there was no reading public, as we understand the term, before the time of Plato. After these first oral publications, the great works of epic and lyric poetry became known throughout the Greek world by means of travelers or traveling minstrels and choruses. Without doubt this direct contact of the people with the author not only quickened the minds of the people and cultivated their taste, but also reacted powerfully upon the author himself, and thus hastened the progress toward perfection.

For almost three thousand years the Greek people have never ceased to have a literature of their own. The Greeks of to-day not only have a considerable body of popular poetry, but boast of a goodly and growing number of writers of no mean ability, both in prose and in poetry. During the Byzantine period—that is, from the time of the Emperor Justinian to the fall of Constantinople (529 to 1453)—Greek letters flourished, though few great works were pro-

duced. It is our purpose here to study only the literature of ancient Greece, and principally that of the classical period—that is, to the destruction of Greek liberty by Alexander. The ancient period naturally falls into five great periods: (1) the Age of Epic Poetry, from Homer to the end of the eighth century; (2) the Age of Lyric Poetry, the seventh, sixth, and part of the fifth centuries; (3) the Attic Period, to the conquests of Alexander; (4), the Alexandrine Age, down to the Roman conquest; (5) the Roman Age, to the time of Justinian. The first three of these five periods come more especially within the scope of this book. It is fitting that we should devote the larger part of our attention to poetry, which to-day claims the larger share of our interest and admiration.

## CHAPTER II

### EPIC POETRY. INTRODUCTION TO THE ILIAD

The Earliest Literature of Europe—Precursors of the Epic—Legendary Bards—The Marriage Hymn—The Dirge—Secular Tendency of Religious Poetry—The Minstrel—Minstrel Themes in Homer—The Poets of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*—Natural and Literary Epics—The Trojan War before the *Iliad*—The Marriage of Peleus and Thetis—The Apple of Discord—The Judgment of Paris—The Rape of Helen—The Summoning of the Greek Chieftains—The First Years of the Siege—The Story of the *Iliad*—Theme, the *Wrath of Achilles*—Analysis of Book I.

At the very threshold of Greek literature stand the two majestic poems which for almost three thousand years have commanded the admiration of the world—the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer. The literature of Europe as well as of Greece begins with these two poems, which for centuries were at once the Bible and the Milton of the Greek people. Although of very early origin, composed long before writing was employed for literary purposes, they are not the crude productions of a primitive people, like the early epics of other races, but are extended works of a highly polished art, reflecting an advanced stage of civilization. This is a phenomenon, without parallel elsewhere, which invites the student to the interesting but complicated problem of their origin. It is the unique distinction of the Homeric poems, however, as compared with the earliest literature of other peoples, that, in spite of the multitude of recondite questions

concerning their authorship and original form which have occupied the scholar, the reader who wishes merely to enjoy them as works of literature has little need of learned commentary or exposition. The heroic deeds and marvelous adventures of which Homer has to tell are simply told. The poems are complete narratives in themselves, and in the main supply their own setting as regards persons, situations, and environment. Most of the books which have been written about Homer have been written out of Homer himself. The research and exploration of recent times have, it is true, shed a flood of light upon the civilization of the Homeric age, but they have added comparatively little to our knowledge of the Homeric poems as works of literature, except in demonstrating that the story of the Trojan war is not entirely the creation of a poet's fancy.

There are no remains of a Greek literature before Homer. Even the Greeks of the classical period possessed nothing earlier than the *Iliad*. It is impossible to suppose, however, that poems so perfect as works of art could have come into being without forerunners. There must have been bards before Homer, just as certainly as there were sculptors before Pheidias. The very perfection of the Parthenon frieze presupposes the practice of carving in marble for generations, even if we had no earlier remains of Greek sculpture. Greek legend recognizes this necessity, for it records the names of certain mythical bards, such as Orpheus, Musæus, and Olympus, servants of the Muses, who, in the remote past—an indefinite time before Homer—sang in honor of the gods. The earliest literature of the Indo-European race to which we

belong, the Vedas of the early Hindus, consist mainly of short hymns, of praise or entreaty, to the early Indian gods. So, long before Homer, in the childhood of the Greek race, there were doubtless poets who voiced the religious feelings of the people and contributed their share to the development of the poetic art which the authors of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* inherited in its perfected form.

The most important events of family life also called for celebration in song. At the marriage of the mortal Peleus with the goddess Thetis, we are told, the Muses themselves sang the wedding hymn. In the description of the shield of Achilles which is given in the *Iliad* (18, 493 ff.), the poet says that Hephæstus "fashioned thereon two fair cities of mortal men. In the one were espousals and marriage feasts, and beneath the blaze of torches they were leading the brides from their chambers through the city, and loud arose the bridal song. And young men were whirling in the dance, and among them flutes and viols sounded high; and the women standing each at her door were marveling." Not less old than the marriage hymn is the dirge for the dead. One of the scenes depicted on the shield of Achilles was a vineyard, in which maidens and youths were plucking the clusters of grapes. "In the midst of them a boy made pleasant music on a clear-toned viol, and sang thereto a sweet Linos-song with delicate voice; while the rest with feet falling together kept time with the music and song." The Linos-song was one of the earliest known to the Greeks, and is thought to be a lament for the departing summer, which had been personified as a young boy, Linos. Although a dirge, it had



now become "a sweet song" for the youth to sing at the joyous vintage. These early dirges, which had taken their place among the poetry of the people, doubtless suggested the form of the funeral chant over the body of the dead, the words of which were necessarily improvised. When the body of Hector was brought back to Troy by his father, Priam, "they laid him upon a fretted bed, and set beside him minstrels, leaders of the dirge, who wailed a mournful lay, while the women made moan with them" (*Iliad*, 24, 722 ff.). Then Hector's wife, Andromache, his mother, Hecabe, and Helen, the wife of his brother Paris, stepped forward one after another and sang her lament. When the hero Achilles was slain in battle, the chanting of dirges lasted seventeen days. The shade of Agamemnon thus speaks to the shade of Achilles in Hades (*Odyssey*, 24, 24 ff.): "And forth from the sea came thy mother with the deathless maidens of the waters, when they heard the tidings; and a wonderful wailing rose over the deep, and trembling fell on the limbs of all the Achæans. . . Then round thee stood the daughters of the ancient one of the sea, holding a pitiful lament, and they clad thee about in raiment incorruptible. And all the nine Muses, one to the other replying, with sweet voices began the dirge; then thou wouldst not have seen an Argive but wept as mightily rose up the clear chant."

We have seen, then, that before Homer the Greeks possessed several varieties of poetry which assumed a more or less literary form. Those which we have considered were originally all of a religious nature; for even the marriage hymns and the dirge grew out of

religious observances. But, as in the case of the Linos-song, some of these varieties had early acquired a popular form. The constant tendency was to divest religious poetry of its liturgical character. The Homeric poems record the existence before Homer of another class of poetry, which possesses barely a trace of the religious origin from which it doubtless sprung—the stories of the exploits of heroes. It is of this class of poetry that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* give us the best picture.

The minstrels form a distinct class in Homeric society. As servants of the Muses they enjoy especial privileges, and receive at the hands of the chieftains exceptional honor and respect. When Agamemnon departed for Troy, he intrusted his household to the care of a minstrel, and Odysseus, after slaying all the suitors, spares the life of Phemius, who had been associated with the suitors, on the plea that “god had put into his heart all manner of lays.” When guests are gathered together in the halls of a chieftain, minstrels sing to them. “Song and dance, these are the accompaniments of the feast.” Odysseus, after his entertainment at the palace of King Alcinous, where he had heard the bard Demodocus, says: “King Alcinous, most notable of all the people, verily it is a good thing to list to a minstrel such as this one, like to the gods in voice. Nay, as for me, I say that there is no more gracious or perfect delight than when a whole people makes merry, and the men sit orderly at feast in the halls and listen to the singer, and the tables beside them are laden with bread and flesh, and a wine-bearer, drawing the wine, serves it round and pours it into the cups. This seems to me wellnigh

the fairest thing in the world." (*Odyssey*, 9, 2 ff.) By his choice of a theme and by his spirited rendering of it the bard could affect his hearers with either joy or sorrow at will. The audience looked upon him as really inspired. Alcinous says of Demodocus: "The god hath given minstrelsy to him as to none other, to make men glad in what way soever his spirit stirs him to sing." Again, he is called "the beloved minstrel, whom the Muse loved dearly, and she gave him both good and evil; of his sight she reft him, but granted him sweet song." When the swineherd Eumæus wishes to impress upon Penelope the charms of the stranger who proves afterward to be Odysseus, he says: "Even as when a man gazes upon a singer, whom the gods have taught to sing words of yearning joy to mortals, and they have a ceaseless desire to hear him, so long as he will sing, even so he charmed me."

In the *Iliad*, Achilles, when refraining from warfare on account of his quarrel with Agamemnon, is seen by his tent "taking his pleasure of a loud lyre. Therein he was delighting his soul and singing the glories of heroes." Traces are found of such lays on the Labors of Heracles and on the Quest of the Golden Fleece. The minstrels in the *Odyssey* also sing of the "glorious deeds of men," but we are often told precisely what the subject of the song is. On one occasion it is "the loves of Ares and Aphrodite." At other times it is of the exploits and adventures connected with the Trojan war. Phemius sang among the suitors "of the pitiful return of the Achæans that Pallas Athene laid on them as they came forth from Troy." Penelope overhears the tale, which reminds

her of the long absence of her husband; and weeping she spake unto the minstrel: "Phemius, since thou knowest many other charms for mortals, deeds of men and gods, which bards rehearse, some one of these do thou sing as thou sittest by them, and let them drink their wine in silence; but cease from this pitiful strain that ever wastes my heart within my breast, since to me, above all women, hath come a sorrow comfortless." Her son Telemachus, however, rebukes her, saying: "As for him, it is no blame if he sings the ill-faring of the Danaans; for men always prize that song the most which rings newest in their ears." (*Odyssey*, I, 325 ff.) Again, in the palace of Alcinous, when Odysseus was present, "the Muse stirred the minstrel (Demodocus) to sing the songs of famous men, even that lay whereof the fame had then reached the wide heaven—namely, the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles." Odysseus drew his cloak over his head and wept. Later on, Odysseus summons Demodocus, and says: "Come now, change thy strain, and sing of the fashioning of the horse of wood, even the guileful thing that godly Odysseus led up into the citadel when he had laden it with the men who wasted Ilios." And Demodocus is able to comply.

These passages are of especial interest because of the fact that the themes of which the minstrels sang are precisely of the kind which Homer weaves together to form the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, although some of the songs, such as the story of the quarrel of Achilles and Odysseus and the stratagem of the wooden horse, are not actually found in the *Iliad* itself. From the passages which we have cited several conclusions may be drawn on the subject of pre-

Homeric poetry: (1) Besides the short poems of a religious nature, such as the hymns to the gods and the responses of the oracles, there was current in the Greek world a large number of short poems that belonged more especially to domestic life—*e. g.*, marriage chants and dirges; (2) a professional class of minstrels existed, whose repertoires included songs on many themes, imaginary incidents in the lives of the gods, and the exploits of heroic men; (3) the exceptional honor shown to the minstrels and the eagerness of the people for new songs would encourage the production of new poems on the models of those already popular; (4) the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are made up of a great many such songs as those which the minstrels sang; (5) the perfection of the poetic art of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is explained by the existence in Greece of minstrel poets long before these poems were composed; (6) the poets of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were either the greatest of the minstrel poets, producing original poems of large compass in the manner of the earlier short lays, or else they were great collectors of the previously existing songs, which they put together to form a consistent whole, adding only the narrative needed to connect the separate lays. This is a part of the Homeric question which will be discussed later on.

The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are epic poems. The Greek word *epos*, from which the adjective "epic" is derived, meant originally a "word" or "saying," and in the plural was applied to the sayings in verse, such as the oracles, or the lays of the minstrels. Since these were composed in the hexameter verse, the measure in which Longfellow's *Evangeline* is written, and were

recited to the accompaniment of the lyre, and not "sung" in the modern sense, epic poetry came to mean narrative poetry in hexameter verse, as opposed to the melic or song poetry, and the term was applied to the longer poems of this kind. According to Aristotle, an epic poem should have a dignified theme and should form a consistent organic whole. This means that it cannot consist of a series of disconnected narratives with no leading thought running from beginning to end. A mere chronicle in verse could not constitute an epic poem. Every part of the narrative must conduce to the completion of the main theme.

The poems of Homer satisfy this definition of epic poetry no less than the great epics since written, as, for example, Vergil's *Aeneid* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. But there is one fundamental difference between the Homeric and the later epics. The difference may be indicated by calling the Homeric poems natural epics, and the *Aeneid* and *Paradise Lost* literary epics. Homer tells his story simply and for its own sake; Milton selects a noble theme and marshals all of his learning to embellish it. The unsophisticated people for whom Homer sang needed to know only their gods and their heroes to understand the narrative; but every page of Milton teems with allusions gathered from the whole world of literature and history. He wrote for learned readers.

The *Iliad* is a narrative of only a single episode in the Trojan war. The action of the *Iliad* embraces altogether only fifty-one days in the tenth year of the war. The story of the events which precede the *Iliad* were known to the Greeks through another early epic

poem, now lost, composed after the *Iliad*, in the eighth century before Christ. It was entitled the *Cypria*, and its reputed author was Stasinus of Cyprus. The hero of the poem is Paris. The story, as told in the *Cypria*, is briefly as follows:

Zeus, the king of the gods, alarmed at the increase of men upon the earth, resolves to reduce the population. Now both he and his brother Poseidon, god of the seas, loved the beautiful sea-nymph Thetis. But there was a prophecy which foretold that Thetis should have a son who would prove mightier than his father. To save themselves from such an event, therefore, it was agreed that Thetis should marry a mortal, Peleus, king of Thessaly. All of the gods and goddesses were bidden to the wedding, save only Eris, or Discord. But Zeus sends her also, that the quarrel may arise that shall lead to the Trojan war. Now Eris casts into the midst of the wedding guests a golden apple, inscribed "to the fairest." Hera, the wife of Zeus, and his daughter Athene, goddess of wisdom and prowess in warfare, and Aphrodite, goddess of love, all claim the prize. Zeus commands Hermes, the messenger of the gods, to conduct the three goddesses to Mount Ida, where Alexander or Paris, son of Priam, king of Ilios or Troy, was tending his flocks as a shepherd, quite unaware of his princely birth. Paris was to decide the dispute.<sup>1</sup> The goddesses accordingly appeared before him, each displaying her charms and proposing tempting bribes. Hera offered the sovereignty of Asia and great riches; Athene, great glory and renown in war; Aphrodite,

<sup>1</sup>See Tennyson's description of the Judgment of Paris in the poem *Enone*, named for the first wife of Paris.

the fairest of all women for his wife. The decision was in favor of Aphrodite, who accordingly received the golden apple. The two slighted goddesses conceived a great hatred toward Troy, the country of the umpire, and made their wrath felt heavily upon the Trojans during the war.

Paris, by the help of Aphrodite, got himself acknowledged as the son of Priam, equipped a fleet, and sailed to Greece in search of the fairest among women. He was hospitably received by Menelaus, king of Sparta. There, in the absence of the king, in violation of the sacred laws of hospitality, he won the love of Helen, the king's wife, and carried her back to Troy. Now Helen was not only the queen of Menelaus, but also the daughter of Zeus himself, by Leda, wife of Tyndareus, whom the king of the gods had visited in the guise of a swan. All the princes of the Achæans had wooed her, entering into a solemn compact with each other that they would all defend the rights of the successful suitor. Accordingly Menelaus called upon the other leading chieftains and upon his brother Agamemnon, king of Mycenæ, the most powerful of them all, to help him avenge the wrong and bring back Helen. With some difficulty they are induced to join in the adventure, and at last, under the chief command of Agamemnon, assemble at Aulis in Bœotia with a fleet of over a thousand ships. The most prominent chieftains, after Agamemnon and Menelaus, were Odysseus, king of Ithaca; Nestor, king of Pylos; Achilles and his chosen friend, Patroclus of Hellas; Idomeneus of Crete; Diomedes of Argos, and Ajax, son of Telamon, of Salamis. The fleet is long delayed by adverse winds sent by Artemis, until



Agamemnon consents to the sacrifice of his daughter Iphigeneia, to propitiate the wrath of the goddess. The start is made, and at length, after some misadventures, of which the most serious was the abandonment on the isle of Lemnos of Philoctetes, the possessor of the bow and unerring arrows of Heracles, the fleet reaches the shores of the Hellespont at the foot of the plain of Troy. The restoration of Helen is demanded of the Trojans, who refuse. ✓

The siege of Ilios<sup>1</sup> now begins. But it was not a close investment. The Greeks were encamped upon the beach beside their ships, which were drawn up upon the shore. The citadel, in which the Trojans were obliged to confine themselves, owing to the prowess of Achilles, was about three miles inland. There were occasional attacks and sallies. But the Greeks seem mainly to have occupied themselves with sweeping the surrounding country for provisions. Detachments were continually sent out under some chieftain to sack the small towns and to bring in the booty, whether of men or supplies, to be divided among the army. It was in one of these raids that Achilles, son of Peleus and Thetis, and king of the Myrmidons, ravaged the town of Thebes, and brought back among the spoils the two beautiful maidens Chryseis and Briseis. The former was assigned to Agamemnon to be his handmaiden, the latter to Achilles. So far the *Cypria* and the first nine years of the war. Chryseis proves to be the daughter of Chryses, priest of Apollo. The god avenges the insult to his priest by sending a pestilence upon the Greek

<sup>1</sup>In Homer, the citadel of Priam, the chief city of his kingdom, is called Ilios, known to the Romans as Ilium, and the country is Troia, "Troy-land." The latter name came to be used for the city also.

army. From this circumstance arises the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles with which the *Iliad* opens.

The traditional title of the poem does not quite accurately give its theme. *Ilias*, in English *Iliad*, properly means the "Story of Ilios." But the real theme is the *Wrath of Achilles* and is given in the first verse of the poem, in the invocation to the Muse:

O goddess! sing the wrath of Peleus' son,  
 Achilles, sing the deadly wrath that brought  
 Woes numberless upon the Greeks, and swept  
 To Hades many a valiant soul, and gave  
 Their limbs a prey to dogs and birds of air,—  
 For so had Jove<sup>1</sup> appointed,—from the time  
 When the two chiefs, Atrides,<sup>2</sup> king of men,  
 And great Achilles, parted first as foes.

I, 1-8. Bryant.

It is only with this conception of the subject of the *Iliad* that the poem has unity. Through Achilles' wrath the Greeks were obliged to fight without his aid, and could not win. The death of Patroclus ensued. Then, through love of his friend, the wrath of Achilles is directed against the Trojans. With Hector's death Patroclus is avenged. This is the story, and throughout the poem our interest centers

<sup>1</sup>Jove, or Jupiter, the Latin form of Zeus. Most of the standard translations give the Latin instead of the Greek names of the gods, though they are not always really equivalent. This would now be considered a fault, but was the prevailing custom a generation ago. The most common equivalents are: Neptune for Poseidon; Pluto for Hades; Vulcan for Hephæstus; Juno for Hera; Minerva for Athene; Venus for Aphrodite; Mars for Ares; Diana for Artemis; Mercury for Hermes; Saturn for Cronus; Latona for Leto.

<sup>2</sup>Atrides (more properly Atreides), i.e., son of Atreus, Agamemnon. It might also mean Menelaus, the brother of Agamemnon. The ending "-ides" in Greek signifies "son of." So Peleides = Achilles, son of Peleus; Tydeides = Diomedes, son of Tydeus, etc. Sometimes it may mean "descendant of"; e.g., Alceides = Heracles, whose grandfather was Alcæus, and Æacides = Achilles, son of Peleus, son of Æacus.

in the hero Achilles, vehement in love as in hate, whether he is sulking in his tent or fighting in the foremost ranks. But there are many incidents in an extended epic like this, and not all of them attach themselves closely to the leading theme.

The wrath of Achilles, then, arising from his quarrel with Agamemnon, was the cause of the woes of the Greeks. The account of the origin of the quarrel occupies about one-half of the first book.<sup>1</sup>

Which of the gods put strife between the chiefs,  
That they should thus contend? Latona's son  
And Jove's. Incensed against the king he bade  
A deadly pestilence appear among  
The army, and the men were perishing.  
For Atreus' son with insult had received  
Chryses the priest, who to the Grecian fleet  
Came to redeem his daughter, offering  
Uncounted ransom. In his hand he bore  
The fillets of Apollo, archer-god,  
Upon the golden sceptre, and he sued  
To all the Greeks, but chiefly to the sons  
Of Atreus, the two leaders of the host:—

“Ye sons of Atreus, and ye other chiefs,  
Well-greaved Achæans, may the gods who dwell  
Upon Olympus give you to o'erthrow  
The city of Priam and in safety reach  
Your homes; but give me my beloved child,  
And take her ransom, honoring him who sends  
His arrows far, Apollo, son of Jove.”

Then all the other Greeks, applauding, bade  
Revere the priest and take the liberal gifts  
He offered, but the counsel did not please  
Atrides Agamemnon; he dismissed  
The priest with scorn, and added threatening words:—

<sup>1</sup>The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were divided each into twenty-four books by an Alexandrian scholar in the third century before Christ. The divisions are often arbitrary and were made simply for convenience.

“Old man, let me not find thee loitering here  
 Beside the roomy ships, or coming back  
 Hereafter, lest the fillet thou dost bear  
 And sceptre of thy god protect thee not.  
 This maiden I release not till old age  
 Shall overtake her in my Argive home,  
 Far from her native country, where her hand  
 Shall throw the shuttle and shall dress my couch.  
 Go, chafe me not, if thou wouldst safely go.”

I, 9-42. Bryant.

The old man obeyed, and walked silently along the shore of the loud-sounding sea, and prayed aloud to Apollo. And Phœbus Apollo heard him.

Down he came,  
 Down from the summit of the Olympian mount,  
 Wrathful in heart; his shoulders bore the bow  
 And hollow quiver; there the arrows rang  
 Upon the shoulders of the angry god,  
 As on he moved. He came as comes the night,  
 And, seated from the ships aloof, sent forth  
 An arrow; terrible was heard the clang  
 Of that resplendent bow. At first he smote  
 The mules and the swift dogs, and then on man  
 He turned the deadly arrow. All around  
 Glared evermore the frequent funeral piles.  
 Nine days already had his shafts been showered  
 Among the host, and now, upon the tenth,  
 Achilles called the people of the camp  
 To council.

I, 57-72. Bryant.

Now when they were all assembled, Achilles, fleet of foot, arose, and proposed that they should inquire of some soothsayer or priest to tell them why Apollo was so wroth against them. Perchance he would accept a rich sacrifice and take away the pestilence. Then spake Calchas, the augur, who knew both things

that were and that should be and that had been before: "Achilles, dear to Zeus, thou biddest me tell the wrath of Apollo, the king that smiteth afar. Therefore will I speak, but do thou make covenant with me, and swear that verily with all thy heart thou wilt aid me both by word and deed. For of a truth I deem that I shall provoke one that ruleth all the Argives with might, and whom the Achæans obey." Achilles thus reassures Calchas: "Be of good courage, and speak whatever soothsaying thou knowest. No man while I live and behold the light on earth shall lay violent hands upon thee amid the hollow ships; no man of all the Danaans, not even if thou mean Agamemnon, that now avoweth him to be the greatest far of the Achæans."

Embolden'd thus, th' unerring prophet spoke:

"Not for neglected hecatombs or pray'rs,  
But for his priest whom Agamemnon scorn'd,  
Nor took his ransom, nor his child restor'd;  
On his account the Far-destroyer sends  
This scourge of pestilence, and yet will send;  
Nor shall we cease his heavy hand to feel,  
Till to her sire we give the bright-eyed girl,  
Unbought, unransom'd, and to Chrysa's shore  
A solemn hecatomb despatch; this done,  
The God, appeas'd, his anger may remit."

I, 108-118. Derby.

The hero, son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, then stood up before them, sore displeased; and his dark heart within him was greatly filled with anger, and his eyes were like flashing fire. He calls the aged seer a prophet of evil, praises the maid Chryseis, but agrees to give her up to save his people. He asks, however, that a recompense be provided for him,

that he alone of all the Achæans be not left without a prize. Achilles springs to his feet and reminds Agamemnon that all the spoil taken from the captured towns has already been apportioned. "Yield thou the damsel to the god, and we Achæans will pay thee back threefold and fourfold if ever Zeus grant us to sack the well-walled city of Troy." But Agamemnon suspects the motives of Achilles, and answers thus:

"Think not, Achilles, valiant though thou art  
 In fight, and godlike, to defraud me thus;  
 Thou shalt not so persuade me, nor o'erreach.  
 Think'st thou to keep thy portion of the spoil,  
 While I with empty hands sit idly down?  
 The bright-ey'd girl thou bidd'st me to restore;  
 If then the valiant Greeks for me seek out  
 Some other spoil, some compensation just,  
 'Tis well: if not, I with my own right hand  
 Will from some other chief, from thee perchance,  
 Or Ajax, or Ulysses, wrest his prey;  
 And woe to him on whomso'er I call!"

I, 153-165. Derby.

Achilles, stung by these words, indignantly reproaches Agamemnon. The wrongs they came to avenge upon Troy were not his own, but those of Menelaus. "All this thou reckonest not, nor takest thought thereof; and now thou threatenest thyself to take my meed of honor, wherefor I travailed much, and the sons of the Achæans gave it me. Never win I meed like unto his, when the Achæans sack any populous city of Trojan men; my hands bear the brunt of furious war, but when the apportioning cometh, then is thy meed far ampler, and I betake me to the ships with some small thing, yet mine own, when I have fought to weariness. Now will I depart to

Phthia, seeing it far better to return home on my beaked ships; nor am I minded here in dishonor to draw thee thy fill of riches and of wealth."

Him answered Agamemnon, king of men:  
 "Desert, then, if thou wilt; I ask thee not  
 To stay for me; there will be others left  
 To do me honor yet, and, best of all,  
 The all-providing Jove is with me still.  
 Thee I detest the most of all the men  
 Ordained by him to govern; thy delight  
 Is in contention, war, and bloody frays.  
 If thou art brave, some deity, no doubt,  
 Has thus endowed thee. Hence then to thy home,  
 With all thy ships and men! there domineer  
 Over thy Myrmidons;<sup>1</sup> I heed thee not,  
 Nor care I for thy fury. Thus, in turn,  
 I threaten thee; since Phœbus takes away  
 Chryseis, I will send her in my ship  
 And with my friends, and, coming to thy tent,  
 Will bear away the fair-cheeked maid, thy prize,  
 Briseis, that thou learn how far I stand  
 Above thee, and that other chiefs may fear  
 To measure strength with me, and brave my power."

I, 224-243. Bryant.

Achilles lays his hand to his sword, doubting whether he shall forthwith slay Agamemnon. But Athene came to him from heaven. She stood beside him and caught him by the golden hair, visible to him alone, and of the rest no man beheld her. She promises Achilles that if he will stay his anger goodly gifts will yet come to him by reason of this slight. So Achilles thrust the great sword back into the sheath, and was not disobedient to the saying of Athene. But he in nowise ceased his wrath, but angrily taunts the king, and says:

<sup>1</sup>The name of the Thessalian tribe over which Achilles ruled.

“ And now I say,  
 And bind my saying with a mighty oath :  
 By this my sceptre, which can never bear  
 A leaf or twig, since first it left its stem  
 Among the mountains—for the steel has pared  
 Its boughs and bark away, to sprout no more,  
 And now the Achaian judges bear it, they  
 Who guard the laws received from Jupiter,  
 Such is my oath—the time shall come when all  
 The Greeks shall long to see Achilles back,  
 While multitudes are perishing by the hand  
 Of Hector, the man-queller ; thou, meanwhile,  
 Though thou lament, shalt have no power to help,  
 And thou shalt rage against thyself to think  
 That thou hast scorned the bravest of the Greeks.”

As thus he spoke, Pelides to the ground  
 Flung the gold-studded wand, and took his seat.

I, 298-314. Bryant.

Then in their midst rose up Nestor, the clear-voiced orator of the Pyliaus, he from whose tongue flowed discourse sweeter than honey. Two generations of mortal men had he seen perish, and he was king among the third. Vainly he tried to allay the passions of the two chieftains. Achilles will yield the maiden Briseis to Agamemnon, but continues to defy his authority. The assembly breaks up. Agamemnon sends Chryseis back to her home, and has Briseis brought from Achilles' tent to his own. Apollo is appeased, but Achilles' abiding wrath remains. Seated on the beach of the sea, he prayed earnestly to his mother, Thetis. And his mother heard him as she sat in the sea-depths beside her aged sire. With speed arose she from the gray sea, like a mist, and sat her before the face of her weeping son, and stroked him with her hand. Achilles then tells Thetis his great sorrow, and entreats her to ask of Zeus that



he shall now give aid to the Trojans, and that the Achæans shall be given over to slaughter, in order that Agamemnon may perceive his blindness in that he honored not at all the best of the Achæans.

Thetis pities her son, and urges him to refrain utterly from battle. So Achilles sat by his swift-faring ships, still wroth. He betook him neither to the assembly nor to war, but consumed his heart in tarrying in his place, and yearned for the war-cry and for battle. And Thetis, when the gods were returned from a banquet among the Æthiopians, forgot not her son's charge, but rose up from the sea-wave, and at early morn mounted up to great heaven and Olympus. There found she Cronus' son, of the far-sounding voice, sitting apart from all on the topmost peak of many-ridged Olympus. So she sat before his face, and with her left hand clasped his knees, and with her right touched him beneath the chin, and spake in prayer to Zeus:

“O Jupiter, my father, if among  
The immortals I have ever given thee aid  
By word or act, deny not my request.  
Honor my son, whose life is doomed to end  
So soon; for Agamemnon, king of men,  
Hath done him shameful wrong: he takes from him  
And keeps the prize he won in war. But thou,  
Olympian Jupiter, supremely wise,  
Honor him thou, and give the Trojan host  
The victory, until the humbled Greeks  
Heap large increase of honors on my son.”

I, 633-643. Bryant.

Zeus hesitates to promise, for he fears to be at variance with Hera, his wife, who favors the Greeks on account of the decision of Paris. But he at last bowed

his dark brow, and the ambrosial locks waved from the king's immortal head, and he made great Olympus shake. Hera suspects the motive of Thetis' visit, and expostulates with Zeus on his interference with her plans, but Zeus rebukes her severely, so that she is afraid. Hephæstus comforts his mother Hera, and the gods make merry at the banquet.

So ends the first book, which forms the prologue to the main action of the poem.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MAIN ACTION OF THE ILIAD

The Preparation for Battle—Catalogue of the Opposing Forces—The First Day of Battle—The Combat of Paris and Menelaus—Pandarus violates the Truce—The Valor of Diomedes—The Parting of Hector and Andromache—The Combat of Ajax and Hector—*Selections*—The Second Day of Battle—The Repulse of the Greeks—The Embassy to Achilles—The Treachery of Dolon—*Selections*—The Third Day of Battle—The Trojans break down the Wall of the Camp—Poseidon aids the Greeks—The Ships are set on Fire—Patroclus fights in Achilles' Armor—The Rout of the Trojans—The Slaying of Patroclus—The Fight for his Body—The Armor of Achilles—The Turning-point of the Plot—*Selections*—The Fourth Day of Battle—Achilles drives back the Greeks—The Slaying of Hector—*Selections*—The Epilogue—The Funeral of Patroclus—The Ransom of Hector's Body—*Selections*.

The main action of the *Iliad* occupies the next twenty-one books, large portions of which are not strictly necessary to the unfolding of the plot, although in the main they illustrate the great need which the Greeks have for the help of Achilles, who remains apart until Patroclus, his friend, is slain. In this interval occur three days of fierce battle.

On the first day (Books II to VII) Agamemnon, who has been beguiled by a dream sent of Zeus into the belief that he will speedily capture Troy, even without the aid of Achilles, marshals his hosts and prepares for battle, although the people at first, thinking that he despairs of final victory, rush to the ships and are with difficulty recalled. An imposing catalogue of the

leaders of the Greek and Trojan forces, with the contingents furnished by each, closes the second book. The third book is occupied mainly with the fight of Paris with Menelaus in single combat, both armies having taken a solemn oath that the victor should receive Helen and the treasure that was stolen with her, thus ending the war. Paris is about to be taken captive by Menelaus when Aphrodite intervenes and rescues her favorite. While the armies are separated, waiting for the duel to begin, Helen, in a famous scene, points out to Priam from the walls of Troy the greatest warriors on the Greek side. The fourth book opens with an assembly of the gods on Olympus. Hera and Athene, in order to insure the final defeat of the Trojans, win the reluctant consent of Zeus to their plan that the Trojans shall violate their solemn pledge to deliver up Helen to Menelaus as victor over Paris. So Athene incites Pandarus, the Lycian archer, who fights on the Trojan side, to shoot an arrow at Menelaus during the armistice. The Greeks, outraged by this act of treachery, furiously renew the battle. In the fifth book the heroes on both sides do mighty deeds of valor, Æneas, Hector, and Sarpedon for the Trojans, Menelaus, Agamemnon, and Diomedes for the Greeks. But Diomedes is conspicuous above them all. He would have slain Æneas but for Aphrodite's intervention, and by Athene's aid wounds both Aphrodite and Ares when they take the field for the Trojans. There is less fighting in the sixth book. Glaucus, the Lycian ally of the Trojans, meets Diomedes in battle, but recognizing each other as family friends, they part in friendship. Hector goes back to Troy to prepare sacrifices to Athene, in the hope that she may

withdraw her support from the Greeks. In a touching scene he bids farewell to Andromache, his wife, and to his child, Astyanax, and returns to the battlefield. In the seventh book, Ajax, son of Telamon, is chosen by lot as champion of the Greeks to fight Hector in single combat. They fight desperately, the advantage being slightly on the side of Ajax, but night puts an end to the encounter. During the next two days the dead are buried and the Greeks build a strong wall about their ships. We quote a few characteristic passages from this section of the poem:

## THE ASSEMBLY OF THE GREEKS

Up rose the sceptered monarchs, and obeyed  
Their leader's call, and round them throng'd the crowd  
As swarms of bees, that pour in ceaseless stream  
From out the crevice of some hollow rock,  
Now clust'ring, and anon 'mid vernal flow'rs,  
Some here, some there, in busy numbers fly;  
So to th' assembly from their tents and ships  
The countless tribes came thronging; in their midst,  
By Jove enkindled, Rumour urged them on.  
Great was the din, and as the mighty mass  
Sat down, the solid earth beneath them groan'd;  
Nine heralds rais'd their voices loud, to quell  
The storm of tongues, and bade the noisy crowd  
Be still, and listen to the heaven-born kings.  
At length they all were seated, and awhile  
Their clamours sank to silence.

II, 98-113. Derby.

## AGAMEMNON ADDRESSES THE ARMY

"But now on me hath ægis-bearing Jove,  
The son of Saturn, fruitless toil impos'd,  
And hurtful quarrels; for in wordy war  
About a girl Achilles and myself  
Engag'd; and I, alas! the strife began:

Could we be friends again, delay were none,  
 How short soe'er, of Ilion's final doom.  
 But now to breakfast, ere we wage the fight.  
 Each sharpen well his spear, his shield prepare,  
 Each to his fiery steeds their forage give,  
 Each look his chariot o'er, that through the day  
 We may unwearied stem the tide of war ;  
 For respite none, how short soe'er, shall be  
 Till night shall bid the storm of battle cease.  
 With sweat shall reek upon each warrior's breast  
 The leathern belt beneath the covering shield ;  
 And hands shall ache that wield the pond'rous spear ;  
 With sweat shall reek the fiery steeds that draw  
 Each warrior's car ; but whomsoe'er I find  
 Loitering beside the beak'd ships, for him  
 'Twere hard to 'scape the vultures and the dogs."

He said ; and from th' applauding ranks of Greece  
 Rose a loud sound, as when the ocean wave,  
 Driv'n by the south wind on some lofty beach,  
 Dashes against a prominent crag, expos'd  
 To blasts from every storm that roars around.

II, 430-455. Derby.

#### THE MARSHALING OF THE GREEK HOSTS

The high-voic't heralds instantly he charg'd to call to arms  
 The curl'd-head Greeks ; they call'd ; the Greeks straight  
 answer'd their alarms.

The Jove kept kings about the kings all gather'd, with their aid  
 Rang'd all in tribes and nations. With them the gray-eyed Maid  
 Great Ægis (Jove's bright shield) sustain'd, that can be never  
 old,

Never corrupted, fring'd about with serpents forg'd of gold,  
 As many as suffic'd to make a hundred fringes, worth  
 An hundred oxen, every snake all sprawling, all set forth  
 With wondrous spirit. Through the host with this the Goddess  
 ran,

In fury casting round her eyes, and furnisht every man  
 With strength, exciting all to arms, and fight incessant. None  
 Now liked their lov'd homes like the wars. And as a fire upon

A huge wood, on the heights of hills, that far off hurls his light;  
 So the divine brass shin'd on these, thus thrusting on for fight,  
 Their splendour through the air reacht heaven. And as about  
 the flood

Caÿster, in an Asian mead, flocks of the airy brood,  
 Cranes, geese, or long-neckt swans, here, there, proud of their  
 pinions fly,

And in their falls lay out such throats, that with their spiritfull  
 cry

The meadow shrieks again ; so here, these many nation'd men  
 Flow'd over the Scamandrian field, from tents and ships ;  
 the din

Was dreadfull that the feet of men and horse beat out of earth.  
 And in the florishing mead they stood, thick as the odorous  
 birth

Of flowers, or leaves bred in the spring ; or thick as swarms  
 of flies

Throng then to sheep-cotes, when each swarm his erring wing  
 applies

To milk dew'd on the milk-maid's pails ; all eagerly dispos'd  
 To give to ruin th' Ilians. And as in rude heaps clos'd,  
 Though huge goatherds are at their food, the goatherds easly  
 yet

Sort into sundry herds ; so here the chiefs in battell set,  
 Here tribes, here nations, ordring all. Amongst whom shin'd  
 the king,

With eyes like lightning-loving Jove, his forehead answering,  
 In breast like Neptune, Mars in waist. And as a goodly bull  
 Most eminent of all a herd, most wrong, most masterful,  
 So Agamemnon Jove that day made overheighten clear  
 That heaven-bright army, and preferr'd to all th' heroës there.

II, 379-412. Chapman.

#### PRIAM AND HELEN ON THE WALLS OF TROY

And Priam lifted up his voice and called to Helen : "Come  
 hither, dear child, and sit before me, that thou mayest see thy  
 former husband and thy kinsfolk and thy friends. I hold thee  
 not to blame ; nay, I hold the gods to blame who brought on  
 me this dolorous war of the Achæans." . . . And Helen,

fair among women, spake and answered him : " Reverend art thou to me and dread, dear father of my lord ; would that sore death had been my pleasure when I followed thy son hither, and left my home and my kinsfolk, and my daughter in her girlhood, and the lovely company of my age-fellows. But that was not so, wherefore I pine with weeping." . . . And thirdly the old man saw Ajax, and asked : " Who then is this other Achæan warrior, goodly and great, preëminent above the Argives by the measure of his head and broad shoulders ? " And long-robed Helen, fair among women, answered : " This is huge Ajax, bulwark of the Achæans. And on the other side amid the Cretans standeth Idomeneus like a god, and about him are gathered the captains of the Cretans. Oft did Menelaus, dear to Zeus, entertain him in our house, whene'er he came from Crete.

Clearly the rest I behold of the dark-eyed sons of Achæa,  
 Known to me well are the faces of all ; their names I remember ;  
 Two, two only remain, whom I see not among the commanders,  
 Castor, fleet in the car,—Polydeuces, brave with the cestus,—  
 Own dear brothers of mine,—our parents loved us as infants,—  
 Are they not here in the host from the shores of loved  
 Lacedæmon ?

Or, though they came with the rest in ships that bound through  
 the water,  
 Dare they not enter the fight, or stand in the council of  
 heroes,  
 All for fear of the shame and the taunts my crime has  
 awakened ? "

So said she—they long since in earth's soft arms were reposing,  
 There in their own native land, their fatherland, Lacedæmon.<sup>1</sup>

III, 234-244. Hawtrey.

<sup>1</sup> This exquisite translation by Hawtrey in the metre of the original "is the one version," says Matthew Arnold, "of any part of the *Iliad* which in some degree reproduces for me the original effect of Homer."

I have given the context in the prose version of Lang, Leaf, and Myers, for the juxtaposition of blank verse and hexameters would give offense.



## VALOR OF DIOMEDES

But of Tydides none might say to whom  
 His arm belonged, or whether with the hosts  
 Of Troy or Greece he mingled in the fight :  
 Hither and thither o'er the plain he rush'd,  
 Like to a wintry stream, that brimming o'er  
 Breaks down all barriers in its rapid course ;  
 Nor well-built bridge can stem the flood, nor fence  
 That guards the fertile fields, as down it pours  
 Its sudden torrent, swoll'n with rain from heav'n,  
 And many a goodly work of man destroys :  
 So back were borne before Tydides' might  
 The serried ranks of Troy, nor dar'd await,  
 Despite their numbers, his impetuous charge.

V, 98-110. Derby.

## ENCOUNTER OF DIOMEDES AND GLAUCUS

Then Tydeus' son, and Glaucus, in the midst,  
 Son of Hippolochus, stood forth to fight ;  
 But when they near were met, to Glaucus first  
 The valiant Diomed his speech address'd :

Who art thou, boldest man of mortal birth ?  
 For in the glorious conflict heretofore  
 I ne'er have seen thee ; but in daring now  
 Thou far surpasses all, who hast not fear'd  
 To face my spear ; of most unhappy sires  
 The children they, who my encounter meet.  
 But if from heav'n thou com'st, and art indeed  
 A god, I fight not with the heav'nly powers.

But be thou mortal, and the fruits of earth  
 Thy food, approach, and quickly meet thy doom."

To whom the noble Glaucus thus replied :  
 "Great son of Tydeus, why my race enquire ?  
 The race of man is as the race of leaves :  
 Of leaves, one generation by the wind  
 Is scattered on the earth ; another soon  
 In spring's luxuriant verdure bursts to light.  
 So with our race ; these flourish, those decay.



But if thou would'st in truth enquire and learn  
 The race I spring from, not unknown of men ;  
 There is a city, in the deep recess  
 Of pastoral Argos, Ephyre by name :  
 There Sisyphus of old his dwelling had,  
 Of mortal men the craftiest ; Sisyphus,  
 The son of Æolus ; to whom was born  
 Glaucus ; and Glaucus in his turn begot  
 Bellerophon, on whom the gods bestow'd  
 The gifts of beauty and of manly grace.

Three children there to brave Bellerophon  
 Were born ; Isander, and Hippolochus,  
 Laodamia last, belov'd of Jove.

I from Hippolochus my birth derive :  
 To Troy he sent me, and enjoin'd me oft  
 To aim at highest honours, and surpass  
 My comrades all ; nor on my father's name  
 Discredit bring, who held the foremost place  
 In Ephyre, and Lycia's wide domain.  
 Such is my race, and such the blood I boast."

He said ; and Diomed rejoicing heard ;  
 His spear he planted in the fruitful ground,  
 And thus with friendly words the chief address'd :

"By ancient ties of friendship we are bound ;  
 For godlike Æneus in his house receiv'd  
 For twenty days the brave Bellerophon.

So I in Argos am thy friendly host ;  
 Thou mine in Lycia, when I thither come :  
 Then shun we, e'en amid the thickest fight,  
 Each other's lance ; enough there are for me  
 Of Trojans and their brave allies to kill,  
 As heaven may aid me, and my speed of foot ;  
 And Greeks enough there are for thee to slay,  
 If so indeed thou canst ; but let us now  
 Our armour interchange, that these may know  
 What friendly bonds of old our houses join."  
 Thus as they spoke, they quitted each his car ;

Clasp'd hand in hand, and plighted mutual faith.  
 Then Glaucus of his judgment Jove deprived,  
 His armour interchanging, gold for brass,  
 A hundred oxen's worth for that of nine.

VI, 141-278. Derby.

#### PARTING OF HECTOR AND ANDROMACHE

Hector left in haste  
 The mansion, and retraced his way between  
 The rows of stately dwellings, traversing  
 The mighty city. When at length he reached  
 The Scæan gates, that issue on the field,  
 His spouse, the nobly dowered Andromache,  
 Came forth to meet him—daughter of the prince  
 Eëtion, who, among the woody slopes  
 Of Placos, in the Hypoplacian town  
 Of Thebè, ruled Cilicia and her sons,  
 And gave his child to Hector, great in arms.  
 She came attended by a maid, who bore  
 A tender child—a babe too young to speak—  
 Upon her bosom—Hector's only son,  
 Beautiful as a star, whom Hector called  
 Scamandrius, but all else Astyanax—  
 The city's lord—since Hector stood the sole  
 Defence of Troy. The father on his child  
 Looked with a silent smile. Andromache  
 Pressed to his side meanwhile, and, all in tears,  
 Clung to his hand, and, thus beginning, said :

“ Too brave ! thy valor yet will cause thy death.  
 Thou hast no pity on thy tender child,  
 Nor me, unhappy one, who soon must be  
 Thy widow. All the Greeks will rush on thee  
 To take thy life. A happier lot were mine,  
 If I must lose thee, to go down to earth,  
 For I shall have no hope when thou art gone,—  
 Nothing but sorrow. Father have I none,  
 And no dear mother. Great Achilles slew  
 My father when he sacked the populous town  
 Of the Cilicians,—Thebè with high gates.

'Twas there he smote Eëtion, yet forbore  
 To make his arms a spoil ; he dared not that,  
 But burned the dead with his bright armor on,  
 And raised a mound above him. Mountain-nymphs,  
 Daughters of ægis-bearing Jupiter,  
 Came to the spot and planted it with elms.  
 Seven brothers had I in my father's house,  
 And all went down to Hades in one day.  
 Achilles, the swift-footed, slew them all  
 Among their slow-paced bullocks and white sheep.  
 My mother, princess on the woody slopes  
 Of Placos, with his spoils he bore away,  
 And only for large ransom gave her back.  
 But her Diana, archer-queen, struck down  
 Within her father's palace. Hector, thou  
 Art father and dear mother now to me,  
 And brother and my youthful spouse besides.  
 In pity keep within the fortress here,  
 Nor make thy child an orphan nor thy wife  
 A widow. Post thine army near the place  
 Of the wild fig-tree, where the city walls  
 Are low and may be scaled. Thrice in the war  
 The boldest of the foe have tried the spot—  
 The Ajaces and the famed Idomeneus,  
 The two chiefs born to Atreus, and the brave  
 Tydides, whether counselled by some seer,  
 Or prompted to the attempt by their own minds.'

Then answered Hector, great in war: "All this  
 I bear in mind, dear wife ; but I should stand  
 Ashamed before the men and long-robed dames  
 Of Troy, were I to keep aloof and shun  
 The conflict, coward-like. Not thus my heart  
 Prompts me, for greatly have I learned to dare  
 And strike among the foremost sons of Troy,  
 Upholding my great father's fame and mine ;  
 Yet well in my undoubting mind I know  
 The day shall come in which our sacred Troy,  
 And Priam, and the people over whom  
 Spear-bearing Priam rules, shall perish all.

But not the sorrows of the Trojan race,  
Nor those of Hecuba herself, nor those  
Of royal Priam, nor the woes that wait  
My brothers many and brave—who all at last,  
Slain by the pitiless foe, shall lie in dust—  
Grieve me so much as thine, when some mailed Greek  
Shall lead thee weeping hence, and take from thee  
Thy day of freedom. Thou in Argos then  
Shalt, at another's bidding, ply thy loom,  
And from the fountain of Messeis draw  
Water, or from the Hypereian spring,  
Constrained unwillingly by the cruel lot.  
And then shall some one say who sees thee weep,  
'This was the wife of Hector, most renowned  
Of the horse-taming Trojans, when they fought  
Around their city.' So shall some one say,  
And thou shalt grieve the more, lamenting him  
Who haply might have kept afar the day  
Of thy captivity. O let the earth  
Be heaped above my head in death before  
I hear thy cries as thou art borne away!"

So speaking, mighty Hector stretched his arms  
To take the boy; the boy shrank crying back  
To his fair nurse's bosom, scared to see  
His father helmeted in glittering brass,  
And eyeing with affright the horse-hair plume  
That grimly nodded from the lofty crest.  
At this both parents in their fondness laughed;  
And hastily the mighty Hector took  
The helmet from his brow and laid it down  
Gleaming upon the ground, and, having kissed  
His darling son and tossed him up in play,  
Prayed thus to Jove and all the gods of heaven:

"O Jupiter and all ye deities,  
Vouchsafe that this my son may yet become  
Among the Trojans eminent like me,  
And nobly rule in Ilium. May they say,  
'This man is greater than his father was!'  
When they behold him from the battlefield

Bring back the bloody spoil of the slain foe,  
That so his mother may be glad at heart."

So speaking, to the arms of his dear spouse  
He gave the boy; she on her fragrant breast  
Received him, weeping as she smiled. The chief  
Beheld, and, moved with tender pity, smoothed  
Her forehead gently with his hand and said:

"Sorrow not thus, beloved one, for me.  
No living man can send me to the shades  
Before my time; no man of woman born,  
Coward or brave, can shun his destiny.  
But go thou home, and tend thy labors there,—  
The web, the distaff,—and command thy maids  
To speed the work. The cares of war pertain  
To all men born in Troy, and most to me."

Thus speaking, mighty Hector took again  
His helmet, shadowed with the horse-hair plume,  
While homeward his beloved consort went,  
Oft looking back, and shedding many tears.

VI, 505-633. Bryant.

#### COMBAT OF AJAX AND HECTOR

He spake, and, brandishing his ponderous lance,  
Hurl'd it; and on the outer plate of brass,  
Which covered the seven bullock-hides, it struck  
The shield of Ajax. Through the brass and through  
Six folds of hides the irresistible spear  
Cut its swift way, and at the seventh stopped.  
Then high-born Ajax cast his massive spear  
In turn, and drove it through the fair, round shield  
Of Priam's son. Through that bright buckler went  
The rapid weapon, pierced the well-wrought mail,  
And tore the linen tunic at the flank.  
But Hector stooped, and thus avoided death.  
They took their spears again, and, coming close,  
Like lions in their hunger, or wild boars  
Of fearful strength, joined battle.

. . . . . Priam's son  
Sent his spear forward, striking in the midst

The shield of Ajax, but it broke not through  
The brass ; the metal turned the weapon's point.  
While Ajax, springing onward, smote the shield  
Of Hector, drove his weapon through, and checked  
His enemy's swift advance, and wounded him  
Upon the shoulder, and the black blood flowed.  
Yet not for this did plumèd Hector cease  
From combat, but went back, and, lifting up  
A huge, black, craggy stone that near him lay,  
Flung it with force against the middle boss  
Of the broad sevenfold shield that Ajax bore.  
The brass rang with the blow. Then Ajax raised  
A heavier stone, and whirled it, putting forth  
His arm's immeasurable strength ; it broke  
Through Hector's shield as if a millstone's weight  
Had fallen. His knees gave way ; he fell to earth  
Headlong ; yet still he kept his shield. At once  
Apollo raised him up ; and now with swords,  
Encountering hand to hand, they both had flown  
To wound each other, if the heralds sent  
As messengers from Jupiter and men  
Had not approached, — Idæus from the side  
Of Troy, Talthibius from the Grecian host, —  
Wise ancients both. Betwixt the twain they held  
Their sceptres, and the sage Idæus spake : —  
“ Cease to contend, dear sons, in deadly fray ;  
Ye both are loved by cloud-compelling Jove,  
And both are great in war, as all men know.  
The night is come ; be then the night obeyed.”

VII, 316-360. Bryant.

The second day of battle begins in the eighth book. Zeus remembers his promise to avenge the wrongs of Achilles. He therefore commands the gods to help neither side, to the end that the Trojans may have the advantage. Zeus himself, however, constantly interferes in favor of the Trojans. The Greeks are driven back into their camp by the ships, while the Trojans

bivouac on the plains, confidently expecting victory on the morrow. The Greeks are panic-stricken. During the night Agamemnon summons them to an assembly, and proposes that they take ship for home, seeing that they should never capture Troy. Diomedes opposes the plan, and the Achæans shout approval. Agamemnon is persuaded by his chieftains to send an embassy to Achilles with offering of rich gifts and the girl Briseis, whom he had taken away, if only he will cease from his wrath. Phœnix, Ajax, and Odysseus bear the message, but Achilles indignantly rejects their overtures. The account of the embassy occupies the ninth book. On the same night Odysseus and Diomedes steal into the Trojan camp and capture Dolon, whom Hector has sent to spy upon the Greeks. Dolon betrays the position of the Thracian king, Rhesus. Rhesus is slain in his sleep, and his snow-white horses are brought back to the camp by the ships. These adventures fill the tenth book. A few selections from this portion of the poem follow:

#### THE TROJANS BIVOUAC UPON THE PLAIN

So Hector spake: the Trojans roar'd applause;  
 Then loosed their sweating horses from the yoke,  
 And each beside his chariot bound his own;  
 And oxen from the city, and goodly sheep  
 In haste they drove, and honey-hearted wine  
 And bread from out the houses brought, and heap'd  
 Their firewood, and the winds from off the plain  
 Roll'd the rich vapour far into the heaven.  
 And these all night upon the bridge of war  
 Sat glorying; many a fire before them blazed:  
 As when in heaven the stars about the moon  
 Look beautiful, when all the winds are laid,



And every height comes out, and jutting peak  
 And valley, and the immeasurable heavens  
 Break open to their highest, and all the stars  
 Shine, and the shepherd gladdens in his heart:  
 So many a fire between the ships and stream  
 Of Xanthus blazed before the towers of Troy,  
 A thousand on the plain; and close by each  
 Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire;  
 And eating hoary grain and pulse the steeds,  
 Fixt by their cars, waited the golden dawn.

VIII, 542-561. Tennyson.

#### AGAMEMNON'S PROPOSAL TO ACHILLES<sup>1</sup>

"O ancient man, most truly hast thou named my faults.

I erred, and I deny it not.

That man indeed is equal to a host  
 Whom Jupiter doth love and honor thus,  
 Humbling the Achaian people for his sake.  
 And now, since, yielding to my wayward mood  
 I erred, let me appease him, if I may,  
 With gifts of priceless worth. Before you all  
 I number them, — seven tripods which the fire  
 Hath never touched, six talents of pure gold,  
 And twenty shining caldrons, and twelve steeds  
 Of hardy frame, victorious in the race,  
 Whose feet have won me prizes in the games.  
 No beggar would he be, nor yet with store  
 Of gold unfurnished, in whose coffers lay  
 The prizes those swift steeds have brought to me.  
 Seven faultless women, skilled in household arts,  
 I give moreover, — Lesbians, whom I chose  
 When he o'erran the populous Lesbian isle, —  
 Damsels in beauty who excel their sex.  
 These I bestow, and with them I will send  
 Her whom I took away, Briseis, pure —  
 I swear it with a mighty oath — as pure  
 As when she left his tent. All these I give

<sup>1</sup>Addressed to Nestor in a meeting of the chieftains.

At once ; and i. by favor of the gods  
 We lay the mighty city of Priam waste,  
 He shall load down his galley with large store  
 Of gold and silver, entering first when we,  
 The Greeks, divide the spoil. Then may he choose  
 Twice ten young Trojan women, beautiful  
 Beyond their sex save Helen. If we come  
 Safe to Achaian Argos, richly stocked  
 With milky kine, he may become to me  
 A son-in-law, and cherished equally  
 With my sole son Orestes, who is reared  
 Most royally. Three daughters there, within  
 My stately palace-walls, — Chrysothemis,  
 Laodice, and Iphianassa,<sup>1</sup> — dwell,  
 And he may choose among them, and may lead  
 Home to the house of Peleus her who best  
 Deserves his love. Nor need he to endow  
 The bride, for I will give an ampler dower  
 Than ever father to his daughter gave, —  
 Seven cities with thronged streets, — Cardamyle,  
 Enope, grassy Hira, Pheræ famed  
 Afar, Antheia with rich pasture-fields,  
 Æpeia beautiful, and Pedasus  
 With all its vineyards ; all are near the sea,  
 And stand the last before you reach the coast  
 Of sandy Pylos. Rich in flocks and herds  
 Their dwellers are, and they will honor him  
 As if he were a god, and, ruled by him,  
 Will pay large tribute. These will I bestow,  
 Let but his anger cool and his resolve  
 Give way. 'T is Pluto who is deaf to prayer  
 And ne'er relents, and he, of all the gods  
 Most hateful is to men. Now let the son  
 Of Peleus yield at length to me, who stand  
 Above him in authority and years."

IX, 138-195. Bryant.

<sup>1</sup>In later Greek tradition Laodice is known as Electra and Iphianassa as Ipbigeneia.

## ACHILLES' REPLY TO AJAX

Achilles the swift-footed answered thus:—  
“Illustrious Ajax, son of Telamon,  
Prince of the people! All that thou hast said,  
I well perceive, is prompted by thy heart.  
Mine swells with indignation when I think  
How King Atreides mid the assembled Greeks  
Heaped insults on me, as if I had been  
A wretched vagabond. But go ye now  
And bear my message. I shall never think  
Of bloody war till noble Hector, son  
Of Priam, slaughtering in his way the Greeks,  
Shall reach the galleys of the Myrmidons,  
To lay the fleet in flames. But when he comes  
To my own tent and galley, he, I think,  
Though eager for the combat, will desist.”

IX, 803-817. Bryant.

The third day of battle occupies the next eight books (XI to XVIII). In the eleventh Agamemnon distinguishes himself, but is wounded and obliged to retire, as are also Diomedes and Odysseus. In the twelfth the fighting goes against the Greeks. The Trojans press forward to the wall around the camp. Sarpedon breaks through the wall, but is opposed by Ajax, son of Telamon. Hector breaks down the gates with a huge stone, and the Trojans pour through the breach. In the thirteenth book Poseidon comes from the sea to rally the Greeks while Zeus is inattentive. They defend their ships valiantly, though the Trojans press them hard. Idomeneus slays many Trojan leaders, while Ajax, son of Telamon, and Ajax, son of Oileus, check the progress of Hector. In the fourteenth book, Zeus, beguiled by Hera, sleeps on Mount Ida, thus enabling Poseidon to continue his interfer-

ence in favor of the Greeks. Ajax, son of Telamon, fells Hector with a huge stone, and the latter is carried out of the fight. The tide of battle is now against the Trojans; but Zeus, in the fifteenth book, awakens, and seeing the work of Poseidon, angrily orders him off the field. Apollo, at the behest of Zeus, revives Hector, who reënters the battle-line. The Trojans again drive back the Greeks, this time to the ships themselves, and set their ships on fire.

A critical moment has arrived. Achilles is resolved not to help the Greeks until the Trojans shall threaten his own ships. But Patroclus, seeing the rout of the Greeks, prevails upon Achilles to lend him his armor, that the Trojans may think that Achilles has returned to battle. Achilles arms his soldiers, the Myrmidons, and sends them into the battle under Patroclus' command. The tide of battle at once changes again. The Trojans are driven back from the ships and the fire is quenched. Patroclus pushes the Trojans out beyond the walls of the camp. He slays Sarpedon, king of the Lycians and son of Zeus, the mightiest of the Trojan allies. Hector and the Trojans fall back to Troy, which Patroclus vainly assaults. Finally, Hector, with Apollo's aid, slays Patroclus. The account of Patroclus' part in the battle occupies the sixteenth book. The seventeenth is devoted to the fight over Patroclus' body. Hector dons the armor of Achilles, which he has stripped from the body of Patroclus, but he is unable to get possession of the body. Menelaus and Ajax, with the Myrmidons, close in around it, and retire slowly and with difficulty toward their camp. In the eighteenth book Achilles is told of the death of Patroclus. He appears unarmed beyond the

wall of the camp, and by his appearance and terrible shouting so frightens the Trojans that Patroclus' body is brought safely within the camp. Achilles is resolved to avenge upon Hector the death of his friend. Thetis, his mother, entreats Hephæstus to make a new set of armor for Achilles. The book closes with a description of Achilles' shield.

The turning-point in the plot of the *Iliad* is the death of Patroclus. Up to this time Agamemnon and the Greeks have learned by bitter defeat the full meaning of the wrath of Achilles. The prophecy of Achilles, that "verily longing for Achilles shall come hereafter upon the sons of the Achæans, one and all," has been fulfilled by the will of Zeus. But Achilles had not yet, even when the Greeks were obliged to fight to save the ships from the flames, fed his grudge to the full. The death of his dearest friend was necessary to cause him to forget the insult put upon him by Agamemnon, that he might avenge upon Hector a still greater grief. Dante expressed this interpretation in the words: "Achilles, who at the last was brought to fight by love." A few passages from this third eventful day of battle follow:

#### SARPEDON TO HIS BROTHER GLAUCUS

"Why boast we, Glaucus, our extended reign,  
Where Xanthus' streams enrich the Lycian plain,  
Our numerous herds that range the fruitful field,  
And hills where vines their purple harvest yield,  
Our foaming bowls with purer nectar crown'd,  
Our hearts enhanced with music's sprightly sound?  
Why on these shores are we with joy survey'd,  
Admired as heroes, and as gods obey'd,  
Unless great acts superior merit prove,  
And vindicate the bounteous powers above?"

'T is ours, the dignity they give to grace ;  
 The first in valor, as the first in place ;  
 That when with wandering eyes our martial bands  
 Behold our deeds transcending our commands,  
 Such, they may cry, deserve the sovereign state,  
 Whom those that envy dare not imitate !  
 Could all our care elude the gloomy grave,  
 Which claims no less the fearful and the brave,  
 For lust of fame I should not vainly dare  
 In fighting fields, nor urge thy soul to war.  
 But since, alas ! ignoble age must come,  
 Disease, and death's inexorable doom,  
 The life, which others pay, let us bestow,  
 And give to fame what we to honor owe ;  
 Brave though we fall, and honor'd if we live,  
 Or let us glory gain, or glory give !"

XII, 310-328. Pope.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE VALOR OF HECTOR

Fiercely he rag'd, as terrible as Mars  
 With brandish'd spear ; or as a raging fire  
 'Mid the dense thickets on the mountain-side.  
 The foam was on his lips ; bright flash'd his eyes  
 Beneath his awful brows, and terribly  
 Above his temples wav'd amid the fray  
 The helm of Hector ; Jove himself from Heav'n  
 His guardian hand extending, him alone  
 With glory crowning 'mid the host of men ;  
 But short his term of glory : for the day  
 Was fast approaching, when, with Pallas' aid,  
 The might of Peleus' son should work his doom.  
 Oft he assay'd to break the ranks, where'er  
 The densest throng and noblest arms he saw ;  
 But strenuous though his efforts, all were vain :  
 They, mass'd in close array, his charge withstood ;  
 Firm as a craggy rock, upstanding high,

<sup>1</sup>In this passage, in Matthew Arnold's judgment, Pope was at his best. These famous lines were quoted by Lord Granville on his death-bed, when considering the preliminary articles of the Treaty of Paris.

Close by the hoary sea, which meets unmov'd  
 The boist'rous currents of the whistling winds,  
 And the big waves that bellow round its base ;  
 So stood unmov'd the Greeks, and undismay'd.  
 At length, all blazing in his arms, he sprang  
 Upon the mass ; so plunging down, as when  
 On some tall vessel, from beneath the clouds  
 A huge billow, tempest-nurs'd, descends ;  
 The deck is drench'd in foam ; the stormy wind  
 Howls in the shrouds ; th' affrighted seamen quail  
 In fear, but little way from death remov'd ;  
 So quailed the spirit in ev'ry Grecian breast.

As when a rav'ning lion on a herd  
 Of heifers falls, which on some marshy mead  
 Feed numberless, beneath the care of one  
 Unskill'd from beasts of prey to guard his charge ;  
 And while the front or rear he walked,  
 The lion on th' unguarded centre springs,  
 Seizes on one, and scatters all the rest ;  
 So Hector, led by Jove, in wild alarm  
 Scatter'd the Grecians all.

XV, 704-741. Derby.

#### THETIS FORETELLS ACHILLES' DEATH

There, as he groan'd aloud, beside him stood  
 His Goddess-mother ; she, with bitter cry,  
 Clasp'd in her hands his head, and spoke :  
 " Why weeps my son ? and what his cause of grief ?  
 Speak out, and naught conceal ; for all thy pray'r  
 Which with uplifted hands thou mad'st to Jove,  
 He hath fulfill'd, that, flying to their ships  
 The routed sons of Greece should feel how much  
 They need thine aid, and deep disgrace endure."

To whom Achilles, deeply groaning, thus :  
 " Mother, all this indeed hath Jove fulfill'd ;  
 Yet what avails it, since my dearest friend  
 Is slain, Patroclus ? whom I honour'd most  
 Of all my comrades, lov'd him as my soul.

Him have I lost : and Hector from his corpse [arms  
 Hath stripp'd those arms, those weighty, beauteous  
 A marvel to behold, which from the Gods  
 Peleus receiv'd, a glorious gift, that day  
 When they consign'd thee to a mortal's bed.  
 How better were it, if thy lot had been  
 Still 'mid the Ocean deities to dwell,  
 And Peleus had espous'd a mortal bride !  
 And now is bitter grief for thee in store,  
 Mourning thy son, whom to his home return'd  
 Thou never more shalt see ; nor would I wish  
 To live, and move among my fellow men,  
 Unless that Hector, vanquish'd by my spear,  
 May lose his forfeit life, and pay the price  
 Of foul dishonour to Patroclus done."

To whom, her tears o'erflowing, Thetis thus :  
 "E'en as thou sayst, my son, thy term is short ;  
 Nor long shall Hector's fate precede thine own."

Achilles, answ'ring, spoke in passionate grief :  
 "Would I might this hour, who fail'd to save  
 My comrade slain ! Far from his native land  
 He died, sore needing my protecting arm :  
 And I, who ne'er again must see my home,  
 Nor to Patroclus, nor the many Greeks  
 Whom Hector's hand hath slain, have render'd aid ;  
 But idly here I sit, cumb'ring the ground :  
 I, who amid the Greeks no equal own  
 In fight ; to others, in debate, I yield.

In search of Hector now, of him who slew  
 My friend, I go ; prepar'd to meet my death,  
 When Jove shall will it, and th' Immortals all.  
 From death not e'en the might of Hercules,  
 Though best belov'd of Saturn's sons, could fly  
 By fate and Juno's bitter wrath subdued.  
 I too, since such my doom, must lie in death ;  
 Yet, e'er I die, immortal fame will win."



## THE SHIELD OF ACHILLES

And first he forged the huge and massive shield,  
Divinely wrought in every part, — its edge  
Clasped with a triple border, white and bright.  
A silver belt hung from it, and its folds  
Were five; a crowd of figures on its disk  
Were fashioned by the artist's passing skill,  
For here he placed the earth and heaven, and here  
The great deep, and the never-resting sun  
And the full moon, and here he set the stars  
That shine in the round heaven, — the Pleiades,  
The Hyades, Orion in his strength,  
And the Bear near him, called by some the Wain,  
That, wheeling, keeps Orion still in sight,  
Yet bathes not in the waters of the sea.

There placed he two fair cities full of men;  
In one were marriages and feasts; they led  
The brides with flaming torches from their bowers,  
Along the streets, with many a nuptial song.  
There the young dancers whirled, and flutes and lyres  
Gave forth their sounds, and women at the doors  
Stood and admired. . . . .

Around the other city sat two hosts  
In shining armor, bent to lay it waste,  
Unless the dwellers would divide their wealth, —  
All that their pleasant homes contained, — and yield  
The assailants half. As yet the citizens  
Had not complied, but secretly had planned  
An ambush. Their beloved wives meanwhile,  
And their young children, stood and watched the walls,  
With aged men among them, while the youths  
Marched on, with Mars and Pallas at their head,  
Both wrought in gold, with golden garments on,  
Stately and large in form, and over all  
Conspicuous, as in bright armor, as became  
The gods; the rest were of an humbler size.

. . . . .  
There, too, the artist placed a field which lay

Deep in ripe wheat. With sickles in their hands  
 The laborers reaped it. Here the handfuls fell  
 Upon the ground; there binders tied them fast [went  
 With bands and made them sheaves. Three binders  
 Close to the reapers, and behind them boys,  
 Bringing the gathered handfuls in their arms,  
 Ministered to the binders. Staff in hand,  
 The master stood among them by the side  
 Of the ranged sheaves and silently rejoiced.  
 Meanwhile the servants underneath an oak  
 Prepared a feast apart; they sacrificed  
 A fatling ox and dressed it, while the maids  
 Were kneading for the reapers the white meal.

A vineyard also on the shield he graved,  
 Beautiful, all of gold, and heavily  
 Laden with grapes. Black were the clusters all;  
 The vines were stayed on rows of silver stakes.  
 He drew a blue trench round it, and a hedge  
 Of tin. Only one path was there by which  
 The vintagers could go to gather grapes.  
 Young maids and striplings of a tender age  
 Bore the sweet fruit in baskets. Midst them all,  
 A youth from his shrill harp drew pleasant sounds,  
 And sang with soft voice to the murmuring strings.  
 They danced around him, beating with quick feet  
 The ground, and sang and shouted joyously.

• • • • •  
 And there illustrious Vulcan also wrought  
 A dance,—a maze like that which Dædalus  
 In the broad realms of Gnosus once contrived  
 For fair-haired Ariadne. Blooming youths  
 And lovely virgins, tripping to light airs,  
 Held fast each other's wrists. The maidens wore  
 Fine linen robes; the youths had tunics on  
 Lustrous as oil, and woven daintily. [swords  
 The maids wore wreaths of flowers; the young men  
 Of gold in silver belts. They bounded now  
 In a swift circle,—as a potter whirls  
 With both his hands a wheel to try its speed,

Sitting before it, — then again they crossed  
Each other, darting to their former place.  
A multitude around that joyous dance  
Gathered, and were amused, while from the crowd  
Two tumblers raised their song, and flung themselves  
About among the band that trod the dance.

Last on the border of that great glorious shield  
He graved in all its strength the ocean-stream.

XVIII, 601-750. Bryant.

The fourth day of battle occupies the next four books (XIX-XXII). In the nineteenth Achilles is reconciled to Agamemnon, who restores Briseis and gives rich gifts besides. The Greeks issue forth to battle, which is renewed in the twentieth book. Achilles dominates the field, looking always for Hector. Æneas narrowly escapes being killed by him. The gods interfere freely on both sides. Achilles, in the twenty-first book, fights with the river-god Scamander, which overflows its banks to help the Trojans, and is barely saved by Hera and Hephæstus. Achilles chases the Trojans inside the citadel. In the twenty-second book, Hector, in spite of the entreaties of his father and mother, goes out to meet Achilles, but fear comes upon him, and he flees thrice around the walls of Troy. Zeus tries the fate of the warriors in the balance, and Hector is doomed. But he makes a brave stand at the last, and is slain by Athene's guile. Achilles then drags the body of Hector after his chariot. Patroclus' death is avenged. The main action of the *Iliad* is at an end, and the plot worked out to its completion. From these four books a few selections follow;

## ACHILLES DONS HIS ARMOR

As when the flakes of snow fall thick from heaven,  
Driven by the north wind sweeping on the clouds  
Before it, so from out the galleys came  
Helms crowding upon helms that glittered fair,  
Strong hauberks, bossy shields, and ashen spears.  
The gleam of armor brightened heaven and earth,  
And mighty was the sound of trampling feet.  
Amidst them all the great Achilles stood,  
Putting his armor on ; he gnashed his teeth ;  
His eyes shot fire ; a grief too sharp to bear  
Was in his heart, as, filled with rage against  
The men of Troy, he cages his limbs in mail,  
The gift of Vulcan, from whose diligent hand  
It came. And first about his legs he clasped  
The beautiful greaves, with silver fastenings,  
Fitted the corselet to his bosom next,  
And from his shoulders hung the brazen sword  
With silver studs, and then he took the shield  
Massive and broad, whose brightness streamed as far  
As the moon's rays. And as at sea the light  
Of beacon, blazing in some lonely spot  
By night, upon a mountain summit, shines  
To mariners whom the tempest's force has driven  
Far from their friends across the fishy deep,  
So from that glorious buckler of the son  
Of Peleus, nobly wrought, a radiance streamed  
Into the sky. And then he rais'd and placed  
Upon his head the impenetrable helm  
With horse-hair plume. It glittered like a star,  
And all the shining tufts of golden thread,  
With which the maker's hand had thickly set  
Its cone, were shaken. Next the high-born chief  
Tried his new arms, to know if they were well  
Adjusted to his shape, and left his limbs  
Free play. They seemed like wings, and lifted up  
The shepherd of the people. Then he drew  
From its ancestral sheath his father's spear,

Heavy and huge and tough. No man of all  
The Grecian host could wield that weapon save  
Achilles only. 'Twas a Pelian ash,  
Which Chiron for his father had cut down  
On Pelion's highest peak, to be the death  
Of heroes.

XIX, 433-475. Bryant.

#### ACHILLES AND HIS STEEDS

Achilles mounted, in a blaze  
Of arms that dazzled like the sun, and thus  
Called to his father's steeds with terrible voice :

“ Xanthus and Balius, whom Podargè bore,—  
A noble stock,—I charge you to bring back  
Into the Grecian camp, the battle done,  
Him whom ye now are bearing to the field,  
Nor leave him, as ye left Patroclus, dead.”

Swift-footed Xanthus from beneath the yoke  
Answered him with bowed head and drooping mane  
That, flowing through the yoke-ring, swept the ground;  
For Juno gave him then the power of speech.

“ For this one day, at least, we bear thee safe,  
O fiery chief, Achilles ! but the hour  
Of death draws nigh to thee, nor will the blame  
Be ours ; a mighty god and cruel fate  
Ordain it. Not through our neglect or sloth  
Did they of Troy strip off thy glorious arms  
From slain Patroclus. That invincible god,  
The son of golden haired Latona, smote  
The hero in the foremost ranks, and gave  
Glory to Hector. Even though our speed  
Were that of Zephyr, fleetest of the winds,  
Yet certain is thy doom to be o'ercome  
In battle by a god and by a man.”

Thus far he spake, and then the Furies checked  
His further speech. Achilles, swift of foot,  
Replied in anger : “ Xanthus, why foretell  
My death? It is not needed ; well I know  
My fate,—that here I perish, far away

From Peleus and my mother. I shall fight  
Till I have made the Trojans sick of war."

He spake, and shouting to his firm-paced steeds,  
Drave them, among the foremost, toward the war.

XIX, 483-516. Bryant.

#### THE GODS DESCEND TO BATTLE

But when the powers descending swell'd the fight,  
Then tumult rose ; fierce rage and pale affright  
Varied each face : then Discord sounds alarms,  
Earth echoes, and the nations rush to arms.  
Now through the trembling shores Minerva calls,  
And now she thunders from the Grecian walls.  
Mars hov'ring o'er his Troy, his terror shrouds  
In gloomy tempests and a night of clouds :  
Now through each Trojan heart he fury pours  
With voice divine from Ilion's topmost towers :  
Now shouts to Simois, from her beauteous hill ;  
The mountain shook, the rapid stream stood still.  
Above, the sire of gods his thunder rolls,  
And peals on peals redoubled rend the poles ;  
Beneath, stern Neptune shakes the solid ground ;  
The forests wave, the mountains nod around ;  
Through all their summits tremble Ida's woods,  
And from their sources boil her hundred floods.  
Troy's turrets totter on the rocking plain,  
And the toss'd navies beat the heaving main.  
Deep in the dismal regions of the dead,  
The infernal monarch rears his horrid head,  
Leap'd from his throne, lest Neptune's arm should lay  
His dark dominions open to the day,  
And pour in light on Pluto's drear abodes,  
Abhorr'd by men and dreadful even to gods.

Such war the immortals wage ; such horrors rend  
The world's vast concave, when the gods contend.

XX, 47-66. Pope.

## THE RIVER SCAMANDER BATTLES WITH ACHILLES

Thus as he spake from off the lofty bank  
Achilles springing in mid current plung'd ;  
Then high the swelling stream, tumultuous, rose  
In all its angry flood ; and with a roar  
As of a bellowing bull, cast forth to land  
The num'rous corpses by Achilles slain ;  
And many living, in his cavern'd bed  
Concealed, behind the whirling waters sav'd.  
Fierce, round Achilles, rose the boiling wave,  
And on his shield descending, drove him down ;  
Nor might he keep his foothold ; but he grasp'd  
A lofty elm, well-grown, which from the cliff  
Uprooted, all the bank had torn away,  
And with its tangled branches check'd the flow  
Of the fair river, which with all its length  
It bridg'd across ; then springing from the deep,  
Swiftly he fled in terror o'er the plain.  
Nor ceas'd the mighty river, but pursued,  
With darkly-ruffling crest, intent to stay  
Achilles' course, and save the Trojan host.  
Far as a jav'lin's flight he rush'd, in speed  
Like the dark hunter eagle, strongest deem'd,  
And swiftest wing'd of all the feather'd race.  
So on he sped ; loud rattled on his breast  
His brazen armour as before the god,  
Cow'ring, he fled ; the god behind him still  
With thund'ring sound pursued. As when a man  
From some dark-water'd spring through trenches leads,  
'Mid plants and gardens, th' irrigating stream,  
And, spade in hand, th' appointed channel clears :  
Down flows the stream anon, its pebbly bed  
Disturbing ; fast it flows with bubbling sound,  
Down the steep slope, o'ertaking him who leads,—  
Achilles so th' advancing wave o'ertook,  
Though great his speed ; but man must yield to gods.  
Oft as Achilles, swift of foot, essay'd  
To turn and stand, and know if all the gods,

Who dwell in heav'n, were leagued to daunt his soul ;  
 So oft the heav'n-born river's mighty wave  
 Above his shoulders dash'd ; in deep distress  
 He sprang on high ; then rush'd the flood below,  
 And bore him off his legs, and wore away  
 The soil beneath his feet ; then, groaning, thus,  
 As up to heav'n he look'd, Achilles cried :

XXI, 269-312. Derby.

#### THE DEATH OF HECTOR

He spake, and brandishing his massive spear,  
 Hurl'd it, nor miss'd, but in the centre smote  
 The buckler of Pelides. Far away  
 It bounded from the brass, and he was vexed  
 To see that the swift weapon from his hand  
 Had flown in vain. He stood perplexed and sad ;  
 No second spear had he. He call'd aloud  
 On the white-buckler'd chief, Deïphobus,  
 To bring another ; but that chief was far,  
 And Hector saw that it was so, and said :

“ Ah me ! the gods have summoned me to die.  
 . . . . My hour at last is come ;  
 Yet not ingloriously or passively  
 I die, but first will do some valiant deed,  
 Of which mankind shall hear in after time.”

He spake, and drew the keen-edged sword that hung,  
 Massive and finely tempered, at his side,  
 And sprang,—as when an eagle high in heaven,  
 Through the thick clouds, darts downward to the plain  
 To clutch some tender lamb or timid hare,  
 So Hector, brandishing that keen-edged sword,  
 Sprang forward, while Achilles opposite  
 Leaped toward him, all on fire with savage hate,  
 And holding his bright buckler, nobly wrought,  
 Before him. On his shining helmet waved  
 The fourfold crest ; there tossed the golden tufts  
 With which the hand of Vulcan lavishly  
 Had deck'd it. As in the still hours of night  
 Hesper goes forth among the host of stars,



The fairest light of heaven, so brightly shone,  
Brandished in the right hand of Peleus' son,  
The spear's keen blade, as, confident to slay  
The noble Hector, o'er his glorious form  
His quick eye ran, exploring where to plant  
The surest wound. The glittering mail of brass  
Won from the slain Patroclus guarded well  
Each part, save only where the collar-bones  
Divide the shoulder from the neck, and there  
Appeared the throat, the spot where life is most  
In peril. Through that part the noble son  
Of Peleus drove his spear; it went quite through  
The tender neck, and yet the brazen blade  
Cleft not the wind-pipe, and the power to speak  
Remained. The Trojan fell amid the dust.

XXII, 358-407. Bryant.

As the first book is the prologue to the main action of the *Iliad*, so the twenty-third and twenty-fourth books form the epilogue. The story of Achilles' wrath is fully told; there remain but two matters about which the poet may fairly inform us, though they are not strictly necessary to the plot—the burial of Patroclus and the disposition of Hector's body. To the Greek mind these seemed matters of the highest importance, far more so than to us. In the twenty-third book, Achilles makes mourning for Patroclus, and has a stately pyre of wood erected, on which he lays the body and burns it, together with twelve Trojan victims and with animal sacrifices. The ashes are placed in an urn, and a mound of earth heaped over it. Games are then celebrated in honor of the dead. The last book tells of Hector. Each day Achilles has dragged his body behind his chariot around the body of Patroclus, and thinks to dishonor it still more. But his mother, Thetis, at the bidding

of Zeus, tells Achilles to give back Hector's body to Priam for a ransom. Priam enters the camp at night, under the escort of Hermes, bearing a rich ransom to Achilles. Achilles receives him kindly, and delivers the body to him, granting also a truce from battle for eleven days. During this time the funeral rites of Hector are performed, with an account of which the poem closes. Two passages from these books are added:

#### PRIAM'S SUPPLICATION TO ACHILLES

Unmarked the royal Priam entered in,  
 And, coming to Achilles, clasped his knees,  
 And kissed those fearful slaughter-dealing hands,  
 By which so many of his sons had died.

And thus King Priam supplicating spake :

“Think of thy father, an old man like me,  
 God-like Achilles! On the dreary verge  
 Of closing life he stands, and even now  
 Haply is fiercely pressed by those who dwell  
 Around him, and has none to shield his age  
 From war and its disasters. Yet his heart  
 Rejoices when he hears thou yet dost live,  
 And every day he hopes that his dear son  
 Will come again from Troy. My lot is hard,  
 For I was father of the bravest sons  
 In all wide Troy, and none are left me now.  
 Fifty were with me when the men of Greece  
 Arrived upon our coast ; nineteen of these  
 Owned the same mother and the rest were born  
 Within my palaces. Remorseless Mars  
 Already had laid lifeless most of these,  
 And Hector, whom I cherished most, whose arm  
 Defended both our city and ourselves,  
 Him didst thou lately slay while combating  
 For his dear country. For his sake I come  
 To the Greek fleet, and to redeem his corpse

I bring uncounted ransom. O, revere  
 The gods, Achilles, and be merciful,  
 Calling to mind thy father! happier he  
 Than I; for I have borne what no man else  
 That dwells on earth could bear,—have laid my lips  
 Upon the hand of him who slew my son.”  
 He spake: Achilles sorrowfully thought  
 Of his own father. By the hand he took  
 The suppliant, and with gentle force removed  
 The old man from him. Both in memory  
 Of those they loved were weeping. The old king,  
 With many tears, and rolling in the dust  
 Before Achilles, mourned his gallant son.  
 Achilles sorrowed for his father’s sake,  
 And then bewailed Patroclus, and the sound  
 Of lamentation filled the tent.

XXIV, 600–648. Bryant.

#### THE LAMENTATION OVER HECTOR’S BODY

The throng gave way and let the chariot pass :  
 And having brought it to the royal halls,  
 On a fair couch they laid the corse, and placed  
 Singers beside it, leaders of the dirge,  
 Who sang a sorrowful, lamenting strain,  
 And all the women answered it with sobs.  
 White-armed Andromache in both her hands  
 Took warlike Hector’s head, and over it  
 Began the lamentation midst them all:  
 “Thou has died young, my husband, leaving me  
 In this thy home a widow, and one son,  
 An infant yet. To an unhappy pair  
 He owes his birth, and never will, I fear,  
 Bloom into youth; for ere that day will Troy  
 Be overthrown, since thou, its chief defence,  
 Art dead, the guardian of its walls and all  
 Its noble matrons and its speechless babes,  
 Yet to be carried captive far away,  
 And I among them, in the hollow barks ;  
 And thou, my son, wilt either go with me,

Where thou shalt toil at menial tasks for some  
 Pitiless master; or perhaps some Greek  
 Will seize thy little arm, and in his rage  
 Will hurl thee from a tower and dash thee dead,  
 Remembering how thy father, Hector, slew  
 His brother, son, or father; for the hand  
 Of Hector forced full many a Greek to bite  
 The dust of earth. Not slow to smite was he  
 In the fierce conflict; therefore all who dwell  
 Within the city sorrow for his fall.  
 Thou bringest an unutterable grief,  
 O Hector, on thy parents, and on me  
 The sharpest sorrows. Thou didst not stretch forth  
 Thy hands to me, in dying, from thy couch,  
 Nor speak a word to comfort me, which I  
 Might ever think of, night and day, with tears."

. . . . .  
 Helen, last of all,  
 Took up the lamentation, and began:—  
 "O Hector, who wert dearest to my heart  
 Of all my husband's brothers, — for the wife  
 Am I of godlike Paris, him whose fleet  
 Brought me to Troy, — would I had sooner died!  
 And now the twentieth year is passed since first  
 I came a stranger from my native shore,  
 Yet have I never heard from thee a word  
 Of anger or reproach. And when the sons  
 Of Priam, and his daughters, and the wives  
 Of Priam's sons, in all their fair array,  
 Taunted me grievously, or Hecuba  
 Herself, — for Priam ever was to me  
 A gracious father, — thou didst take my part  
 With kindly admonitions, and restrain  
 Their tongues with soft address and gentle words.  
 Therefore my heart is grieved, and I bewail  
 Thee and myself at once, — unhappy me!  
 For now I have no friend in all wide Troy, —  
 None to be kind to me: they hate me all."

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ODYSSEY. HOMER AND TROY

The Trojan War after the *Iliad*—The Epic Cycle—The Story of the *Odyssey*—Its Structure—Analysis of the Poem—The Adventures of Telemachus—Odysseus reaches the Land of the Phæacians and relates his Adventures to Alcinous—His Arrival at Ithaca—The Slaying of the Suitors—The Recognition of Odysseus by Penelope—The Homeric Age—Homeric Geography—Homeric Society—Homeric Theology—Troy—The Mycenæan Age—The Homeric Question.

Although the *Iliad* gives the complete story of the *Wrath of Achilles*, it not only presupposes an acquaintance on the part of the hearer with the events of the first nine years of the war, but also looks forward to the completion of the story of the expedition against Troy. The fall of Troy is predicted, and the death of Achilles; while the fate of other actors in the narrative is darkly foreshadowed. Now the Greeks possessed a series of epic poems by various hands and of different dates, arranged so as to form a continuous history of the mythical world. This series was called by them the Epic Cycle. It began with the marriage of Heaven and Earth, and ended with the slaying of Odysseus by his son Telegonus. The last eight poems of the Epic Cycle contained a continuous, although not always a consistent, account of the Trojan War, thus forming a smaller Trojan Cycle within the larger series. The place of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer in the Trojan Cycle may be briefly indicated.

As we have already seen, the *Cypria*, of doubtful authorship, brought the story of the Trojan expedition down through the first nine years of the war. Then came the *Iliad*. After the *Iliad* the *Æthiopis*, by Arctinus of Miletus (about 776 B. C.), took up the story. The queen of the Amazons, Penthesileia, comes to the aid of Troy, but is slain by Achilles. Achilles is slain by an arrow, shot by Paris but directed by Apollo, which wounds him in the heel, where alone he is vulnerable. Ajax and Odysseus contend for Achilles' armor, which is awarded to the latter. Ajax takes his own life. Then came the *Little Iliad*, of doubtful authorship (of about 700 B. C.). Philoctetes is brought from the isle of Lemnos for the sake of the bow and arrows of Heracles which he possesses, without which Troy cannot be taken. Odysseus devises the stratagem of the wooden horse filled with armed warriors. In the *Iliouperis* (*Destruction of Troy*), by Arctinus of Miletus, the wooden horse is taken into the city by the Trojans themselves. Troy is captured and burned. Laocoon and one of his sons are strangled by the huge serpents. Æneas makes his escape, but Priam is killed by Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles. The Greeks start for home. The *Nostoi* (*Return of the Heroes*), by Agias of Trœzen (about 750 B. C.), dealt chiefly with the return of Menelaus and Agamemnon and the slaying of the latter by his wife, Clytemnestra. The *Odyssey* comes next in the series, and after the *Odyssey* the *Telegoneia*, a poem of much later date than the others.

The theme of the *Odyssey* is the *Return of Odysseus*. The difficulties that beset him after he leaves Troy furnish the elements of the plot. He is constantly

thwarted on his homeward journey by Poseidon, and even after he reaches Ithaca he finds the insolent suitors of his wife, Penelope, in possession of his house. How Odysseus, the man of many resources, surmounts all these difficulties, regaining at last both his native land and his wife—this is the story of the poem.

But the poet does not recount the adventures of his hero in chronological order, beginning with the departure from Troy. Like Vergil and Milton he plunges *in medias res*, finding a later occasion for the recital of preceding events by the hero himself. Selecting a critical moment in the tenth year after the fall of Troy, he first briefly depicts the present predicament of Odysseus and the situation of affairs at his home in Ithaca, and then begins the narrative. At first we follow the adventures of Telemachus, the son of Odysseus, as he searches for news of his father. Later on we are transferred to Calypso's isle, where Odysseus is detained by the fair enchantress. His release is obtained by the efforts of Athene. He reaches the land of the Phæacians, where he is entertained by King Alcinous. There he tells of his former adventures, a narrative which occupies about one-fourth of the whole poem. Finally he reaches Ithaca, where he slays the suitors and is restored to his wife and possessions. By this scheme of composition the poet greatly enhances the plot and prevents his story from becoming a mere chronicle of adventures. The action of the poem covers just forty-two days. The following outline by books will show its structure:

- I-IV. The quest of Telemachus for his father.
- V. Odysseus leaves Calypso's isle and reaches the

land of the Phæacians. This book covers twenty-four days. VI-XII. Odysseus among the Phæacians. He recites his adventures during the two years between the fall of Troy and his captivity on Calypso's isle, where he was detained seven years. XIII-XV. The return of Odysseus to Ithaca. The return of Telemachus. XVI-XXIV. Odysseus slays the suitors, and is recognized by Penelope and his father, Laertes.

As in the *Iliad*, the theme is given in the invocation to the Muse, which is followed by a statement of the situation.

Tell me, O Muse, of that sagacious man  
 Who, having overthrown the sacred town  
 Of Ilium, wandered far and visited  
 The capitals of many nations, learned  
 The customs of their dwellers, and endured  
 Great suffering on the deep; his life was oft  
 In peril, as he labored to bring back  
 His comrades to their homes. He saved them not,  
 Though earnestly he strove; they perished all,  
 Through their own folly; for they banqueted,  
 Madmen! upon the oxen of the Sun, —  
 The all-o'erlooking Sun, who cut them off  
 From their return. O goddess, virgin-child  
 Of Jove, relate some part of this to me.

Now all the rest, as many as escaped  
 The cruel doom of death, were at their homes  
 Safe from the perils of the war and sea,  
 While him alone, who pined to see his home  
 And wife again, Calypso, queenly nymph,  
 Great among goddesses, detained within  
 Her spacious grot, in hope that he might yet  
 Become her husband. Even when the years  
 Brought round the time in which the gods decreed  
 That he should reach again his dwelling-place  
 In Ithaca, though he was with his friends,



His toils were not yet ended. Of the gods  
 All pitied him save Neptune, who pursued  
 With wrath implacable the godlike chief,  
 Ulysses, even to his native land.

I, 1-29. Bryant.

The gods assemble on Olympus while Poseidon is absent among the Æthiopians. Athene intercedes with Zeus for Odysseus:

“ But I am grieved  
 For sage Ulysses, that most wretched man,  
 So long detained, repining, and afar  
 From those he loves, upon a distant isle  
 Girt by the waters of the central deep, —  
 A forest isle, where dwells a deity,  
 The daughter of wise Atlas, him who knows  
 The ocean to its utmost depths, and holds  
 Upright the lofty columns which divide  
 The earth from heaven. The daughter there detains  
 The unhappy chieftain, and with flattering words  
 Would win him to forget his Ithaca.  
 Meanwhile, impatient to behold the smokes  
 That rise from hearths in his own land, he pines  
 And willingly would die. Is not thy heart,  
 Olympius, touched by this? And did he not  
 Pay grateful sacrifice to thee beside  
 The Argive fleet in the broad realm of Troy?  
 Why then, O Jove, art thou so wroth with him? ”

I, 62-80. Bryant.

It is decreed by Zeus that Odysseus is to return home in spite of Poseidon. Athene goes to Ithaca, appearing disguised to Telemachus, who tells her of his troubles:

Again Telemachus, the prudent, spake:  
 “ Since thou dost ask me, stranger, know that once  
 Rich and illustrious might this house be called  
 While yet the chief was here. But now the gods  
 Have grown unkind and willed it otherwise;

They make his fate a mystery beyond  
 The fate of other men. I should not grieve  
 So deeply for his loss if he had fallen  
 With his companions on the field of Troy,  
 Or midst his kindred when the war was o'er.  
 Then all the Greeks had built his monument,  
 And he had left his son a heritage  
 Of glory. Now has he become the prey  
 Of Harpies, perishing ingloriously,  
 Unseen, his fate unheard of, and has left  
 Mourning and grief, my portion. Not for him  
 Alone I grieve; the gods have cast on me  
 Yet other hardships. All the chiefs who rule  
 The isles, Dulichium, Samê, and the groves  
 That shade Zacynthus, and who bear the sway  
 In rugged Ithaca, have come to woo  
 My mother, and from day to day consume  
 My substance. She rejects not utterly  
 Their hateful suit, and yet she cannot bear  
 To end it by a marriage. Thus they waste  
 My heritage, and soon will seek my life."

I, 286-311. Bryant.

Athene encourages Telemachus to go forth to seek tidings of his father. Telemachus orders the suitors from the house, but is answered with insults. He then (Book II) calls an assembly of the elders of his own people, but appeals to them in vain to help him. One of the suitors thus complains to him of Penelope:

"What word is this thou speakest to our shame,  
 Who dost with foul disgrace our honour brand?  
 Know, then, that not the Achaïans are to blame,  
 But thine own mother, who doth understand  
 Sleights more than all the women in the land.  
 For now behold a three years' space is gone,  
 Even as I speak the fourth is close at hand,  
 Since with vain hopes she hath our hearts undone,  
 For bent on endless wiles she promises each one.

Now of all others hearken this device  
 Which in her mind the queen did frame. She reared  
 There in her halls a mighty loom of price.  
 Anon before the suitors she appeared,  
 And said: 'Young men, my suitors, what I feared  
 Is come; divine Odysseus is no more:  
 Woo ye, but leave my widowhood revered  
 A little while until my task is o'er,  
 Lest my long-purposed work fall void for evermore.

I for Laertes weave a funeral sheet  
 Against the final debt that he must pay;  
 And I were shamed the Achaian dames to meet,  
 Should the long slumber find but shroudless clay  
 Of one who owned much lordship in his day.'  
 So did she speak amid the suitor-throng,  
 And so persuaded our large heart gave way.  
 Daily she weaved; then working grievous wrong,  
 By night the woof unwound, with torches ranged along.

So for three years she prospered in her wile.  
 But when the fourth came with the seasons' flight,  
 One of her women, making known the guile,  
 Showed us the queen unwinding in the night.  
 So force, not will, constrained her to the right.  
 Know then the suitors' answer in thy mind,  
 And know Achaia here in the open light—  
 Send to her sire thy mother, to be assign'd  
 To whoso in his eyes and hers shall favour find."

II, 85-114. Worsley.

Telemachus sets sail for Pylos and Sparta, accompanied by Athene in the guise of Mentor. At Pylos (Book III) the aged Nestor tells of the fate of the Greek chieftains who left Troy, but has no tidings of Odysseus. At Sparta (Book IV) Menelaus and Helen entertain him. Helen recognizes him by his likeness to his father. "None, I say, have I ever yet seen so like another, man nor woman—wonder comes over me

as I look on him—as this man is like the son of great-hearted Odysseus, Telemachus, whom he left a newborn babe in his house, when for the sake of me, shameless woman that I was, ye Achæans came up under Troy with bold war in your hearts.” At length Telemachus questions Menelaus for tidings of his father. Then Menelaus relates how once, on the journey from Troy, when becalmed on an island near the mouth of the Nile, he had laid hold of Proteus, the Old Man of the Sea, and had compelled him to declare the fate of his companions and to direct him homeward. Proteus told of the death of Ajax, son of Oileus, and of Agamemnon; “a third,” he added, “still living, lingers yet on the wide sea.” Menelaus would fain know his name. Proteus answered:

“‘It is Laertes’ son, whose dwelling stands  
 In Ithaca. I saw him in an isle,  
 And in the cavern-palace of the nymph  
 Calypso, weeping bitterly, for she  
 Constrains his stay. He cannot leave the isle  
 For his own country; ship arrayed with oars  
 And seamen has he none to bear him o’er  
 The breast of the great ocean. But for thee,  
 ’Tis not decreed that thou shalt meet thy fate  
 And die, most noble Menelaus, where  
 The steeds of Argos in her pastures graze.  
 The gods will send thee to the Elysian plain,  
 And to the end of the earth, the dwelling-place  
 Of fair-haired Rhadamanthus. There do men  
 Lead easiest lives. No snow, no bitter cold,  
 No beating rains, are there; the ocean-deeps  
 With murmuring breezes from the West refresh  
 The dwellers. Thither shalt thou go; for thou  
 Art Helen’s spouse, and son-in-law of Jove.’”

IV, 709-727. Bryant.

Meanwhile at Ithaca the suitors lay a plot to slay Telemachus on his return. Penelope is overwhelmed with grief at the news of her son's departure, but she is consoled by a dream sent by Pallas Athene.

At the opening of the fifth book we are transferred to Calypso's isle, leaving Telemachus at Sparta. Zeus, at the instance of Athene, commands Hermes to bear a message to Calypso:

So spake he, nor did Hermes aught withhold.  
 He nimbly underneath his feet made fast  
 Fair-shining sandals of ambrosial gold,  
 Wherewith the wide sea, with the blowing blast,  
 And land unmeasured he of old had passed;  
 Then took the wand which can men's eyes subdue,  
 Whomso he listeth in long sleep to cast,  
 And sleeping wake to breathe and feel anew—  
 This holding in his hand the slayer of Argus flew.

He on Pieria pitched, and in the sea  
 Shot from the ether. Him the waves upbore  
 Like to some bird that on the watch for prey  
 Searches the barren sea-gulfs o'er and o'er,  
 And dips her feathers in the ocean hoar.  
 So Hermes through the yielding waters drave  
 Till the nymph's island rose his eyes before.  
 Gladly he came forth from the dark-blue wave,  
 And through the land walked on, and came to a great cave.

There dwelt the fair-haired nymph, and her he found  
 Within. Bright flames, that on the hearth did play,  
 Fragrance of cedar-breathed around,  
 And fume of incense wafted every way.  
 There her melodious voice the livelong day,  
 Timing the golden shuttle, rose and fell.  
 And round the cave a leafy wood there lay,  
 Where green trees waved o'er many a shady dell,  
 Alder and poplar black and cypress sweet of smell.



Thither the long-winged birds retired to sleep,  
 Falcon and owl and sea-crow loud of tongue,  
 Who plies her business in the watery deep;  
 And round the hollow cave her tendrils flung  
 A tender vine, with purpling clusters hung;  
 And fountains four, in even order set,  
 Near one another, from the stone out-sprung,  
 Streaming four ways their crystal-showery jet  
 Through meads of parsley soft and breathing violet.

So that a god, if any came that way,  
 For wonder, admiration, and delight  
 Would stand agaze, as Hermes gazed that day;  
 Who, having satisfied his soul with sight,  
 Moved where the broad cave did his steps invite.  
 Nor did Calypso, nymph divine, I trow,  
 His features or his form not read aright.  
 For never do the gods—not even though  
 Asunder far they dwell—each other fail to know.

But he, large-hearted one, Odysseus brave,  
 Within was found not. He sat weeping sore  
 Hard by the breakings of the barren wave,  
 Where he did oft afflict his soul before,  
 And through the floods unfruitful evermore  
 Yearned a set gaze with many a tear and groan,  
 Heart-broken captive on a hated shore.

V, 43-83. Worsley.

Calypso, bidden by Hermes, releases Odysseus,  
 though not without an effort to induce him to stay.

“Child of Laertes, wouldst thou fain depart  
 Hence to thine own dear fatherland? Farewell!  
 Yet, couldst thou read the sorrow and the smart,  
 With me in immortality to dwell  
 Thou wouldst rejoice and love my mansion well.  
 Deeply and long thou yearnest for thy wife;  
 Yet her in beauty I perchance excel.  
 Beseems not one who hath but mortal life  
 With forms of deathless mould to challenge a vain strife.”

To whom the wise Odysseus answering spake:  
"O nymph Calypso, much revered, cease now  
From anger, nor be wroth for my wife's sake.  
All this I know and do myself avow.  
Well may Penelope in form and brow  
And stature seem inferior far to thee,  
For she is mortal, and immortal thou.  
Yet even thus 'tis very dear to me  
My long-desired return and ancient home to see."

V, 203-220. Worsley.

Odysseus builds a huge raft and sets sail. On the eighteenth day, as he nears the Phæacian land, Poseidon spies him and sends a great storm. His raft is wrecked, but a sea-nymph gives him her veil to keep him from sinking. For two days he is driven by the waves, narrowly escaping death on the rocks, but Athene finally directs him to the mouth of a river. He swims ashore, takes shelter in a thicket, and falls asleep in a bed of dry leaves.

We come now (Book VI) to one of the most celebrated scenes in the poem. Athene appears in a dream to Nausicaä, daughter of Alcinous, king of the Phæacians, taking on the likeness of a playmate of the princess, and thus addresses her:

"Nausicaä, has thy mother then brought forth  
A careless housewife? Thy magnificent robes  
Lie still neglected, though thy marriage day  
Is near, when thou art to array thyself  
In seemly garments, and bestow the like  
On those who lead thee to the bridal rite;  
For thus the praise of men is won, and thus  
Thy father and thy gracious mother both  
Will be rejoiced. Now with the early dawn  
Let us all hasten to the washing-place.  
I too would go with thee, and help thee there,  
That thou mayst sooner end the task, for thou

Not long wilt be unwedded. Thou art wooed  
Already by the noblest of the race."

Soon the bright morning came. Nausicaä rose,  
Clad royally, as marvelling at her dream  
She hastened through the palace to declare  
Her purpose to the father and the queen.  
She found them both within. Her mother sat  
Beside the hearth with her attendant maids,  
And turned the distaff loaded with a fleece  
Dyed in sea-purple. On the threshold stood  
Her father, going forth to meet the chiefs  
Of the Phæacians in a council where  
Their noblest asked their presence. Then the maid,  
Approaching her beloved father, spake:

"I pray, dear father, give command to make  
A chariot ready for me, with high sides  
And sturdy wheels, to bear to the river-brink,  
There to be cleansed, the costly robes that now  
Lie soiled. Thee likewise it doth well beseem  
At councils to appear in vestments fresh  
And stainless. Thou hast also in these halls  
Five sons, two wedded, three in boyhood's bloom,  
And ever in the dance they need attire  
New from the wash. All this must I provide."

She ended, for she shrank from saying aught  
Of her own hopeful marriage. He perceived  
Her thought and said: "Mules I deny thee not,  
My daughter, nor aught else. Go then; my grooms  
Shall make a carriage ready with high sides  
And sturdy wheels, and a broad rack above."

VI, 32-90. Bryant.

So Nausicaä and her maidens drove down to the river and washed the linen garments. Laying these upon the beach to dry, they fell to playing at ball. But the princess, throwing the ball at one of the company, missed the girl and cast the ball into the river, whereat they all raised a piercing cry. Odysseus was awakened



from his sleep, and crept forth from the thicket, hiding his nakedness with a leafy bough. The other maidens fled, but Nausicaä alone stood firm. Odysseus thus addresses her:

“O queen, I am thy suppliant, whether thou  
 Be mortal or a goddess. If perchance  
 Thou art of that immortal race who dwell  
 In the broad heaven, thou art, I deem, most like  
 To Dian, daughter of imperial Jove,  
 In shape, in stature, and in noble air.  
 If mortal and a dweller of the earth,  
 Thrice happy are thy father and his queen,  
 Thrice happy are thy brothers; and their hearts  
 Must overflow with gladness for thy sake,  
 Beholding such a scion of the house  
 Enter the choral dance. But happiest he  
 Beyond them all, who, bringing princely gifts,  
 Shall bear thee to his home a bride; for sure  
 I never looked on one of mortal race,  
 Woman or man, like thee, and as I gaze  
 I wonder.

. . . . .  
 O queen, have pity on me, since to thee  
 I come the first of all. I do not know  
 A single dweller of the land beside.  
 Show me, I pray, thy city; and bestow  
 Some poor old robe to wrap me, — if, indeed,  
 In coming hither, thou hast brought with thee  
 Aught poor or coarse. And may the gods vouchsafe  
 To thee whatever blessing thou canst wish,  
 Husband and home and wedded harmony.  
 There is no better, no more blessed state,  
 Than when the wife and husband in accord  
 Order their household lovingly. Then those  
 Repine who hate them, those who wish them well  
 Rejoice, and they themselves the most of all.”

Nausicaä gives him clothing, and promises to take him to the city. Odysseus, after bathing and clothing himself, glows with beauty and grace, whereat the princess whispers to her maidens: "Would that such an one might be called my husband, dwelling here, and that it might please him here to abide." But she prudently directs him to follow her only to the gates of the city, lest some one of the baser sort among the people make it a reproach to her to be seen with a strange man. She directs him, however, to the palace of her father.

In the seventh book Odysseus reaches the palace of Alcinous, which the poet thus describes:

For, like the sun's fire or the moon's, a light  
 Far streaming through the high-roofed house did pass  
 From the long basement to the topmost height.  
 There on each side ran walls of flaming brass,  
 Zoned on the summit with a blue bright mass  
 Of cornice; and the doors were framed of gold;  
 Where, underneath, the brazen floor doth glass  
 Silver pilasters, which with grace uphold  
 Lintel of silver framed; the ring was burnished gold.

And dogs on each side of the door there stand,  
 Silver and gold, the which in ancient day  
 Hephæstus wrought with cunning brain and hand,  
 And set for sentinels to hold the way.  
 Death cannot tame them, nor the years decay.  
 And from the shining threshold thrones were set,  
 Skirting the walls in lustrous long array,  
 On to the far room, where the women met,  
 With many a rich robe strewn and woven coverlet.

There the Phæacian chieftains eat and drink,  
 While golden youths on pedestals upbear  
 Each in his outstretched hand a lighted link,  
 Which nightly on the roval feast doth flare.

. . . . .

Outside the courtyard stretched a planted space  
Of orchard, and a fence environed all the place.

There in full prime the orchard-trees grow tall,  
Sweet fig, pomegranate, apple fruited fair,  
Pear and the healthful olive. Each and all  
Both summer droughts and chills of winter spare;  
All the year round they flourish. Some the air  
Of Zephyr warms to life, some doth mature.  
Apple grows old on apple, pear on pear,  
Fig follows fig, vintage doth vintage lure;  
Thus the rich revolution doth for aye endure.

With well-sunned floor for drying, there is seen  
The vineyard. Here the grapes they cull, there tread.  
Here falls the blossom from the clusters green;  
There the first blushings by the suns are shed.  
Last, flowers forever fadeless — bed by bed;  
Two streams; one waters the whole garden fair;  
One through the courtyard, near the house, is led;  
Whereto with pitchers all the folk repair.  
All these the god-sent gifts to king Alcinous were.

VII, 84-132. Worsley.

Entering the palace, Odysseus is kindly received by the king and his queen, Arete. The latter recognizes his garments, and hears the story of his shipwreck and succor at the hands of her daughter. Alcinous (Book VIII) orders a well-manned ship to be made ready to convey Odysseus to his home. Meanwhile the minstrel Demodocus sings of the quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles, whereat Odysseus weeps. The Phæacians engage in athletic contests. Odysseus, challenged to show his skill, at first declines on the ground of his great sorrow, but at length, when taunted by a young man, he rises angrily, and throws a huge stone far beyond the marks reached by the others. Demodocus again sings, this time of the

loves of Ares and Aphrodite. Alcinous and his chieftains bring many costly presents to Odysseus. At the banquet with which the day closes Demodocus sings of the wooden horse. Odysseus weeps again. Alcinous, noticing this, asks Odysseus his name and his country.

Odysseus then reveals (Book IX) who he is, and begins the story of his adventures since leaving Troy. Driven by a storm as they were rounding Cape Malea, on the tenth day they reached the land of the Lotus-eaters.

“Whoever tasted once of that sweet food  
Wished not to see his native country more,  
Nor give his friends the knowledge of his fate.”

Next they came to the land of the Cyclopes, “a forward and a lawless folk, who plant not aught with their hands, neither plow. They have neither gatherings for council nor oracles of law, but they dwell in hollow caves on the crests of high hills, and each one utters the law to his children and his wives, and they reckon not one of another.” Leaving the other ships at a distance, he landed with the crew of one ship near a lofty cave, about which was built a great pen for the sheep and goats. There lived a man of monstrous size, Polyphemus, one of the one-eyed Cyclopes. Entering the cave, the company ate of the cheese stored within and awaited the return of the giant, though all but Odysseus were sore afraid. Finally Polyphemus entered, driving his flocks into the cave before him, then closing the doorway with a huge stone. Spying the strangers, he questioned them. Odysseus pretended that his ship had been wrecked and asked for hospitality.

“ The savage answered not, but sprang,  
 And, laying hands on my companions, seized  
 Two, whom he dashed like whelps upon the ground.  
 Their brains flowed out, and weltered where they fell.  
 He hewed them limb from limb for his repast,  
 And, like a lion of the mountain wilds,  
 Devoured them as they were, and left no part—  
 Entrails nor flesh, nor marrowy bones.”

IX, 327-337. Bryant.

Odysseus was tempted to slay Polyphemus as he slept, but bethought him of the huge door-stone “that two and twenty wagons could not lift.” In the morning the Cyclops ate two other men, drove out his flocks, and blocked the door behind him. Then Odysseus and his companions sharpened the end of a great club which the Cyclops had left in the cave. Polyphemus returned and seized yet two other men for his supper. He drank deeply of a strong wine which Odysseus offered him, and asked the hero's name. Here is Odysseus' famous reply and his account of their escape:

“ Thy promised boon, O Cyclopl now I claim,  
 And plead my title; Noman is my name.  
 By that distinguish'd from my tender years,  
 'Tis what my parents call me, and my peers.'  
 The giant then: ' Our promised grace receive,  
 The hospitable boon we mean to give:  
 When all thy wretched crew have felt my power,  
 Noman shall be the last I will devour.'  
 He said: then nodding with the fumes of wine  
 Droop'd his huge head, and snoring lay supine.  
 His neck obliquely o'er his shoulders hung,  
 Press'd with the weight of sleep that tames the strong:  
 There belch'd the mingled streams of wine and blood,  
 And human flesh, his indigested food.  
 Sudden I stir the embers, and inspire

With animating breath the seeds of fire;  
 Each drooping spirit with bold words repair,  
 And urge my train the dreadful deed to dare.  
 The stake now glow'd beneath the burning bed  
 (Green as it was) and sparkled fiery red.  
 Then forth the vengeful instrument I bring;  
 With beating hearts my fellows form a ring.  
 Urged by some present god, they swift let fall  
 The pointed torment on his visual ball.  
 Myself above them from a rising ground  
 Guide the sharp stake, and twirl it round and round  
 As when a shipwright stands his workmen o'er,  
 Who ply the wimble, some huge beam to bore;  
 Urged on all hands, it nimbly spins about,  
 The grain deep-piercing till it scoops it out:  
 In his broad eye so whirls the fiery wood;  
 From the pierced pupil spouts the boiling blood;  
 Singed are his brows; the scorching lids grow black;  
 The jelly bubbles, and the fibres crack.  
 And as when armorers temper in the ford  
 The keen-edged pole-ax, or the shining sword,  
 The red-hot metal hisses in the lake,  
 Thus in his eye-ball hiss'd the plunging stake.  
 He sends a dreadful groan, the rocks around  
 Through all their inmost winding caves resound.  
 Scared we receded. Forth with frantic hand  
 He tore and dash'd on earth the gory brand:  
 Then calls the Cyclops,<sup>1</sup> all that round him dwell,  
 With voice like thunder, and a direful yell.  
 From all their dens the one-eyed race repair,  
 From rifted rocks, and mountains bleak in air.  
 All haste assembled at his well-known roar,  
 Inquire the cause, and crowd the cavern door.  
 'What hurts thee, Polypheme? What strange affright  
 Thus breaks our slumbers, and disturbs the night?  
 Does any mortal, in the unguarded hour  
 Of sleep, oppress thee, or by fraud or power?

<sup>1</sup>Pope uses the forms of this word incorrectly. The singular is *Cyclops*, not *Cyclop*, and the plural *Cyclopes*. The mistake which Pope makes, though common, should be avoided.

Or thieves insidious thy fair flocks surprise?'  
 Thus they: the Cyclop from his den replies:  
 'Friends, Noman kills me; Noman, in the hour  
 Of sleep, oppresses me with fraudulent power.'  
 'If no man hurt thee, but the hand divine  
 Inflict disease, it fits thee to resign:  
 To Jove or thy father Neptune pray.'  
 The brethren cried, and instant strode away."

IX, 364-414. Pope.

Odysseus contrived an ingenious plan of escape. Lashing together the rams three by three, he placed a man under the middle one of each three. Then he curled himself under the shaggy belly of the largest ram in the flock. Polyphemus felt the backs of the other rams as they passed him, but laid hold of the great ram and gently chid him for lagging behind the rest. At last, to the great relief of Odysseus, he let him also pass out. Odysseus released his companions and they regained the ship. Then, with foolhardy daring, Odysseus shouted back exultingly to the Cyclops, disclosing his real name. Polyphemus first hurled two huge crags at the ship and almost wrecked it, then uttered the curse which caused Odysseus so many sorrows before he reached his home:

"Hear now, great monarch of the raven hair:  
 Holder of earth, Poseidon, hear my cry,  
 If thou my father art indeed, and I  
 Thy child! Or ever he the way fulfil,  
 Make thou Laertes-born Odysseus die,  
 Waster of walls! or should the high Fates will  
 That friends and home he see, then alone and late and ill

Let him return on board a foreign ship,  
 And in his house find evil! "

IX, 528-535. Worsley.

Odysseus and his companions next came (Book X) to the island of Æolus, god of the winds. The god gave Odysseus a bag in which were bound all the noisy winds, and made it fast in the hold of the ship. Then he sent forth the blast of the west wind, which in nine days brought them within sight of Ithaca. But while Odysseus slept for weariness, his crew, thinking the bag contained gold and silver, opened it, and the winds burst violently forth, driving them back to the island of Æolus, who angrily sent them away. After six days' sailing they reached the land of the cannibal giants, the Læstrygonians. Odysseus sent out a reconnoitering party, one of whom was caught and eaten. The giants rushed to the cliffs and threw great rocks on the ships, "and anon there arose from the fleet an evil din of men dying and ships scattered withal. And like folk spearing fishes, they bore home their hideous meal." Eleven of the ships were wrecked and their crews slain; Odysseus escaped with the twelfth alone and its crew, "stricken at heart, yet glad as men saved from death."

They came next to the island Aea, "where dwelt Circe of the braided tresses, an awful goddess of mortal speech." Odysseus sent one-half of his crew to search out the place, but they, partaking of a potion mixed for them by the enchantress, "took on the shape and voice and bristles of swine, but their mind abode even as of old." One only, who had tarried outside through misgivings, came back to tell the tale. Odysseus girt on his sword and went forth to rescue his companions. Hermes met him, told him of the charm of Circe, and gave him an antidote against it. Circe prevailed upon Odysseus to remain with her,



transforming his companions back into men and swearing to do him no harm. At the end of a year, at his earnest entreaty, she let him resume his journey, telling him, however, that he must first go down to Hades to seek the spirit of the soothsayer Teiresias.

After one day's sailing they came (Book XI) "to the limits of the world, to the deep-flowing Oceanus. There is the land and the city of the Cimmerians, shrouded in mist and cloud, and never does the shining sun look down upon them with his rays, neither when he climbs the starry heavens, nor when again he turns earthward from the firmament, but deadly night is outspread over miserable mortals." Reaching the place that Circe had declared unto to him, he dug a trench and filled it with the blood of victims.

Forthwith from Erebus a phantom crowd  
 Loomed forth, the shadowy people of the dead—  
 Old men, with load of earthly anguish bowed,  
 Brides in their bloom cut off, and youths unwed,  
 Virgins whose tender eyelids then first shed  
 True sorrow, men with gory arms renowned,  
 Pierced by the sharp sword on the death-plain red.  
 All these flock darkling with a hideous sound,  
 Lured by the scent of blood, the open trench around.

XI, 36-43. Worsley.

Teiresias told Odysseus that he would reach home in safety after many troubles, but warned him not to slay the cattle of the Sun on the isle Thrinacia. He closed with this prophecy: "And from the sea shall thine own death come, the gentlest death that may be, which shall end thee foredone with smooth old age, and the folk shall dwell happily around thee." Then Odysseus' mother came up to him. Thrice he sought to embrace her; thrice she flitted from his arms as a

shadow or even as a dream. "For even on this wise is it with mortals when they die. The sinews no more bind together the flesh and the bones, and the spirit like a dream flies forth and hovers near." Odysseus next saw all the famous women who had borne children to the gods.

Odysseus would now fain cease his tale before the Phæacians, for the time of sleep had come. But Alcinous asks to hear about the Argives who went against Troy: "Beauty crowns thy words and wisdom is within thee. Behold, the night is of great length, unspeakable, and the time for sleep is not yet; tell me, therefore, of those wondrous deeds. I could abide even till the bright dawn, so long as thou couldst endure to rehearse all these woes of thine in the hall." So Odysseus goes on to tell of his meeting with the shades of Atreus, Achilles, Ajax, and Heracles, and describes the tortures of Tantalus and Sisyphus. His conversation with the ghost of Achilles is famous:

"Ulysses! what hath moved thee to attempt  
This greatest of thy labors? How is it  
That thou hast found the courage to descend  
To Hades, where the dead, the bodiless forms  
Of those whose work is done on earth, abide?"

"He spake; I answered: 'Greatest of the Greeks!  
Achilles, son of Peleus! 'Twas to hear  
The counsel of Teiresias that I came,  
If haply he might tell me by what means  
To reach my rugged Ithaca again.  
For yet I have not trod my native coast,  
Nor even have drawn nigh to Greece. I meet  
Misfortunes everywhere. But as for thee,  
Achilles, no man lived before thy time,  
Nor will hereafter live, more fortunate  
Than thou,—for while alive we honored thee

As if thou wert a god, and now again  
 In these abodes thou rulest o'er the dead;  
 Therefore, Achilles, shouldst thou not be sad.'

"I spake; Achilles quickly answered me:—  
 'Noble Ulysses, speak not thus of death,  
 As if thou couldst console me. I would be  
 A laborer on earth, and serve for hire  
 Some man of mean estate, who makes scant cheer,  
 Rather than reign o'er all who have gone down  
 To death.'"

XI, 581-606. Bryant.

Leaving the place of the shades, Odysseus then (Book XII) sailed past the isle of the Sirens, who bewitch all men by their singing. "Whoso draws nigh them unwittingly and hears the sound of their voice, never does he see wife or babes on his return, nor have they joy at his coming." But Odysseus, warned by Circe, heard the singing, but sailed past unharmed; for he bound himself fast to the mast and filled the ears of the crew with wax. Next they sailed between Scylla and Charybdis, two monsters of the sea, one on either side of a narrow strait of seething waters; but Scylla seized six of the crew and devoured them, shrieking and stretching forth their hands to their leader in the dread death-struggle. "And the most pitiful thing was this that mine eyes have seen in all my travail in searching out the paths of the sea." Landing then on the isle Thrinacia, his companions slew and ate of the sacred kine<sup>1</sup> of Helios, the sun-god, in spite of the warnings of Teiresias and Circe and the commands of their leader. Thereupon the gods sent a great storm upon the ship and wrecked her with all the crew, save only Odysseus, who lashed

<sup>1</sup>These were three hundred and sixty in number, typifying the days in the year.

himself upon a mast and was brought safely, after nine days, to Calypso's isle, where he remained seven years. These were the adventures which Odysseus related at the court of King Alcinous.

Odysseus departs. (Book XIII) from the island of the Phæacians in a swift ship, provided by Alcinous, taking with him a load of treasure, the gifts of the Phæacians, "such wealth as he never would have won for himself, out of Troy." He is set upon the shore of Ithaca while still asleep. Poseidon, thwarted in his plans concerning Odysseus, wreaks his wrath upon the Phæacians who conveyed him home. Smiting their ship, it becomes a stone, fast-rooted in the sea. When Odysseus awakes, wondering in what land he is, Athene appears unto him in disguise, points out the familiar landmarks of his native land, and tells him of Telemachus in Sparta and of Penelope surrounded by the shameless suitors. That he may not be recognized and slain, she transforms him into a beggar:

So with her wand she touched him; and the skin  
 Shrunk on the flexile limbs, the auburn hair  
 Died, and he stooped an old man, wrinkled, thin.  
 Bleared were the bright orbs, late so wondrous fair,  
 And coarse rags, smoke-defiled, she made him wear,  
 Wrapped with vile deer's-hide, and rude staff anon  
 Gave, and a foul scrip leathern-looped to bear.

XIII, 430-438. Worsley.

In this disguise he appears (Book XIV) before the faithful swineherd Eumæus, an old serf of his, and is entertained in his hut. Odysseus pretends that he is a Cretan, and weaves a cunning tale of his adventures after leaving Troy. But when he says that he has recently heard tidings of Odysseus, the swineherd,

too often deceived by such reports, refuses to believe him.

Meanwhile (Book XV) Telemachus is warned by Athene to hasten home to Ithaca. Menelaus gives him gifts and speeds him on his way. By the advice of Athene he goes first to the hut of Eumæus, thus avoiding the suitors who lie in wait for his ship. In the morning (Book XVI), after the arrival of Telemachus, Athene appeared unto Odysseus, invisible to the others, and commands him to reveal himself to his son, that they may take counsel together. She restores him, for the moment, to his own form and dress. Telemachus is soon convinced that this stranger is indeed his father. Odysseus then inquires about the number of the suitors, that he may decide whether they two alone shall be able to make head against them without aid or whether they must seek allies. Telemachus thus replies:

“O father, I have heard of thy great fame  
 My whole life long,—how mighty is thy arm,  
 How wise thy counsels. Thou hast said great things,  
 And I am thunderstruck. It cannot be  
 That two alone should stand before a crowd  
 Of valiant men. They are not merely ten,—  
 These suitors,—nor twice ten, but many more.  
 Hear, then, their number. From Dulichium come  
 Fifty and two, the flower of all its youth,  
 With whom are six attendants. Samê sends  
 Twice twelve, and twenty more Achaian chiefs  
 Come from Zacynthus. Twelve from Ithaca;  
 The noblest of the isle are these,—with whom  
 Medon, the herold, comes,—a bard whose song  
 Is heavenly,—and two servants skilled to spread  
 The banquet. Should we in the palace halls  
 Assault all these, I fear lest the revenge  
 For all thy wrongs would end most bitterly

And grievously for thee. Now, if thy thought  
Be turned to some ally, bethink thee who  
Will combat for us with a willing heart."

Again Ulysses, the great sufferer, spake:  
"Then will I tell thee; listen, and give good heed.  
Think whether Pallas and her father, Jove,  
Suffice not for us. Need we more allies?"

XVI, 293-317. Bryant.

Eumæus, who knows not that the stranger is Odysseus, is sent to the city to tell Penelope of her son's return. The suitors are enraged that Telemachus has escaped them. The next day (Book XVII) Telemachus goes up early to the city and boldly shows himself before the suitors. Later on Eumæus conducts Odysseus thither, again disguised as a beggar. Arrived at the palace, Odysseus is recognized by his old dog Argus:

A dog was lying near,  
And lifted up his head and pricked his ears.  
'T was Argus, which the much-enduring man  
Ulysses long before had reared, but left  
Untried, when for the hallowed town of Troy  
He sailed. The young men oft had led him forth  
In eager chase of wild goats, stags, and hares;  
But now, his master far away, he lay  
Neglected, just before the stable doors,  
Amid the droppings of the mules and beeves,  
Heaped high till carried to the spacious fields  
Of which Ulysses was the lord. There lay  
Argus, devoured with vermin. As he saw  
Ulysses drawing near, he wagged his tail  
And dropped his ears, but found that he could come  
No nearer to his master. Seeing this,  
Ulysses wiped away a tear unmarked,  
While over Argus the black night of death  
Came suddenly, as soon as he had seen  
Ulysses, absent now for twenty years.

XVII, 335-398. Bryant.

Odysseus goes about among the suitors begging food, and Telemachus feigns not to know him. One of the suitors smites him on the shoulder with a footstool. A beggar whom the suitors call "Irus," because he ran on errands, tries to drive Odysseus away from the house (Book XVIII). The suitors arrange a boxing match between them, wherein Odysseus easily smites Irus. Thereafter Odysseus is on a better footing with the suitors, though they still taunt him, so that he almost forgets his rôle of beggar. Penelope appears among the suitors in all her beauty and beguiles them into giving her costly presents. Odysseus tests the loyalty of the maidens of Penelope and finds some of them on the side of the suitors.

Telemachus and Odysseus secretly take all the arms out of the great hall and place them in the armory (Book XIX). Penelope calls Odysseus to her and questions him. He tells her a false tale in the likeness of truth, how that he had once entertained Odysseus in Crete, and that he had lately heard of his homecoming from the king of the Thesprotians. Penelope is cheered by his words, and, disposed to treat kindly the beggar who has brought the good tidings of her husband's speedy return, she bids Eurycleia, a trusted servant, once the nurse of Odysseus, to wash the stranger's feet. This leads to the recognition of Odysseus by Eurycleia, who says to him:

"Deeply am I moved at sight of thee.▷

Hear what I say: of strangers in distress

Come many hither, yet have I beheld▷

No one who bears, in shape and voice and feet▷

Such likeness to our absent lord as thou▷

Ulysses, the sagacious, thus replied:

"O aged woman, so has it been said  
By all who have beheld both him and me.  
They all declare that we are very like  
Each other; thou in this hast spoken well."

He spake; she took a shining vase designed  
For washing feet, and poured cold water in  
In large abundance, and warm water next.  
Ulysses, who had sat before the hearth,  
Moved to a darker spot, for in his mind  
The thought arose that she might find a scar  
Upon his limbs in handling them, and thus  
His secret would be known. She came and bathed  
His feet, and found the scar. 'T was where a boar  
With his white tooth had gashed the limb, as once  
He journeyed to Parnassus.

. . . . .

The aged woman, as she took the foot  
Into her hands, perceived by touch the scar,  
And, letting fall the limb, it struck the vase.  
Loud rang the brass, the vase was overturned,  
And poured the water forth. At once a rush  
Of gladness and of grief came o'er her heart.  
Tears filled her eyes, and her clear voice was choked.  
She touched Ulysses on the chin, and said:—

"Dear child! thou art Ulysses, of a truth.  
I knew thee not till I had touched the scar."

So speaking, toward Penelope she turned  
Her eyes, about to tell her that her lord  
Was in the palace, but the queen saw not,  
And all that passed was unperceived by her,  
For Pallas turned her thoughts another way.

XIX, 463-583. Bryant.

But Odysseus enjoins upon Eurycleia to tell no one in the house, lest the secret be betrayed to the suitors. Penelope tells Odysseus of a dream that has come to her, which seemed to forbode the destruction of the suitors, and adds:



"Of dreams, O stranger, some are meaningless  
 And idle, and can never be fulfilled.  
 Two portals are there for their shadowy shapes  
 Of ivory one, and one of horn. The dreams  
 That come through the carved ivory deceive  
 With promises that never are made good;  
 But those which pass the doors of polished horn,  
 And are beheld of men, are ever true.  
 And yet I cannot hope that my strange dream  
 Came through them, though my son and I would both  
 Rejoice if it were so. This let me say,  
 And heed me well. To-morrow brings to us  
 The hateful morn which takes me from my home,  
 The palace of Ulysses. I shall now  
 Propose a contest. In the palace court  
 Ulysses in a row set up twelve stakes,  
 Like props that hold a galley up; each stake  
 Had its own ring; he stood afar, and sent  
 An arrow through them all. I shall propose  
 This contest to the suitors. He who bends  
 The bow with easy mastery, and sends  
 Through the twelve rings an arrow, I will take  
 To follow from the palace where I passed  
 My youthful married life,—a beautiful home,  
 And stored with wealth; a home which I shall long  
 Remember, even in my nightly dreams."

XX, 679-704. Bryant.

The day of vengeance comes at last (Book XX).  
 The suitors insult Odysseus again. Athene drives  
 their wits wandering, so that when the prophet Theo-  
 clymenus, whom Telemachus brought from Pylos,  
 tells them of their impending doom, they laugh sweetly  
 at him, understanding not his words. Penelope then  
 brings out the bow and arrows of Odysseus (Book  
 XXI), and the swineherd Eumæus brings out the axes,  
 which Telemachus arranges in a straight line. One  
 after another the suitors try to string the great bow,

but none can bend it. Odysseus calls apart the swineherd Eumæus and a faithful neatherd whom he has proved, and reveals himself to them, charging them with their duties in the approaching fight. Odysseus now asks to try the bow. The suitors object, but Penelope and Telemachus insist upon his claim as just. Odysseus takes the bow, at the same time bidding Eumæus have the doors of the women's apartment closed, while the neatherd bars the outer gates of the court, so that no way of escape is left for the suitors. Odysseus then easily strings the bow, and "the bow-string rang sweetly at the touch, in tone like a swallow." Then laying an arrow on the bow, "he held the notch and drew the string, even from the settle where he sat, and with straight aim shot the shaft and missed not one of the axes, beginning from the first axe-handle, and the bronze-weighted shaft passed clean through and out at the last." Then at a nod from his father, Telemachus girt his sharp sword about him and took a spear in his grasp, and stood by Odysseus' side.

Then did Ulysses cast his rags aside,  
 And leaping to the threshold, took his stand  
 On its broad space, with bow and quiver filled  
 With arrows. At his feet the hero poured  
 The winged shafts, and to the suitors called:

"That difficult strife is ended. Now I take  
 Another mark, which no man yet has hit.  
 Now shall I see if I attain my aim,  
 And, by the aid of Phœbus, win renown."

He spake, and turning, at Antinous aimed  
 The bitter shaft,—Antinous, who just then  
 Had grasped a beautiful two-eared cup of gold,  
 About to drink the wine. He little thought  
 Of wounds and death; for who, when banqueting

Among his fellows, could suspect that one  
 Alone against so many men would dare,  
 However bold, to plan his death, and bring  
 On him the doom of fate? Ulysses struck  
 The suitor with the arrow at the throat.  
 The point came through the tender neck behind.  
 Sideways he sank to earth; his hand let fall  
 The cup; the dark blood in a thick warm stream  
 Gushed from the nostrils of the smitten man.  
 He spurned the table with his feet and spilled  
 The viands; bread and roasted meat were flung  
 To lie polluted on the floor. Then rose  
 The suitors in a tumult, when they saw  
 The fallen man; from all their seats they rose  
 Throughout the hall, and to the massive walls  
 Looked eagerly; there hung no buckler there,  
 No sturdy lance for them to wield. They called  
 Thus to Ulysses with indignant words:

“Stranger, in evil hour hast thou presumed  
 To aim at men; and thou shalt henceforth bear  
 Part in no other contest. Even now  
 Is thy destruction close to thee. Thy hand  
 Hast slain the noblest youth in Ithaca.  
 The vultures shall devour thy flesh for this.”

So each one said; they deemed he had not slain  
 The suitor wittingly; nor did they see,  
 Blind that they were, the doom which in that hour  
 Was closing round them all. Then with a frown  
 The wise Ulysses looked on them, and said:

“Dogs! ye had thought I never would come back  
 From Ilium’s coast, and therefore ye devoured  
 My substance here, and offered violence  
 To my maid-servants, and pursued my wife  
 As lovers, while I lived. Ye dreaded not  
 The gods who dwell in the great heaven, nor feared  
 Vengeance hereafter from the hands of men;  
 And now destruction overhangs you all.”

He spake, and all were pale with fear, and each  
 Looked round for some escape from death.

But the suitors rally and rush upon Odysseus with drawn swords. Odysseus shoots one leader and Telemachus smites another with his spear. Telemachus brings from the armory four suits of armor and eight spears. Odysseus, so long as he had arrows, smote the suitors one by one, and they fell thick upon one another. But when the arrows failed, he put on helmet and shield and grasped two mighty spears. The suitors are furnished by a servant with armor and spears from the armory, which Telemachus had left open, but the traitor is caught and suspended from the roof-beam. The goat-herd and neat-herd don their armor and take their stand with Odysseus and Telemachus. The suitors make another onset with volleys of spears, all aimed at Odysseus, but the four withstand the attack and slay each his man.

They fled along the hall as flees a herd  
 Of kine, when the swift gadfly suddenly  
 Has come among them, and has scattered them.  
 Meantime, like falcons with curved claws and beaks,  
 That, coming from the mountain summits, pounce  
 Upon the smaller birds, and make them fly  
 Close to the fields among the snares they dread,  
 And seize and slay, nor can the birds resist  
 Or fly, and at the multitude of prey  
 The fowlers' hearts are glad; so did the four  
 Smite right and left the suitors hurrying through  
 The palace-hall, and fearful moans arose  
 As heads were smitten by the sword, and all  
 The pavement swam with blood.

XXII, 364-378. Bryant.

All are slain except the minstrel Phemius and a faithful henchman. The unfaithful maidens are

commanded to carry out the dead and to cleanse the hall; after this Odysseus hangs them all.

Now Penelope is told that Odysseus is in the house and has slain the suitors (Book XXIII), but cannot believe the truth, even when assured by Telemachus and Odysseus himself. "If this be in truth Odysseus," she says, "and he hath indeed come home, verily we shall beware of each other the more surely, for we have tokens that we twain know, even we, secret from all others." So she spake, and the steadfast, goodly Odysseus smiled. Going to the bath, he came forth again changed in aspect, clothed in a goodly mantle and doublet. And Athene shed great beauty upon him, "and made him greater and more mighty to behold, and from his head caused deep curling locks to flow, like the hyacinth flower." Then Penelope, to test him, speaks thus to Eurycleia:

"Bestir thyself,

Dame Eurycleia, and make up with care  
A bed without the chamber, which he framed  
With his own hands; bear out the massive bed,  
And lay upon it seemly coverings,  
Fleeces and mantles for his nightly rest."

She spake to try her husband; but displeased,  
Ulysses answered thus his virtuous queen:

"O woman, thou hast said unwelcome words.  
Who hath displaced my bed? That task were hard  
For long-experienced hands, unless some god  
Had come to shift its place. No living man,  
Even in his prime of years, could easily  
Have moved it, for in that elaborate work  
There was a mystery; it was I myself  
Who shaped it, no one else. Within my court  
There grew an olive-tree with full-leaved boughs,  
A tall and flourishing tree; its massive stem

Was like a column. Round it I built up  
 A chamber with cemented stones until  
 The walls were finished; then I framed a roof  
 Above it, and put on the well-glued doors  
 Close-fitting. Next I lopped the full-leaved boughs,  
 And, cutting off the trunk above the root,  
 Smoothed well the stump with tools, and made of it  
 A post to bear the couch. I bored the wood  
 With wimbles, placed it on the frame, and carved  
 The work till it was done, inlaying it  
 With silver, gold, and ivory. I stretched  
 Upon it thongs of oxhide brightly dyed  
 In purple. Now, O wife, I cannot know  
 Whether my bed remains as then it was,  
 Or whether some one from the root has hewn  
 The olive trunk, and moved it from its place."

He spake, and her knees faltered and her heart  
 Was melted as she heard her lord recount  
 The tokens all so truly, and she wept,  
 And rose, and ran to him, and flung her arms  
 About his neck, and kissed his brow, and said:—

"Ulysses, look not on me angrily,  
 Thou who in other things art wise above  
 All other men. The gods have made our lot  
 A hard one, jealous lest we should have passed  
 Our youth together happily, and thus  
 Have reached old age. I pray, be not incensed,  
 Nor take it ill that I embraced thee not  
 As soon as I beheld thee, for my heart  
 Has ever trembled lest some one who comes  
 Into this isle should cozen me with words;  
 And they who practice frauds are numberless.

But now, since thou by tokens clear and true  
 Hast spoken of our bed, which human eye  
 Has never seen save mine and thine, and those  
 Of one handmaiden only, Actoris,—  
 Her whom my father gave me when I came  
 To this thy palace, and who kept the door

Of our close chamber, — thou hast won my mind  
To full belief, though hard it was to win."

She spake, and he was moved to tears; he wept  
As in his arms he held his dearly loved  
And faithful wife. As welcome as the land  
To those who swim the deep, of whose stout bark  
Neptune has made a wreck amidst the waves,  
Tossed by the billows and the blast, and few  
Are those who from the hoary ocean reach  
The shore, their limbs all crested with the brine,  
These gladly climb the sea-beach, and are safe, —  
So welcome was her husband to her eyes.  
Nor would her fair white arms release his neck,  
And there would rosy-fingered Morn have found  
Both weeping, but the blue-eyed Pallas planned  
That thus it should not be; she stayed the night  
When near its close, and held the golden Morn  
Long in the ocean depths, nor suffered her  
To yoke her steeds that bring the light to men, —  
Lampas and Phæthon, swift steeds that bear  
The Morning on her way.

XXIII, 214-298. Bryant.

The story is now finished, for the plot is complete; but, as in the *Iliad*, the poet adds a few touches to the picture in an epilogue (Book XXIV). He first tells of the descent of the souls of the suitors to Hades. In Hades the souls of Agamemnon, Patroclus, Antilochus, and Ajax are gathered about Achilles, Agamemnon telling of the death and burial of Achilles, when Hermes brings down the souls of the suitors. When Agamemnon learns of the return and triumph of Odysseus, he thus apostrophizes Odysseus:

"Son of Laertes, fortunate and wise,  
Ulysses! thou by feats of eminent might  
And valor dost possess thy wife again.  
And nobly minded is thy blameless queen,

The daughter of Icarius, faithfully  
 Remembering him to whom she gave her troth  
 While yet a virgin. Never shall the fame  
 Of his great valor perish, and the gods  
 Themselves shall frame, for those who dwell on earth,  
 Sweet strains in praise of sage Penelope."

XXIV, 236-245. Bryant.

Meanwhile Odysseus visits his father, Laertes, and finds him wasted with age and clothed in unseemly garments. The old man discloses his grief for his long-lost son, whereupon Odysseus declares himself, showing as a token the scar upon his leg and naming over the trees which he himself had planted when a boy. Odysseus, Telemachus, and Laertes then go up to the city to fight against the relatives of the suitors, who plan to slay them. After a short struggle Athene intervenes and reëstablishes Odysseus in his sovereignty over Ithaca and his people.

The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* give us a well-defined picture of a certain stage of Greek civilization, of the Greek people in an early period of its development. The Homeric Greek strongly resembles the Greek of later times, but as the child resembles the father. He has the same aptitudes and instincts, but they are as yet relatively undeveloped, nor has civilization advanced sufficiently to give his powers full play. It is the childhood of the Greek race, with all the buoyancy and freshness, enthusiasm and vigor; but the childhood of an essentially noble people, responsive, as a rule, to its best impulses, and endowed with a passionate love for both spiritual and physical excellence. The *Odyssey* gives the impression of being somewhat later than the *Iliad* by reason of its more advanced



conception of the gods and its broader view of life; but practically the two poems are products of the same age. The Greek chronologists placed the events of the Trojan war in the twelfth century before Christ. The remains of the Homeric age which the spade of the excavator has uncovered seem to point to a time between 1200 and 1500. But the authors of the poems were of a much later time, and naturally transferred many of the customs and conceptions of their own day to the period of their story.

Homer conceives of the earth as a sort of flat oval, around which flows the river Oceanus. Just at the edge is the region of the dead—the Elysian fields, where roam the shades. At the extreme east and west dwell the Æthiopians, the favorites of the gods. Near the centre is Greece. The coast of Asia Minor is well known, and many of the islands of the Ægæan and Ionian seas. Phœnicia is mentioned and Egyptian Thebes. The Nile is “the river Egyptus.” Outside of this zone lie strange lands, peopled with monsters and fairies. The sky is the vast roof the earth, supported by pillars which the giant Atlas holds.

The prevailing form of government is monarchy, but not the absolute despotism by which the people of Egypt and the Orient were at this time oppressed. The king consults his council of elders, and sometimes calls together the whole people. But the rights of the people are not guarded by constitutional restrictions upon the king. If powerful enough he may override both the elders and the assembly. He rules by divine right; and yet the obligations of his office are distinctly felt. Besides the free people there is a class of slaves, captives taken in war. They may be bought

and sold, and are charged with domestic labors for the most part. But they are not looked upon as belonging to an inferior race, nor are they cruelly treated. Hired servants attend to the flocks and the farms.

The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* contain charming pictures of well-ordered, happy domestic life. The households of Menelaus and Helen and of Alcinous and Arete reveal both refinement and affection. The husband respects and honors his wife, who in turn renders him both affection and obedience. Children are subject to their parents and care for them in old age. Hospitality is regarded as a requirement of divine law. The guest is always welcome. Even the beggar is not turned away. The position of women is significant of an enlightened people. There is not a trace of the Oriental attitude toward her which afterward characterized Athenian society. She moves freely among men, but with becoming modesty, and is invariably treated with a chivalrous courtesy. Her sphere is the household; war and the council are reserved for the men. She directs her servants, spins, weaves, and embroiders. As we have seen, even the princess Nausicaä is not above washing the linen. In the entertainment of guests the wife takes a prominent part. Polygamy is unknown; so is divorce. But the unfaithful wife and the erring husband are not wanting.

The gods of this age are men and women in their passions, but possess greater beauty and power, together with immortality. They are not, strictly speaking, all-powerful nor all-wise. They are not always good, yielding to temptations to which men are subject and allowing human passions of hatred and

revenge to sway them. The universe is divided into three realms, assigned to the three sons of Cronus. Zeus, the oldest and most powerful, is supreme in the heavens, Poseidon in the sea, and Hades in the abode of the dead. The people of the earth are subject to the god of the skies and the god of the seas, but the former is more powerful. Next to these three in rank are three others, Hera, the sister and wife of Zeus, and Athene and Apollo, children of Zeus. The others are more restricted in the scope of their power. The gods interfere freely in the affairs of men, appearing among them in person or in disguise, or directing their doings from the height of Mount Olympus.

The age of Homer has received fresh illustration in recent years from extensive excavations made in Asia Minor and in Greece. Heinrich Schliemann, a German merchant, was from early boyhood a devout worshiper at the shrine of Homer, and conceived a passionate desire to explore the scenes which Homer describes. Acquiring a large fortune, he set about the fulfillment of his dreams. Following the indications found in the poems, he excavated the hill of Hisarlik in Asia Minor, near the Hellespont, and found there the ruins of seven cities one upon another. He himself believed that in the second city from the bottom, where a wonderful treasure of objects in massive gold, silver, bronze, and clay came to light, he had found the city of Priam. More recent excavations have shown, however, that the city which represents best the civilization and the power of the Homeric Priam was rather the sixth from the bottom. This is made certain by comparison with the remains found in Mycenæ, the city of Agamemnon, which Schliemann

also excavated, and at Tiryns, a still earlier fortress in Argos. On many sites in Greece and on the islands remains of the same civilization have been found by Schliemann and others, so that now the phrase "Mycenæan civilization" stands for a certain definite prehistoric culture which bears a very close relationship with the culture revealed in the Homeric poems. These discoveries have had the effect of dissipating much of the skepticism with which the Homeric poems had come to be regarded a half-century ago as trustworthy documents of the past. We cannot, indeed, affirm that the story of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* is true in the sense that the events described ever took place. But the story of the Trojan war may, after all, have grown out of certain historical occurrences which in the course of time became magnified by the poets into heroic proportions. Certain it is, at least, that there once was a rich and powerful city in the Troad, and at the same time, in Greece proper, a rich and powerful people under the sway of the lord of Mycenæ.

We shall touch but briefly upon the famous Homeric Question, which has existed since the second century before Christ and will probably not cease to be discussed so long as the Homeric poems are studied. The question, briefly stated, is the problem of the origin and authorship of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The ancients knew almost nothing about the person Homer, but they believed in him, conceiving of him as a blind bard, like Demodocus in the *Odyssey*. Many different cities claimed to be his birthplace. In late antiquity some scholars held that the *Iliad*, but not the *Odyssey*, was the work of Homer. It is the view of scholars

to-day that the two poems are of different authorship, although they acknowledge their great similarity. But the *Odyssey* bears the marks of a somewhat later age than the *Iliad*.

Professor F. A. Wolf, of Berlin, in a book written in 1795, was the first to attempt seriously to prove that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were not the work of a single poet, nor each composed originally as a single poem. They were rather put together from many smaller poems which had once circulated orally throughout the Greek world. The unity of the poems as we now have them is due to the editor who put the smaller poems together. The arguments advanced by Wolf and his successors are too complicated to be presented here. It will suffice to state some of the results of the long discussion in which most scholars now agree. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* belong to the end and not to the beginning of a poetical epoch. There were current in pre-Homeric times a multitude of lays which gradually, as the poetic art developed, took on a style suitable to a heroic narration. The *Iliad* existed once in a much shorter form than now. By various hands it has been enlarged and remodeled. The author of this original *Iliad* is fairly entitled to be called Homer, the founder of the epic art. The *Odyssey* is mainly the work of a single poet, though certain portions of it also are later additions. It was probably composed about a century later than the original *Iliad*. The nucleus of both poems had its origin in Greece proper, but was carried over to Ionia by emigrants, whence it received the imprint of the Ionic society, spirit, and dialect.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>One of the principal arguments of Professor Wolf has been much weakened by the discoveries of the present century. He believed that the

Besides the poems of the Epic Cycle, to which reference has already been made, the only epic poems of literary importance produced during the classical period after Homer were the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* of Hesiod. The former poem brings together the legends about the origin of the universe and the birth of the gods, the latter gives practical hints on farming (the *Works*) and on lucky and unlucky days (the *Days*). Hesiod was a Bœotian, born a century and a half after Homer, according to tradition, and as a poet has no claim to a place beside Homer. Mention should also be made of the so-called Homeric Hymns, a collection of poems of different ages, most of them simply preludes to the songs of the rhapsodists. The *Hymn to Demeter* is of great beauty and of interest as bearing on the origin of the famous mysteries at Eleusis.

art of writing was not known and freely practiced among the Greeks for several centuries after the reported time of Homer. The oral transmission for so long a time of poems so extensive as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* seemed to him quite impossible. But we now possess Greek writing from last half of the seventh century and may safely assume the practice of writing at a considerably earlier period.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ELEGIAC, IAMBIC, AND MELIC POETS

The Change in the Social and Political Conditions of Greece — Lyric Poetry — The three Branches of Lyric — Elegiac Poetry — Callinus — Tyrtæus — Mimnermus — Solon — Theognis — The Anthology — Iambic Poetry — Archilochus — Melic Poetry — Alcæus — Sappho — Anacreon.

Between the age represented by Homer and Hesiod and the end of the sixth century great changes took place in Greece, essentially altering the conditions of social and political life. These changes were, briefly stated, the overthrow of monarchies, colonizing movements, and the extension of commerce. Where there had been monarchies we now find either oligarchies, as in Sparta and Athens, or tyrannies,<sup>1</sup> as in Corinth, Lesbos, and Syracuse. Toward the end of this period democracies took the place of tyrannies. It was a period of revolutions, and revolutions stir men's minds and broaden their experiences. The tendency of the time was toward the liberty of the individual. The sending out of colonies and the expansion of commerce were results of the political unrest, and also tended to develop the individual and bring the private citizen into prominence.

Now lyric poetry is essentially the expression of the individual. It delineates the poet's own thoughts and feelings, and as such is contrasted with epic

<sup>1</sup>The word "tyrant" in Greek does not necessarily imply an oppressive ruler, but simply one who has usurped authority or who holds it by unconstitutional means.

poetry, the narration of external circumstances, and with dramatic poetry, the representation of another's experiences. The Greeks themselves had no word which corresponds to this meaning of "lyric," which to them meant only that which is sung or recited to the accompaniment of the lyre. They used less comprehensive designations for the various kinds of poetry that were neither epic nor dramatic. But the characteristics implied in our modern term are found in the Greek poetry of which we speak, and are traceable to the political and social movements above outlined.

The germs of Greek lyric poetry are to be sought in the early history of the people. We have already spoken of the wedding-chant and the dirge, the hymn to the gods, and the people's song in the pre-Homeric days. There were songs appropriate to almost every situation in life. In these the poet found occasion to express his own feelings, and they all developed into recognized branches of lyric poetry. Only a few remnants of these early attempts are preserved to us, of which one of the oldest and the most interesting is the "Swallow Song," which the boys of Rhodes sang each year, going from house to house and demanding a present for the good news of returning spring:

She is here, she is here, the swallow!  
 Fair seasons bringing, fair seasons to follow!  
 Her belly is white,  
 Her back black as night!  
 From your rich house  
 Roll forth to us  
 Tarts, wine, and cheese:  
 Or if not these,  
 Oatmeal and barley-cake  
 The swallow deigns to take.



What shall we have? or must we hence away?  
 Thanks, if you give; if not, we'll make you pay!  
     The house-door hence we'll carry;  
     Nor shall the lintel tarry;  
     From hearth and home your wife we'll rob;  
         She is so small  
     To take her off will be an easy job!  
 Whate'er you give, give largess free!  
 Up! open, open to the swallow's call!  
 No grave old men, but merry children we!

Symonds.

We have also a Linus-song of great antiquity:

O, Linus, thee the gods did grace;  
     For unto thee they gave, most dear,  
 First among men the song to raise  
     With shrill voice sounding high and clear;  
 But Phœbus thee in anger slays,  
     And Muses mourn around thy bier.

Symonds.

The Greek poetry which we designate as lyric was known to the Greeks themselves under three general classes, each named either after the metre employed or the manner of its recitation. These classes are Elegiac, Iambic, and Melic. Their literary development was in this order. The two first classes received their names from the metres used. The ancient elegy was always composed in the elegiac couplet, consisting of a dactylic hexameter followed by the so-called pentameter.<sup>1</sup> Iambic poetry was written in the iambic verse, generally consisting of six iambic feet.<sup>2</sup> The word

<sup>1</sup> Illustrated in these lines of Longfellow:

Now the meadows are blooming with flowers of various colors,  
 And with untaught throats carol the garrulous birds.

<sup>2</sup> As this line from Shakespeare:

Then let's make haste away and look unto the main.

melic is derived from *melos*, "song (cf. *melody*)," and was applied strictly to poetry intended for singing. So the term "choral" was used for melic poetry composed with a view to production by a chorus with the accompaniment of the dance. To these three classes of lyric poetry should be added the epigram, the short commemorative poem designed to be inscribed on a tombstone or monument of some kind.

The Greek word for elegy is believed to be Phrygian in origin, and elegiac poetry was always in early time recited to the accompaniment of the flute, which was a Phrygian invention. The subject of the Greek elegy ranges from war to political philosophy, from moral advice to the pleasures of life, but it is always the expression of the poet's own feelings. The later Greek elegy, like the Roman imitations, was largely on the subject of love. But the modern meaning, a poem of sorrow or melancholy, was not present to the mind of the classical Greeks.

— The earliest Greek elegiac poet of whom we know was Callinus of Ephesus, who flourished about the beginning of the seventh century B. C. In the one extant poem he exhorts his countrymen to battle against the invading barbarians:

How long will ye slumber? when will ye take heart  
 And fear the reproach of your neighbors at hand?  
 Fie! comrades, to think ye have peace for your part,  
 Whilst the sword and the arrow are wasting our land!  
 Shame! grasp the shield close! cover well the bold breast!  
 Aloft raise the spear as ye march on the foe!  
 With no thought of retreat, with no terror confessed,  
 Hurl your last dart in dying, or strike your last blow.  
 Oh, 't is noble and glorious to fight for our all,—  
 For our country, our children, the wife of our love!

Death comes not the sooner; no soldier shall fall,  
 Ere his thread is spun out by the sisters above.  
 Once to die is man's doom; rush, rush to the fight!  
 He cannot escape, though his blood were Jove's own.  
 For a while let him cheat the shrill arrow by flight;  
 Fate will catch him at last in his chamber alone.  
 Unlamented he dies;—unregretted. Not so,  
 When, the tower of his country, in death falls the brave;  
 Thrice hallowed his name amongst all, high or low,  
 As with blessings alive, so with tears in the grave.

Henry Nelson Coleridge.

The few extant elegies of Tyrtæus very closely resemble in subject and in style this poem of Callinus. Tyrtæus lived early in the seventh century, and is said to have been an Athenian who migrated to Sparta when the Spartans were engaged in war with the Messenians. His songs so thrilled the Spartans that they soon brought the war to a victorious close. His march song was sung before and during battle, and became almost the national hymn of the Spartans. The following is the longest extant poem—an Exhortation to Battle.

How glorious fall the valiant, sword in hand,  
 In front of battle for their native land!  
 But oh! what ills await the wretch that yields,  
 A recreant outcast from his country's fields!  
 The mother whom he loves shall quit her home,  
 An aged father at his side shall roam;  
 His little ones shall weeping with him go,  
 And a young wife participate his woe;  
 While scorned and scowled upon by every face,  
 They pine for food, and beg from place to place.  
 Stain of his breed! dishonoring manhood's form,  
 All ills shall cleave to him: affliction's storm  
 Shall blind him wandering in the vale of years,  
 Till, lost to all but ignominious fears,

He shall not blush to leave a recreant's name,  
 And children like himself, inured to shame.  
 But we will combat for our father's land,  
 And we will drain the lifeblood where we stand,  
 To save our children:—fight ye side by side,  
 And serried close, ye men of youthful pride,  
 Disdaining fear, and deeming light the cost  
 Of life itself in glorious battle lost.

Leave not our sires to stem the unequal fight,  
 Whose limbs are nerved no more with buoyant might;  
 Nor, lagging backward, let the younger breast  
 Permit the man of age (a sight unblest)  
 To welter in the combat's foremost thrust,  
 His hoary head disheveled in the dust,  
 And venerable bosom bleeding bare.  
 But youth's fair form, though fallen, is ever fair,  
 And beautiful in death the boy appears,  
 The hero boy, that dies in blooming years:  
 In man's regret he lives, and woman's tears;  
 More sacred than in life, and lovelier far,  
 For having perished in the front of war.

Thomas Campbell.

Far different are the elegiacs of Mimnermus of Smyrna, who lived toward the end of the seventh century. Brought up in the soft luxury of Ionia, his poems breathe of indolence and pleasure, but pervading all is a tender melancholy induced by the reflection that youth is soon past and old age and death are at hand. "When the flower of youth is past," he says, "it is best to die at once," and again, "may the doom of death overtake me, free from disease and care, in my sixtieth year." This poem is addressed to his sweetheart Nanno:

What's life or pleasure wanting Aphrodite?

When to the gold-haired goddess cold am I,  
 When love and love's soft gifts no more delight me,  
 Nor stolen dalliance, then I fain would die!

Ah! fair and lovely bloom the flowers of youth;  
On men and maids they beautifully smile:  
But soon comes doleful eld, who, void of ruth,  
Indifferently afflicts the fair and vile;  
Then cares wear out the heart; old eyes forlorn  
Scarce reckon the very sunshine to behold—  
Unloved by youths, of every maid the scorn—  
So hard a lot God lays upon the old.

J. A. Symonds, Sr.

Solon, the great lawgiver of Athens and one of the seven sages of Greece (first part of sixth century), used the elegy both as a vehicle of political teaching and to record his reflections on life in general. Some of his early verses stirred the Athenians to renew the struggle with the Megarians for the possession of Salamis. "Up, let us go to Salamis, to fight for the lovely island and to wipe out our deep disgrace." Referring to the reforms which he had carried through by arbitrating between the rich and the poor, he says: "I gave the common folk as much as is enough, neither less nor more than their due meed; but as to those who had rule and the splendor of wealth, to those also I gave counsel, even that they should not uphold cruelty. I took my stand, I spread my strong shield over both, and suffered neither to prevail by wrong." But he sees the dangers that encompass the state: "From storm-clouds descend furious snow and hail, and thunder is born of bright lightning; so great men produce the overthrow of states, and into the bondage of a despot's power the people fall unwittingly. Easy it is to raise the storm, but hard to curb the whirlwind; yet must we now take thought of all these things."

Solon's prayer is interesting for the light which it

throws on the moral ideals of the time: "Grant us wealth from the blessed gods, and from all men a good name. May I be sweet to my friend and bitter to my foe, revered by the one and dreaded by the other. Money I desire, but no ill-gotten gain; for the wealth that the gods give lasts and fleets not away, but the fruits of insolence and crime bring vengeance sure, though slow. Zeus seeth all things, and like a wind scattering the clouds, which shakes the deep places of the sea and rages over the corn land, and comes at last to heaven, the seat of gods, and makes a clear sky to be seen, whereupon the sun breaks out in glory and the clouds are gone—so is the vengeance of Zeus. He may seem to forget, but sooner or later he strikes; perchance the guilty man escapes, yet his blameless children or remote posterity pay the penalty."

5- The greatest of all the elegiac poets as a moral teacher was Theognis of Megara, who flourished about 550 B. C. His poems reveal the storm and stress of the period in which he lived. Theognis was a nobleman of this Dorian city, but driven out and dispossessed by a democratic revolution he traveled here and there in exile, his thoughts constantly embittered by his own evil fortune. Most of his poems were addressed to a young friend, Cyrnus, son of Polypas, to whom he was greatly attached and for whose guidance and instruction he wrote. Because of the practical worldly wisdom of his maxims and the respectability of his views Theognis was much in vogue throughout the Greek world, and his writings were condensed and used in the schools by the side of Homer and Hesiod for the instruction of the young.

A part of this collection (about 1,400 lines) has come down to us. A few selections follow in Frere's translation:

A TRUE FRIEND

A trusty partisan, faithful and bold,  
Is worth his weight in silver or in gold,  
For times of trouble. But the race is rare;  
Steady, determined men, ready to share  
Good or ill fortune! Such, if such there are,  
Could you survey the world and search it round,  
And bring together all that could be found,  
The largest company you could enroll,  
A single vessel could embark the whole!  
So few there are! the noble manly minds  
Faithful and firm, the men that honour binds;  
Impregnable to danger and to pain  
And low seduction in the shape of gain.

BREEDING

With kine and horses, Cynus! we proceed  
By reasonable rules, and choose a breed  
For profit and increase, at any price;  
Of a sound stock, without defect or vice.  
But, in the daily matches that we make,  
The price is everything; for money's sake  
Men marry; women are in marriage given:  
The churl or ruffian that in wealth has thriven  
May match his offspring with the proudest race:  
Thus everything is mix'd, noble and base!  
If then in outward manner, form, and mind  
You find us a degraded, motley kind,  
Wonder no more, my friend! the cause is plain,  
And to lament the consequence is vain.

ADAPTATION

Join with the world; adopt with every man  
His party views, his temper, and his plan;

Strive to avoid offense, study to please,  
 Like the sagacious inmate of the seas  
 That an accommodating colour brings,  
 Conforming to the rock to which he clings,  
 With every change of place changing his hue;  
 The model for a statesman such as you.

#### THEOGNIS' PRAYER

May Jove assist me to discharge the debt  
 Of kindness to my friends, and grant me yet  
 A further boon—revenge upon my foes!  
 With these accomplished, I could gladly close  
 My term of life—a fair requital made;  
 My friends rewarded, and my wrongs repaid,  
 Gratitude and revenge, before I die,  
 Might make me deem'd almost a deity!

#### THE BEST LOT

Not to be born—never to see the sun—  
 No worldly blessing is a greater one!  
 And the next best is speedily to die,  
 And lapt beneath a load of earth to lie!

#### RESIGNATION

Entire and perfect happiness is never  
 Vouchsaf'd to man; but nobler minds endeavour  
 To keep their inward sorrows unreveal'd.  
 With meaner spirits nothing is conceal'd.  
 Weak, and unable to conform to fortune,  
 With rude rejoicing or complaint importune,  
 They vent their exultation or distress.  
 Whate'er betides us, grief or happiness,  
 The brave and wise will bear with steady mind,  
 Th' allotment unforeseen and undefin'd  
 Of good or evil, which the gods bestow,  
 Promiscuously dealt to man below.



THE IMMORTAL FAME OF CYRNU8

Lo, I have given thee plumes wherewith to skim  
 The unfathomed deep, and lightly hover around  
 Earth's huge circumference. Thou shalt be found  
 At banquets on the breath of pæan and hymn:  
 To shrill-voiced pipes with lips of seraphim,  
 Lovely young men thy rapturous fame shall sound;  
 Yea, when thou liest lapped in the noiseless ground,  
 Thy name shall live, nor shall oblivion dim  
 Thy dawn of splendour. For these lands, these isles,  
 These multitudinous waves of refluent seas,  
 Shall be thy pleasure-ground wherethrough to roam,  
 Borne by no steed, but wafted by the smiles  
 Of Muses violet-crowned, whose melodies,  
 While earth endures, shall make all earth thy home.  
Symonds.

We have considered above the greatest of the poets of this period who are known as elegiac poets. But the elegy was cultivated also by poets whose greatest achievements lay in another field, and throughout the history of Greek literature the elegant elegiac couplet was used by poets like Simonides, Æschylus, and Sophocles, by prose writers such as Plato and Aristotle, and a host of others, as an appropriate vehicle for the expression of sentiments in honor of the dead, for commemorative and dedicatory inscriptions, for conceits on the subject of love, art, and in fact the whole range of human interests. Most of those now extant are found in a collection called the Anthology,<sup>1</sup> in which are preserved several thousand short poems, covering a range of over a thousand years.

The light and rapid iambic measure, from which

<sup>1</sup>This Anthology,—“Garland of Flowers,” or, as we should say, “Golden Treasury of Song,”—was collected in the tenth century of our era. Many other epigrams have since been added from inscriptions excavated in Greece.

iambic poetry derives its name, was early felt to be peculiarly appropriate to sharp and swift retort, to pungent raillery and biting satire. In the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* the mourning goddess is at last stirred to laughter by the bright jests of a girl, Iambê. The iambic rhythm is that most frequently employed in the colloquial language of common life, and is the fit vehicle for dialogue and for verse that deals with topics drawn from the range of daily experiences. It received the satirical stamp which was afterward always associated with the word "iambic" from the first poet who employed it extensively, Archilochus of Paros.

Archilochus flourished in the first half of the seventh century. His life was full of adventure and romance. He is said to have been engaged to be married to Neobulê, whose father withdrew his consent to the match. Archilochus then in iambic verse publicly denounced his former sweetheart, her father, and her sisters, scathing them with all the vehemence of his venomous nature. Neobulê and her sisters straightway hanged themselves, as the story goes. However fanciful this story may be, the fact remains that Archilochus was a poet of vigor, cruel wit, and a genius for personal satire. He was ranked by the Greeks among their greatest and most original poets, and the iambic verse, which he brought to perfection, was destined to play a great part in the most perfect of literary forms which Greece produced—the drama. Unfortunately only a few fragments of his writings remain, and for most of these no verse translation exists. Characteristic are: "One thing I can—requite with great ill the man who does me ill," and

“O Lord Apollo, point me out the guilty and smite them as thou canst smite.” Another side of his character, as of his genius, is revealed in these splendid trochaic verses, addressed to his own soul:

Tossed on a sea of troubles, Soul, my Soul,  
Thyself do thou control  
And to the weapons of advancing foes  
A stubborn breast oppose;  
Undaunted 'mid the hostile might  
Of squadrons burning for the fight.

Thine be no boasting when the victor's crown  
Wins the deserved renown;  
Thine no dejected sorrow when defeat  
Would urge a base retreat:  
Rejoice in joyous things—nor overmuch  
Let grief thy bosom touch  
'Midst evil, and still bear in mind,  
How changeful are the ways of humankind.

William Hay.

Symonds has translated three exquisite lines, a picture of a young girl. “Greek sculpture is not more pure in outline than this fragment”:

Holding a myrtle-rod she blithely moved,  
And a fair blossoming rose; the flowing tresses  
Shadowed her shoulders, falling to her girdle.

Of the two other poets who inaugurated iambic satire in Greece, Semonides of Amorgos and Hipponax of Ephesus, there is little to say. From the few verses of the latter which survive it is clear that he was vulgar, if clever. Semonides has many disagreeable and spiteful things to say about women. Already the Greeks, especially the Ionians, had departed from the chivalrous attitude toward women which characterized the Homeric age, and we find more and more evidence

of the influence of Oriental ideals in this respect as we approach the classical period.

The poems belonging to the two branches of lyric poetry which we have considered were essentially intended for recitation. Melic poetry, on the other hand, was the poetry of song. Unlike the greater number of poems of the same order in English, which generally are not set to music, the musical accompaniment was an essential part of Greek melic poetry. The poet was also a musical composer. The instrument which was used for the accompaniment was the harp or lyre. This instrument had been known to the Greeks from remote times; its invention was attributed to Hermes. But the early lyre had only four strings; the musical element in song in Homeric times must consequently have been of a very simple, monotonous nature. The invention of the seven-stringed lyre, whose range was, of course, a complete octave, was attributed by antiquity to Terpander of Lesbos, who flourished about 660 B. C. The rapid development of melic poetry after this epoch was a natural consequence of this invention.

Choral poetry must be distinguished as a separate branch of melic poetry, for a third element, not found in the latter, was essential to it—the dance. The fact, too, that the choral was sung by a chorus of persons, and not by an individual, led to an important distinction. A chorus must be organized and trained. Therefore, while the simple song could be rendered on any occasion in private life, the choral belonged rather to public life and assumed a much more elaborate and formal character. Choral performances were especially appropriate to occasions of public

worship or to the celebration of events in which the public was especially interested. Another distinction arises out of these differences: the song was perfected by the Æolians of Lesbos, whose social and political conditions tended to develop the individual and whose temperament was easily stirred to expression of personal feelings; but the choral reached its earliest development among the Dorians of Sparta, where the state was everything and the individual nothing. We shall consider first the melic poets of the Lesbian school.

The life of the earliest great poet of the Lesbian school, Alcæus, seems to have been as stormy as the political condition of his own island. He belonged to the nobility, which was engaged in constant struggles against one tyrant after another. During a period of exile he took refuge in Egypt and saw service in the army under the Pharaoh. The latter part of his life he spent in Lesbos, having become reconciled with his former enemy, the famous tyrant Pittacus, one of the seven sages. There is a tradition that he loved his countrywoman, the poet Sappho, to whom he said: "Chaste Sappho, violet-tressed, softly smiling, I fain would speak, but shame restrains me." Sappho's answer is recorded: "Hadst thou felt desire for things good or noble, and hadst not thy tongue framed some evil speech, shame had not filled thy eyes, but thou hadst spoken honestly about it." Only a few fragments of the poems of Alcæus<sup>1</sup> survive, and these are

<sup>1</sup>The Alcaic stanza, which is named for Alcæus, was a favorite of Horace. These lines of Tennyson represent it:

O mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies,  
 O skilled to sing of time or eternity,  
 God-gifted organ voice of England,  
 Milton, a name to resound for ages.

not fair specimens of his poetical skill. The finest is an allegory—the storm-tossed state—translated by Sir William Jones:

Now here, now there, the wild waves sweep,  
 Whilst we, betwixt them, o'er the deep  
     In shattered tempest-beaten bark  
 With labouring ropes are onward driven,  
     The billows dashing o'er our dark  
 Upheaved deck — in tatters riven  
 Our sails — whose yawning rents between  
 The raging sea and sky are seen.  
 Loose from their hold our anchors burst,  
     And then the third, the fated wave,  
 Comes rolling onward like the first,  
     And doubles all our toil to save.

Most of the fragments have to do with wine. The following description of a winter day furnished the model for one of the best-known odes of the Roman poet Horace, who was deeply indebted to Alcæus.

The rain of Zeus descends, and from high heaven  
     A storm is driven:  
 And on the running water-brooks the cold  
     Lays icy hold:  
 Then up: beat down the winter; make the fire  
     Blaze high and higher;  
 Mix wine as sweet as honey of the bee  
     Abundantly;  
 Then drink with comfortable wool around  
     Your temples bound.  
 We must not yield our hearts to woe, or wear  
     With lasting care;  
 For grief will profit us no whit, my friend,  
     Nor nothing mend:  
 But this our best medicine, with wine fraught  
     To cast out thought.

Symonds.

Of the life of Sappho, the greatest poet of the Lesbian school, very little is known with certainty. The accounts which have come down to us were compiled centuries after her time, after her personality, of unique interest in the history of literature, had become enveloped in a haze of romantic and malicious fables. She was a native of Mytilene, the capital of Lesbos, and belonged to the highest nobility of the island. That she lived about the beginning of the sixth century is inferred from her acquaintance with Alcæus. She is said to have gone in exile to Sicily, owing, doubtless, to the political troubles in which the Lesbian aristocracy was involved. She was the centre of a club of women devoted to the cultivation of poetry, such an association as Æolian and Dorian women often formed, comparable to the group of Socrates and his followers in Athens. She was married to a wealthy Andrian, to whom she bore a daughter, of whom she sings:

I have a child, a lovely one,  
 In beauty like the golden sun,  
 Or like sweet flowers of earliest bloom;  
 And Cleïs is her name, for whom  
 I Lydia's treasures, were they mine,  
 Would glad resign.

Merivale.

The ancients tell of her unrequited love for a beautiful youth named Phaon, for whom she threw herself from the Leucadian cliff into the sea. But this romance does not appear until three centuries after her death and is probably pure fable.

Antiquity was of one mind as regards Sappho's merits as a poet. She was known simply as "the

poetess," just as Homer was "the poet." Plato said of her:

Some thoughtlessly proclaim the Muses nine;  
A tenth is Lesbian Sappho, maid divine.

In this verdict modern writers have unanimously concurred. Mr. Symonds says: "The world has suffered no greater literary loss than the loss of Sappho's poems. So perfect in the smallest fragments that we muse in a sad rapture of astonishment to think what the complete poems must have been. . . . Of all the poets of the world, of all the illustrious artists of all literature, Sappho is the one whose every word has a peculiar and unmistakable perfume, a seal of absolute perfection and inimitable grace." Her influence upon lyric poetry in ancient and modern times has been marked.

Sappho was preëminently a poet whose songs were but the natural outpourings of the soul. All the passion of her Æolian blood, her intense love of beauty in nature, her every thought and feeling, found unrestrained expression in her poems. To the Athenians of a later day the freedom which the Æolians and Dorians allowed their women was unintelligible. In Athens the brilliant women who shone in male society were exclusively of one class. In the phrase of Pericles the ideal of womanly virtue was "not to be talked about for good or evil among men." It is not surprising, therefore, that later Greek tradition misconstrued her perfect frankness and traduced her good name. But to-day only the ignorant fail to discover the sources from which calumnies against her character have sprung. To such ignorance, however, is due

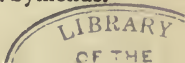


the fact that so little now remains of her poems and those of her contemporaries, for the early Christian emperors commanded them to be burned. Only one complete poem survives, the larger part of another, and a considerable number of short fragments. The Sapphic stanza, brought to perfection by her, is imitated in the first of the following translations:

PRAYER TO APHRODITE

Glittering-throned, undying Aphrodite,  
 Wile-weaving daughter of high Zeus, I pray thee  
 Tame not my soul with heavy woe, dread mistress,  
     Nay, nor with anguish!  
 But hither come, if ever erst of old time  
 Thou didst incline and listenedst to my crying  
 And from thy father's palace down descending  
     Camest with golden  
 Chariot yoked: thee fair swift-flying sparrows  
 Over dark earth with multitudinous fluttering  
 Pinion on pinion, through middle ether  
     Down from heaven hurried.  
 Quickly they came like light, and thou, blest lady,  
 Smiling with clear undying eyes didst ask me  
 What was the woe that troubled me, and wherefore  
     I cried to thee ;  
 What thing I longed for to appease my frantic  
 Soul; and whom now must I persuade, thou askedst,  
 Whom must entangle to thy love, and who now,  
     Sappho, hath wronged thee?  
 Yea, for if now he shun, he soon shall chase thee;  
 Yea, if he take not gifts, he soon shall give them;  
 Yea, if he love not, soon shall he begin to  
     Love thee, unwillingly.  
 Come to me now too, and from tyrannous sorrow  
 Free me, and all things that my soul desires to  
 Have done, do for me, queen, and let thyself too  
     Be my great ally.

J. A. Symonds.



## Homer to Theocritus

## TO A LOVED ONE

Blest as the immortal gods is he,  
 The youth who fondly sits by thee,  
 And hears and sees thee all the while  
 Softly speak and sweetly smile.

'T was this deprived my soul of rest,  
 And raised such tumults in my breast;  
 For while I gazed, in transport lost,  
 My breath was gone, my voice was lost:

My bosom glowed; all the subtle flame  
 Ran quick through all my vital frame;  
 O'er my dim eyes a darkness hung;  
 My ears with hollow murmurs rung.

In dewy damp my limbs were chilled;  
 My blood with gentle horror thrilled;  
 My feeble pulse forgot to play;  
 I fainted, sank, and died away.

Ambrose Phillips.

## TO A MAIDEN

Of foliage and flowers love-laden  
 Twine wreaths for thy flowing hair,  
 With thine own soft fingers, maiden,  
 Weave garlands of parsley fair.  
 For flowers are sweet, and the Graces  
 On suppliants wreathed with may  
 Look down from their heavenly places,  
 But turn from the crownless away.

Symonds.

## A GIRL IN LOVE

Oh, my sweet mother, 't is in vain,  
 I cannot weave as once I wove,  
 So wildered is my heart and brain  
 With thinking of that youth I love.

Thomas Moore.

MIDNIGHT

The moon hath left the sky:  
Lost is the Pleiads' light:  
    It is midnight  
And time slips by:  
But on my couch alone I lie.

Symonds.

Anacreon of Teos lived in the latter part of the sixth century. Gaining celebrity as a poet at the court of the tyrant Polycrates of Samos, he was summoned to Athens to adorn the court of the tyrant Hipparchus. Athens was fast becoming the literary centre of Greece. Anacreon was a poet of pleasure, singing of little but love and wine. A large number of the poems handed down under his name are spurious and of late origin, and though often very pretty, have no place in this work.

## CHAPTER VI

### CHORAL LYRIC. . PINDAR

The Dorian School — Alcman — Stesichorus — Arion — Simonides — Bacchylides — Pindar — His Life — The Festivals and Games — The Epinician Ode — Analysis of the *Seventh Olympian* — Pindar's Preludes — The Future Life in Pindar — Fragment of a Dirge.

We turn now to the lyric poets of the Dorian school. The Dorians themselves seem to have produced very few poets, but Sparta attracted from outside some poets of the first order who succeeded wonderfully in catching the spirit of Dorian institutions and in conforming to the requirements of Dorian taste. Now Sparta was strictly a military state, and all of its institutions conformed to the demands of a society organized for the production of soldiers. All sentiments except those of patriotism and religion were discouraged. The themes of their poets must be the glorious traditions of the race, the praise of the gods, a victory of some Dorian in the athletic games, the celebration of some important civic event, and the like. Furthermore, the lyric poet should voice not his own sentiments, but those of the people, and his song must be of a kind in which the public could participate. The result was a highly developed choral lyric, in which the words and music were supplemented by the stately evolutions of the chorus. The stamp of the Dorian genius was so impressed upon this branch of poetry that the choral, even when composed

by an Athenian or Bœotian, always retained the Doric dialect (see page 9). Of choral lyric there were as many varieties as there were occasions which called for the song. We shall have occasion to notice a number of these varieties.

Alcman was one of the earliest of the Dorian lyric poets (660 B. C.). It was he who first gave an artistic form to the choral ode by arranging it in balancing stanzas, the first stanza, or strophe ("turning"), accompanying an evolution of the chorus to the right; the second, or antistrophe, a corresponding movement to the left, and so on through the ode. The longest and most notable fragment remaining, discovered in Egypt in 1855, is a choral for maidens, a branch in which Alcman gained especial distinction. His description of a night in Lacedæmon shows a true sympathy with nature: "The summits of the mountains are sleeping, and the ravines, the headlands, and the torrent courses, the leaves that the black earth nourishes, and all creeping things, the wild creatures of the hills, and the race of bees, and the monsters in the depths of the dark sea, and sleep is upon the tribes of the wide-winged birds."

Stesichorus<sup>1</sup> of Sicily (620 B. C.) perfected the form of the choral lyric by adding a third member to each pair of stanzas, the epode, sung by the chorus standing, after the two preceding evolutions of strophe and antistrophe. His *Palinode (Recantation) to Helen* was famous. In an ode he had told the usual story about Helen's flight to Troy, and of the misery her sin had caused. Thereupon he was stricken with blindness,

<sup>1</sup>His real name was Tisias, but he was called Stesichorus, "Marshal of Choruses," from his skill as a choral poet.

for Helen had become a goddess. So he wrote the *Palinode*, beginning: "Not true is this story. Thou didst not go in the well-benched ships, nor didst thou come to the citadel of Troy." He then develops the fiction that a phantom of Helen was taken to Troy, and his sight was promptly restored.

Arion of Corinth, a Lesbian by birth, was a little later than Stesichorus, and claims a large place in the history of the choral lyric. It was he who elaborated the dithyramb, or the choral hymn to Dionysus, out of which tragedy developed. He fixed the number of the chorus at fifty, and seems to have given a distinctive character to the evolutions of the dithyrambic chorus and to the manner of the performance. Herodotus tells a quaint story of how he was thrown into the sea by pirates and was carried safely to land by dolphins, charmed by his singing.

With Simonides of Ceos a new era in lyric poetry begins. Toward the end of the sixth century Athens succeeded in ridding herself of the tyrants Hippias and Hipparchus, and established the democracy. These rulers, on the whole enlightened sovereigns, had drawn a large number of brilliant literary men to Athens, among whom were Anacreon and Simonides. Soon after the establishment of the democracy Athens and Greece passed through the tremendous struggle for freedom with the Persians, the invasion of Darius culminating at Marathon and the second attack under Xerxes being repulsed at Salamis and Plataea—glorious victories in which all Greece had a share, though to Athens fell the largest part. The Greeks began to feel that they were one people and that Athens was their leader and champion. From this time on Athens

became the literary centre of Greece, and for two centuries the history of Greek literature can almost be said to be that of Athenian literature.

The life of Simonides fell in these stirring times. The greater portion of his life he spent at the courts of the tyrants. But he identified himself at once with the Athenian democracy, and after the Persian wars voiced the sentiments of liberty-loving Greece in the famous epigrams on the fallen to which we have already referred. He died at the court of Hiero, in Syracuse, loaded with honors. Highly gifted by nature, Simonides was yet a professional poet who tuned his lyre according to the pay. The story is told that he once received a commission to write a poem in celebration of a victory won by a team of mules. He refused, alleging that the subject was too ignoble for his muse. But when the reward was increased he wrote the spirited poem which begins, "Hail! ye daughters of horses, swift as the winds." Simonides won distinction in almost every branch of lyric poetry, especially in epinicia, or odes celebrating victories in the games—a branch in which he was the rival of Pindar—and in the epigram. The following beautiful fragment of a dirge is extant. Danaë and her babe Perseus, her son by Zeus, are adrift at sea in a chest, committed to the waves to die by Danaë's father:

When, in the carven chest,  
The winds that blew and waves in wild unrest  
Smote her with fear, she, not with cheeks unwet,  
Her arms of love round Perseus set,  
And said: O child, what grief is mine!  
But thou dost slumber, and thy baby breast  
Is sunk in rest,

Here in the cheerless brass-bound bark,  
Tossed amid starless night and pitchy dark.

Nor dost thou heed the scudding brine  
Of waves that wash above thy curls so deep,  
Nor the shrill winds that sweep,—  
Lapped in thy purple robe's embrace,

Fair little face!

But if this dread were dreadful too to thee,  
Then wouldst thou lend thy listening ear to me;  
Therefore I cry,—Sleep, babe, and sea, be still,  
And slumber our unmeasured ill!

Oh, may some change of fate, sire Zeus, from thee  
Descend, our woes to end!

But if this prayer, too overbold, offend  
Thy justice, yet be merciful to me!

J. A. Symonds.

Bacchylides, the nephew of Simonides, was also a court poet. Although he was far inferior as a poet to his uncle, a universal interest attaches to him at present from the fact that a papyrus roll containing twenty of his odes was discovered in Egypt in 1896 and acquired by the British Museum. Before that time only a few pages of short fragments were preserved. Most of his odes were written to celebrate victories at the athletic games, but several are of a religious import. In one of the later occurs a pretty scene. Theseus and the Athenian youths who were offered yearly as a sacrifice to the Minotaur are on the ship with Minos, king of Crete. Minos insults one of the maidens, whereat young Theseus defies the king, who throws a ring into the sea, challenging Theseus to prove his divine origin.

“Into the waves leapt the hero, and gentle eyes dropped a tear, boding dire disaster. But dolphins, denizens of the sea, bore strong Theseus swiftly to the palace of the knightly sire.



He reached the gods' abode, and there beheld with awe the daughters of blessed Nereus; for from their glorious limbs gleamed a radiance as of fire as with supple feet they delighted their heart in the dance. And Amphitrite threw about him a purple mantle, and on his shining locks set a faultless wreath twined with roses, a wedding-gift once from Aphrodite. At the ship's stern he rose. Ah! in what thoughts he disturbed the Cretan king when he came from the sea undrenched, a marvel to all. On his limbs gleamed the god's gifts, and the radiant maidens with new-born courage lifted up a shout of joy. The sea resounded with the peal, and the boys standing near with sweet voices raised a pæan of praise."

As Æolian song reached its highest point with Sappho, so the Dorian choral ode culminates in Pindar, its latest representative. But though Pindar's odes were Dorian in form, continuing and perfecting the traditions which began with Alcman and Stesichorus, yet Pindar, like Simonides, was thoroughly Pan-Hellenic in spirit, belonging to no one branch of the Greek people. Born at Thebes, in Bœotia, in 522 B. C., of an old aristocratic family, he was early trained in music and in poetry for a professional career. Of the details of his life we have little knowledge, but he certainly traveled widely, visiting both the scenes of the great national games which he celebrated, and the countries of his royal patrons. He died about 452, after an active literary career of fifty years.

Pindar was some thirty years the junior of Simonides. He had scarcely made his début in the literary world when the threatening storm of the Persian invasion roused all Greece to united action in defense of liberty. The glorious share which Simonides had in perpetuating the memory of the heroism of Marathon, Thermopylæ, Salamis, and Platæa has already been

mentioned. Pindar was no less loyal than his elder rival, but Thebes, his native city, alone of all the states of central and southern Greece, held herself aloof and even supported the barbarian. Pindar nowhere speaks openly of his state's disgrace, but his deep sympathy with the cause of Greek freedom is shown in the allusion to "the intolerable suffering for Hellas which some god hath turned aside for us," and by his memorable apostrophe to "violet-crowned, illustrious Athens, the theme of poets, bulwark of Greece." But it was not Pindar's good fortune to be the poet of Greek liberty. His title to be called the poet of all Hellas, and not of one section alone, arises rather from his connection with the great national festivals, in which all branches of the Greek race came together as one people.

These festivals were four in number. The Olympian, in honor of Zeus, were held at Olympia, in Elis, once in four years. The prize for the victors in the games was a wreath of wild olive. The next in importance was the Pythian, held at Delphi every four years in honor of Apollo. The prizes were a wreath of laurel and a palm branch. The Isthmian and Nemean were of lesser importance compared with the two others, and were celebrated every two years, the one at Corinth, in honor of Poseidon, the other at Nemea in Argolis, in honor of Zeus. The prizes were wreaths of parsley and of pine respectively. It is hard for us to realize the immense importance which attached to these religious gatherings. The Greeks flocked to them from all corners of the Mediterranean. A sacred truce from hostilities was observed during the festival, and safe conduct was guaranteed by each state to

every pilgrim passing through its territory. The principal events of the festival were the athletic contests, to which only Greeks of pure descent were admitted. Of these the most important was the foot-race, "the two hundred yards dash." The victor in this event at Olympia gave his name to the whole period of four years. Even sober historians like Thucydides date political events by the Olympiad "in which So-and-so won the foot-race." Princes and men of wealth alone could contend in the chariot-race, but the highest honor of all could be won by the humblest. The victor lent distinction to his native town forever, and the greatest poets and sculptors were called upon to perpetuate the fame of the victor, his family, and his city.

Pindar was of all the poets of his time the best fitted by birth, training, and genius to do justice to such subjects as the great religious festivals offered him. An aristocrat through and through, he makes the nobility of family and the proud traditions of race stand out in high relief. Closely connected himself with the worship of Apollo at Delphi, he keeps the religious aspect of the festivals in the foreground, not permitting the mere athletic side to overshadow all else. Keenly alive to the grander and more imposing aspects of external nature, he never lets us forget the splendid scenes through which his subject leads him. And finally, with his superb genius as a poet and his marvelous mastery of musical and choral technique, he produced poems which are perfect as works of art. The Greeks counted him their greatest lyric poet.

Of his epinician odes, or odes of victory, forty-four are extant. It is impossible to give an adequate idea of the splendor of these odes through the medium of

translations. Our language has neither the rhythm nor the diction to represent Pindar. Even in the original they are difficult reading, owing to the obscurity of thought arising from swift transition and allusions to which we no longer possess the key. The Greek hearer had the advantage of us in these matters, but especially in the accompanying music and dance, both indispensable to the general effect. But we may at any rate examine the structure of the Pindaric ode and illustrate some of its poetical qualities.

Some Greek has won a victory in the games. The poet who is called upon to celebrate this victory must tell who, in what event, and at what festival, and must praise the victor for his prowess and good fortune, and congratulate his family and his state. It is Pindar's manner to weave these facts into his ode in such a way as not to put us into possession of all the facts at once, nor to make too prominent the person of the victor. He magnifies rather the festival, or the noble lineage of the victor, or a mythological incident suggested by his career, or the heroic and mythical legends associated with the festival, the victor, or the victor's native city. This subject, which usually occupies the larger central portion of the ode, is known as the "myth" of the poem, and is attached to the introduction by means of a swift note of transition which is likely to escape the unobserving reader. At the end of the ode the poet returns to his theme by a similar transition, often concluding by a note of warning or advice or by a reference to the undying fame which the poet's gifts confer. Interwoven in the poem we often find interesting bits of moralizing on the problems of this world and the next.

An analysis of the seventh Olympian ode will serve us as an illustration of the structure of a Pindaric ode. It is in honor of Diagoras of Rhodes, the most celebrated athlete of his time, winner in the boxing-match.

INTRODUCTION.—As when a man takes from his wealthy hand a goblet foaming with the dew of grape, and gives it with healths and pledges to his youthful son-in-law to bear from one home to the other home, golden, the crown of his possessions, gracing the feast and glorifying his kinsman, and makes him in the eyes of the assembled friends to be envied for his harmonious wedlock; so I, sending outpoured nectar, the Muses' gift, to conquering heroes, the sweet fruit of the soul, greet them like gods, victors at Olympia and Pytho.

THEME.—Happy is he whom good report encompasseth; now on one man, now on another, doth the Grace that giveth joy to life look with favor, and tune for him the lyre and the stops of music manifold. Thus with the sound of the twain am I come with Diagoras sailing home, to sing the sea-girt Rhodes, child of Aphrodite and bride of Helius, that I may glorify, as a tribute to his boxing, a mighty man who hath won crowns by Alpheus' Stream and at Castalia, and his father Demegetus, in whom Justice hath her delight.

The allusion to the home and the ancestry of Diagoras leads up to the myth, which here falls into two parts. The first part tells of the colonization of Rhodes by Tlepolemus, son of Heracles and ancestor of Diagoras; then follows the explanation of the origin of the worship of Helios and Athene on the island. The main part of the myth, taken as a whole, is the story of the birth of Rhodes from the sea:

MYTH.—Now the ancient story of men saith that when Zeus and the other gods made division of the earth among them, not yet was Rhodes apparent in the open sea, but in the briny depths lay hid. And none drew the lot for Helius, who was

absent; so they left him portionless of land, that holy god. And when he spake thereof Zeus would cast lots afresh; but he suffered him not, for he said that beneath the hoary sea he saw a certain land waxing from its root in earth, that should bring forth food for many men and rejoice in flocks. And the son of Cronus promised him that the isle sent up to the light of heaven should thenceforth be his share. And his speech had fulfilment. There sprang up from the watery main an island, and the father who begetteth the sun's rays hath the dominion thereof, even the lord of fire-breathing steeds.

Returning to his theme, the poet swiftly recounts the athletic previous victories of Diagoras, and concludes thus:

CONCLUSION.—Do thou, O Father Zeus, glorify the accustomed Olympian winner's hymn and the man who hath done valiantly with his fists. Give him honor at the hands of citizens and strangers; for he walketh in the straight way that abhorreth insolence, having learnt well the lessons his true soul hath taught him, which hath come to him from his noble sires. . . . Surely with the joys of his family the whole city maketh glad. But in a moment of time the varying breezes shift their course.

Pindar's introductions to his odes are especially brilliant. "As when with golden columns reared beneath the well-walled palace porch we build a splendid hall, so will I build my song. At the beginning of a work we must make the portal radiant from afar." The most admired is the prelude to the first Pythian ode, in honor of Hiero, tyrant of Syracuse, winner in the chariot-race:

O golden lyre,  
 Apollo's, dark-haired Muses' joint heirloom,  
 Alert for whom  
 The dancer's footstep listens, and the choir  
 Of singers wait the sound,  
 Beginning of the round

Of festal joy, whene'er thy quivering strings  
 Strike up a prelude to their carolings.  
 Thou slakest the lancèd bolt of quenchless fire;  
 Yea, drooped each wing that through the æther sweeps,  
 Upon his sceptre Zeus's eagle sleeps.

The bird-king crowned!  
 The while thou sheddest o'er his beaked head bowed  
 A darkling cloud,  
 Sweet seal of the eyelids,—and in dreamful swoond  
 His rippling back and sides  
 Heave with thy music's tides;  
 Thou bidst impetuous Ares lay apart  
 His keen-edged spear, and soothe with sleep his heart;  
 Thou launchest at the breasts of gods, and bound  
 As by a spell, they own thy lulling power,  
 Latoides's and the deep-zoned Muses' dower.

Newcomer.

Pindar's view of the future life, with its system of just rewards and punishments, is unusually definite for his time. In the second Olympian he weaves these thoughts into the myth: Among the dead, sinful souls at once pay penalty, and the crimes done in this realm of Zeus are judged beneath the earth by one who gives sentence under dire necessity.

*Str.* But in the happy fields of light,  
 Where Phœbus with an equal ray  
 Illuminates the balmy night,  
 And gilds the cloudless day,  
 In peaceful, unmolested joy,  
 The good their smiling hours employ.  
 Them no uneasy wants constrain  
 To vex the ungrateful soil,  
 To tempt the dangers of the billowy main,  
 And break their strength with unavailing toil,  
 A frail disastrous being to maintain.  
 But in their joyous calm abodes,

The recompense of justice they receive;  
 And in the fellowship of gods,  
 Without a tear eternal ages live.  
 While banished by the fates from joy and rest,  
 Intolerable woes the impious soul infest.

*Antistr.* But they who, in true virtue strong,  
 The third purgation can endure;  
 And keep their minds from fraudulent wrong  
 And guilt's contagion, pure;  
 They through the starry paths of Jove  
 To Saturn's blissful seat remove:  
 Where fragrant breezes, vernal airs,  
 Sweet children of the main,  
 Purge the blest island from corroding cares,  
 And fan the bosom of each verdant plain:  
 Whose fertile soil immortal fruitage bears;  
 Trees, from whose flaming branches flow,  
 Arrayed in golden bloom, refulgent beams;  
 And flowers of golden hue, that blow  
 On the fresh borders of their parent streams.  
 These by the blest in solemn triumph worn,  
 Their unpolluted hands and clustering locks adorn.

*Epode* Such is the righteous will, the high behest  
 Of Rhadamanthus, ruler of the blest;  
 The just assessor of the throne divine,  
 On which, high raised above all gods, recline,  
 Linked in the golden bands of wedded love,  
 The great progenitors of thundering Jovē.  
 There in the number of the blest enrolled  
 Live Cadmus, Peleus, heroes famed of old;  
 And young Achilles, to these isles removed,  
 Soon as, by Thetis won, relenting Jove approvèd.

Gilbert West.

Pindar covered the whole range of choral poetry, but apart from the odes of victory only a few fragments remain. The following fragment of a dirge gives another picture of Elysium:



Shines for them the sun's warm glow  
When 't is darkness here below:  
And the ground before their towers,  
Meadow-land with purple flowers,  
Teems with incense-bearing trees,  
Teams with fruit of golden sheen.  
Some in steed and wrestling feat,  
Some in dice take pleasure sweet,  
Some in harping: at their side  
Blooms the spring in all her pride.  
Fragrance all about is blown  
    O'er that country of desire,  
Even as rich gifts are thrown  
    Freely on the far-seen fire,  
Blazing from the altar-stone.

But the souls of the profane,  
    Far from heaven removed below,  
Flit on earth in murderous pain  
    'Neath the unyielding yoke of woe;  
While pious spirits tenanting the sky,  
Chant praises to the mighty one on high.

Conington.

## CHAPTER VII

### TRAGIC POETRY. ÆSCHYLUS

Athens the Literary Centre of Greece—The Beginnings of Tragedy—Arion and the Dithyramb—Thespis—The Satyr-Drama—The Dramatic Festivals at Athens—The Dramatic Contest—The Theatre—The Position of the Actors and the Chorus—The Number of Contestants and Performers—The Three Unities—The Subjects of Tragedy—Æschylus—The Structure of a Greek Tragedy illustrated by the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus—The *Libation-Bearers*—The *Furies*—The *Suppliants*—The *Persians*—The *Seven against Thebes*—The *Prometheus Bound*.

At the beginning of the fifth century an observer of literary movements in Greece might have been seriously in doubt as to whether Syracuse or Athens was destined to become the literary centre of the Hellenic world. The brilliant court maintained in Athens by Peisistratus and his sons down to the overthrow of the tyranny in 510, a court distinguished by the presence of Simonides, Anacreon, and other poets, was surpassed in the next generation by that of Hiero in Syracuse, who drew to his city such lyric poets as Simonides, Pindar, and Bacchylides, Epicharmus, the founder of comedy, and even Æschylus, the father of tragedy. Before the establishment of the democracy Athens had produced but one poet of distinction—Solon, the legislator. But in the latter part of the sixth century a new type of poetry was rapidly being developed, the drama, which was to become the greatest literary creation of the Greek people after

the epic of Homer. As the Ionians of Asia Minor had brought the epic to perfection, the Æolians of Lesbos the song lyric, and the Dorians the choral lyric, so now it fell to the Athenians, who, though Ionians by race and in temperament, yet shared some of the best qualities of the Dorians, to contribute the drama. Thanks to this supreme creation and to her political supremacy resulting from the wars with Persia, Athens soon overshadowed Syracuse and from the middle of the fifth century to the middle of the third was the acknowledged literary and intellectual centre of Hellas.

The order in which the three great branches of poetry, epic, lyric, and dramatic, were developed in Greece is the best illustration of the significant fact to which we have already alluded—the natural and normal growth of Greek literature. In each age we find the type of poetical expression which most perfectly reflects the order of beliefs and sentiments of the people, a type which, both in form and in content, is a natural outgrowth of the type which preceded it. Epic poetry was developed from the minstrel's songs, which arose in response to the conditions of the patriarchal society of the Homeric age. The choral lyric sprang from the religious observances of the Dorian society under the new conditions of a later period, but retained the mythological and heroic elements of the epic moulded to a new form. The Greek drama presupposes both the epic and the choral lyric, the subject-matter and inspiration of the former, the religious and structural elements of the latter, adopting at the same time for the dialogue the iambic form which had already been perfected by Archilochus.

We have seen that the festivals in honor of the gods were the occasion for the performance of choral compositions. In the course of time a certain kind of choral came to be regarded as peculiarly appropriate to the worship of a particular god. Thus the dithyramb came to be employed exclusively in the worship of Dionysus, the god of wine. We have seen, also, that Arion, at Corinth, first gave the dithyramb its distinctive character. Now among the Dorian folk it was believed that Dionysus, in his roaming over the hills from one seat of worship to another, was accompanied by sportive, mischief-loving beings, half animal, half human, whom they called "satyrs." These beings were popularly represented as having the legs, ears, snub-nose, and shaggy hair of a goat, attached to the human form—precisely like Pan, who was himself a satyr. It was a natural, but none the less a far-reaching idea of Arion's, to dress up his dithyrambic chorus of fifty men or boys in the likeness of satyrs, and to have them sing, *in character*, of the adventures and sufferings of their lord and leader, Dionysus. In this way the decisive step was taken toward the development of a story to be acted—impersonation. The song of such a Dionysiac chorus at some time received the name of "tragedy," or "goat-song" (*tragos*, "goat," and *odé*, "song"), which was retained for the species of poetry which grew out of the dithyramb even after the original significance of the word was lost sight of.

The next step in the development of tragedy was taken in Attica toward the middle of the sixth century. The worship of Dionysus had taken a strong hold upon the people of the country district, Icaria, on the slope

of Mount Pentelicus.<sup>1</sup> A festival in his honor had become established there, in which "tragic" choruses in the Peloponnesian manner played a part. A native poet, Thespis, introduced the important innovation of stepping out of the chorus of satyrs at some point in the performance and reciting verses addressed to the other satyrs. In addition to the element of impersonation we now have the element of acting, though in a very rudimentary form. But the new "tragic" dithyramb at once found favor. The first performance in Athens took place in 534 B. C., under the patronage of the tyrant Peisistratus. From this time on the development of tragedy was rapid. Soon a second actor was introduced, tradition says by Æschylus. Instead of a simple dramatic narrative, interrupting the songs of the chorus, we now have a true dramatic action in the dialogue of the two actors, interrupted by the choral songs. The chorus is thus reduced to a subordinate place, though it is still relatively prominent. This subordination becomes much more marked after the introduction of the third actor by Sophocles, about 468 B. C.

The early tragic performance was probably rather short, and the subject-matter restricted, by the very satyric nature of the chorus, to themes connected with the legends of Dionysus. Only a change in the costume of the choruses was needed to make possible a larger range of subjects. But when this was done the performance was no longer strictly appropriate to the worship of Dionysus. A compromise was adopted. Whatever the mythological subject of the

<sup>1</sup>This site was excavated by the American School of Classical Studies in Athens in 1888. The excavations disclosed many traces of the worship of Dionysus.

earlier scenes, the last scene was reserved for the old satyr-chorus of Dionysus. From this fact arose the strange phenomenon which we see throughout the fifth century—a satyr-drama, full of burlesque and ribaldry, following upon the three tragedies presented by each poet. The connection seems to us incongruous, but by this device the poet was enabled to work out a serious theme quite without reference to the boisterous rites of the wine-god. Later on the poet sometimes substituted another play for the satyr-drama, and still later only one instead of three such pieces was given at each festival. But for centuries the satyr-chorus was retained in some manner as a relic of the early Dionysus worship out of which tragedy had grown.

There were only two yearly festivals of Dionysus at Athens at which dramatic performances were given—the Lenæan<sup>1</sup> festival in January, and the City Dionysia in March. The Athenian citizen who remained in the city had therefore only two opportunities a year of witnessing exhibitions of tragedy and comedy. But most of the villages in Attica had their local festivals in December, called the Rural Dionysia, which it was easy for the Athenian to attend. The December exhibition at Peiræus, the port of Athens, was only less important than those of the city itself. Of the two city festivals the Dionysia in March was by far the more brilliant occasion. The greatest poets contended for the honor of presenting their tragedies and comedies there, and Athens was thronged with visitors from abroad who came to participate in the festival.

<sup>1</sup>So called from the Lenæon, "Place of the Wine-press," where the festival was celebrated in early times.

The cost of the dramatic exhibitions was a charge upon the state, inasmuch as the drama constituted a part of the worship of the gods, the supervision and regulation of which was a function of the state. But under the democracy the state delegated a portion of its duty to wealthy individuals. Each year the magistrates selected from the lists of wealthy citizens persons who, from the work to which they were assigned, were called choregi, or "chorus-leaders." Upon them fell the expense of equipping and training the tragic and comic choruses, one choregus being designated for each poet. The exhibitions themselves took the form of contests, each poet and choregus competing with the others for prizes offered by the state for the best "tragic and comic choruses"—that is, for the best tragedy and the best comedy. Contests between the leading actors, or "protagonists," of each play were organized at a later time. The prizes were awarded by judges chosen by the magistrates, every precaution being taken to secure a just and impartial verdict. The result of this system was an intense rivalry between the poets, the choruses, the choregi, and the actors, and no expense or effort was spared in the competition for the coveted honor. The keen participation of the spectators was also secured, not only by their interest in the subjects which were enacted before them, appealing to all their religious, intellectual, musical, and æsthetic sentiments, but also by the fact of their personal connection with the members of the choruses, representing perhaps one hundred and fifty families in the case of tragedy alone. All citizens of Athens were admitted to the dramatic exhibitions without charge from the time of Pericles on.

The first permanent theatre in Athens was erected about the middle of the fourth century, long after the most brilliant period of the Attic drama had passed. But the stone theatre of the fourth century probably only reproduced in durable material the temporary arrangements of the structure in which the dramas of the great masters were performed. The Greek drama was always performed in the open air, the spectators sitting upon the slope of the hill, which was artificially built up at the wings so that the view of every spectator was directed toward the large circular level space at the bottom called the orchestra, or "dancing place." In the centre of the orchestra was the large altar of Dionysus, situated not far from the temple of the god, in whose sacred precinct the theatre was located. In the earliest times there was no scenic background, for no scenery was needed. The choruses and the single actor at first had no need of dressing-rooms either. But this need must have been felt as soon as a series of scenes involving different characters was depicted, for each actor was assigned to a number of rôles. The dressing-room may at first have been placed at one side of the orchestra. When a scenic background was introduced and painted scenery came to be employed (probably about 470 B. C.), the most convenient place was selected for the dressing-rooms—the space behind the scenery.

These, then, were the three main elements of the theatre of the time of Sophocles:—the scenic background, which was the front of the dressing-room building; the orchestra, which represented the space in front of the building shown in the scenery; and the auditorium, which rose from the level of the



orchestra, the two wings extending a little beyond the semicircle opposite the background. This simple scheme was always retained in Greek theatres, although both auditorium and scene-buildings were developed, the one for the comfort of the spectators,<sup>1</sup> the other to enhance the realism of the spectacle.

In the early period, when the slope of the Acropolis was first used by the spectators, the evolutions of the chorus and the recitations of the single actor, who came out of the chorus, took place in the orchestra. Since the spectators occupied an elevation, no elevation for the performers was needed to improve the view, although the actor could mount the steps of the great altar when special prominence was desired. What was true of this early period was equally true after the second and third actor had been added. The erection of the building for the scenic background and dressing-rooms did not alter the place of action. But the actors naturally came to occupy mainly the part of the orchestra nearer the scenery, which generally represented the home of the principal characters, while the chorus retained its position near the altar in the centre of the orchestra. In an orchestra whose diameter was sixty feet, as at Athens, there was ample room for the fifteen members of the chorus and the three actors without overcrowding, nor was there danger that the actors would be hidden from view by the chorus. Besides, the actors were distinguished by their costume<sup>2</sup> from the members of the chorus.

<sup>1</sup>The theatre at Athens, when completed, seated about seventeen thousand persons comfortably.

<sup>2</sup>The more important personages in the tragedy, such as kings and queens, were represented as of unusual stature. On the feet they wore the cothurnus, which added something to the height, and the wig was so arranged as to increase the effect still more. The body was also padded considerably. We may mention here the fact that all women's rôles were taken by men. We never hear of a Greek actress.

A considerable elevation for the actors alone, separating them from the chorus, was impossible in the Greek drama, for the chorus is in constant contact with the actors, and may always enter the building in the background directly from the orchestra. The long, narrow building called the proscenium, extending along the front of the scene-buildings thirteen feet above the level of the orchestra, was formerly believed to be an elevated stage for actors, but it is now known to have been the main part of the decoration, the roof of which was used only in exceptional cases. The actors and choruses moved upon the same level, as in the case of the modern opera.<sup>1</sup>

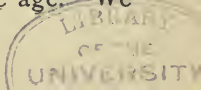
During the fifth century, in which the works of the greatest dramatic poets fall, three tragic and three comic poets competed at the City Dionysia, each comic poet presenting one play, and the tragic poets four each, three tragedies and a stage-drama. In the lifetime of Æschylus the three tragedies often dealt with successive stages of the same subject, and even the stage-drama was sometimes upon the same theme. The term "trilogy" refers to the group of three tragedies, "tetralogy" to the group of four plays. But after Æschylus the members of a trilogy were not connected in subject. The plays produced at the City Dionysia were always new, but in the fourth century

<sup>1</sup>I have spoken as if the question of an elevated stage in Greek theatres were settled. It is fair to say that some scholars still adhere to the old view to which I have alluded above, although many have accepted as a compromise the theory that in the fifth century the actors occupied a low stage accessible to the chorus. But the evidence of the ruins and of the extant dramas is distinctly in favor of the view which I have presented, which has rapidly gained adherents during the past fifteen years. The Roman writer Vitruvius, who is quoted as an authority for a high stage in the Greek theatre, had in mind a type of theatre peculiar to Asia Minor, and not that found in Athens. In this Græco-Roman theatre actors and chorus performed upon a stage about five feet above the level of the lowest seats, as in the modern theatre.

an old tragedy was sometimes revived. It is surmised that in the fifth century popular old plays were revived at the Lenæan festival. In any event they were undoubtedly to be seen at the Rural Dionysia. The tragic chorus, which at the time of Thespis probably contained fifty members, numbered only twelve in Æschylus's time but later was increased to fifteen. The comic chorus contained twenty-four members. By a convention which seems strange to us, only three actors ever appeared upon the scene at the same time, not counting "mutes" and attendants. There was consequently much less action in a Greek drama than we are accustomed to see in a modern play, though the participation of the chorus often lends greater animation.

Another important difference between the ancient and modern drama must be mentioned. There is almost never a change of scene in tragedy during the progress of the action, and in comedy rarely. This is due to the constant presence of the chorus, which thus fixes the scene of the action. This peculiar rule is called the "unity of place." The rule of "unity of time" is adhered to much more strictly than in the modern drama, partly for the same reason. The other unity, the "unity of action," is of universal application, resting upon the fundamental principle of dramatic art that every portion of a play must conduce to the development of the main theme.

We have already stated that Greek tragedy presupposes the epic. In fact by far the greater number of subjects treated by the tragic poets was taken from the poems of the Epic Cycle, and almost all the rest from the legendary history of the heroic age. We



know of few exceptions to the rule. Phrynichus, an older contemporary of Æschylus, once represented the *Capture of Miletus*, referring to the taking of this city by the Persians. The Athenians were so affected by the play that they put a heavy fine upon the poet "for reminding them of their own misfortunes." No such result followed the performance of his *Phœnician Woman*, in which he celebrated the deeds of Athens in the Persian wars, nor when Æschylus produced the *Persians*, which glorifies the victory of Salamis. No other tragedies of this period are known that depart from the subjects of the heroic age. Æschylus spoke the truth when he said that his tragedies were but crumbs from the table of Homer.

The first great poet of tragedy was Æschylus, who was born at Eleusis in 525 B. C. and died in Sicily in 456. During the Persian wars he fought with conspicuous courage at Marathon and Salamis. His first prize at the City Dionysia was won in 484, and altogether he is said to have won twenty-eight victories—a larger number than is recorded for any other poet. Of the seventy tragedies which he wrote only seven are extant. By his introduction of the second actor Æschylus is entitled to be called the creator of Attic tragedy. In his treatment of the chorus, his choice of themes, his development of the plot, and in his whole conception of the dignity of tragedy and of its mission as instructor of the people in morals and religion, Æschylus laid down the lines which succeeding poets were to follow, with few important changes, so long as tragedy was cultivated in Greece.

We may best illustrate the structure of a Greek tragedy by an analysis of the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus,

the first play in the trilogy on the subject of the House of Atreus, which was awarded the prize at the City Dionysia in 458 B. C. The mythical story which forms the groundwork of the trilogy is briefly as follows: Atreus, son of Pelops, succeeded to the throne of Eurystheus, king of Argos. Thyestes, his brother, who had been banished from Argos for wronging his sister-in-law, returned as a suppliant. Atreus, fearing to kill him, set before him at a banquet the flesh of Thyestes's own children. When Thyestes knew what he had done, he cursed the house of Atreus, and the curse followed it for three generations. Agamemnon and Menelaus, sons of Atreus, married the sisters Clytemnestra and Helen. The story of the rape of Helen and the Trojan war follows. Agamemnon, it will be remembered, sacrificed at Aulis his own daughter, Iphigeneia. Clytemnestra, wroth at her daughter's death, plotted with her paramour, Ægisthus, youngest son of Thyestes, to murder Agamemnon on his return from Troy. Orestes, her son, was sent away to Phocis, and Electra, her other daughter by Agamemnon, was treated as a servant.

The *Agamemnon* takes up the story at the point when the hero's return from Troy is anxiously waited at Argos. The scene is laid at Mycenæ in front of the palace of Agamemnon. When the tragedy begins<sup>1</sup> we see on the roof of the palace a watchman, commissioned by Clytemnestra to watch for the beacon-light that should announce the fall of Troy. The prologue is spoken by him.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>A curtain was not employed in the Greek theatre. The actors took their places in view of the spectators. For the same reason the favorite conclusion of a play is a procession instead of a tableau.

<sup>2</sup>Morshead's translation is used for all selections from the *Agamemnon*, *Libation-Bearers*, and *Eumenides*.

I pray the gods to quit me of my toil,  
 To close the watch I keep, this livelong year;  
 For as a watch-dog lying, not at rest,  
 Propped on one arm upon the palace-roof  
 Of Atreus' race, too long, too well I know  
 The starry conclave of the midnight sky;  
 Too well, the splendours of the firmament,  
 The Lords of Light, whose kingly aspect signs—  
 What time they set or climb the sky in turn—  
 'The year's divisions, bringing frost or fire!  
 And now, as ever, am I set, to mark  
 When shall stream up the glow of signal flame,  
 The bale-fire bright, and tell its Trojan tale—  
*Troy town is ta'en*: such issue holds in hope  
 She, in whose woman's breast beats heart of man!

He at length sees the beacon flash out and shouts the good news to the people in the palace, but not without a dark word of foreboding for the future. Twelve old men of Mycenæ, who form the chorus, now file through the side passage into the orchestra, chanting<sup>1</sup> as they march of the expedition of the sons of Atreus against Troy, beginning:

Ten livelong years have rolled away,  
 Since the twin lords of sceptred sway,  
 By Zeus endowed with pride of place,  
 The doughty chiefs of Atreus' race,  
     Went forth of yore,  
 To plead with Priam, face to face,  
     Before the judgment-seat of War!

While the elders are still singing Clytemnestra comes from the palace to make a thank-offering to the

<sup>1</sup>The entrance song of the chorus is called the *parodus*, and gives the motive for the presence of the chorus—here their anxiety about Agamemnon and the army. All that precedes the *parodus* is called the *prologue*. In it the situation is unfolded, and the audience made acquainted with the subject to be presented. If the play opens with a choral march, the *parodus* and *prologue* are identical. The song of the chorus from its usual station in the orchestra is called the *stasimon*, and the acts which fall between two *stasima*, *episodes*. The final act is known as the *exodus*.

gods. The altars along the front of the palace are soon ablaze. The elders question her anxiously, but she pays no heed. They then continue their song, telling of the strange omen that appeared to the chieftains at Aulis and the interpretation of Calchas the seer, who prophesied the sacking of Troy but gave warning of the sacrifice which Artemis would require.

At home there tarries like a lurking snake,  
 Biding its time, a wrath unreconciled,  
 A wily watcher, passionate to slake  
 In blood, resentment for a murdered child.<sup>1</sup>

The chorus interrupt their story for a moment by an appeal to Zeus:

Zeus—if to the Unknown  
 That name of many names seems good—  
 Zeus, upon thee, in utter need, I call.  
 Thro' the mind's every road  
 I passed, but vain are all  
 Save that which names thee Zeus, the Highest One!  
 . . . . .  
 'Tis Zeus alone who shows the perfect way  
 Of knowledge: He hath ruled,  
 Men shall learn wisdom, by affliction schooled.  
 In visions of the night, like dropping rain,  
 Descend the many memories of pain  
 Before the spirit's sight: through tears and dole,  
 Comes wisdom o'er the unwilling soul.

The subject is resumed again. After a long delay at Aulis, through adverse winds sent by Artemis, Calchas explicitly declared that Iphigeneia must be sacrificed. Agamemnon yielded at last to the demands of his alliès, against the dictates of his own conscience and his love and in spite of the tender

<sup>1</sup>Referring to the curse of Thyestes for the murder of his children.

entreaties of his daughter. The terrible sacrifice is made and Agamemnon has committed a great wrong. "But may all yet be well." With this prayer the *parodus* is concluded.

The chorus now takes its stand by the altar, and its leader advances toward the palace to inquire of Clytemnestra the meaning of her sacrifices. Is it for good news that has come? "Good beyond hope," is Clytemnestra's answer. She then describes in a magnificent passage the progress of the beacon-fires from Mount Ida to Lemnos, from Lemnos to Athos, and so from peak to peak to Argos. The victory is gained, but let the victors fail not to reverence the gods of Troy if they would come safely home. Clytemnestra then reënters the palace, and the first *episode* comes to a close.

In the choral ode, or *stasimon*, which follows, the chorus first thank the gods for the victory whereby the crime of Paris is avenged. Riches and power avail not to ward off the consequences of sin.

And such did Paris come  
Unto Atreides' home,  
And thence, with sin and shame his welcome to repay,  
Ravished the wife away—  
And she, unto her country and her kin  
Leaving the clash of shields and spears and arming ships,  
And bearing unto Troy destruction for a dower,  
And overbold in sin,  
Went fleetly through the gates, at midnight hour.

Alas for the home which Helen left desolate! Her form seems yet to bear sway in the house and hovers near Menelaus in his dreams, a vain delight! But the sorrows of the Achæans are even greater than his.



Each house has its dead to mourn, and the people murmur against their rulers. The god will surely punish those who shed men's blood.

O'er him who vaunteth an exceeding fame,  
Impends a woe condign;  
The vengeful bolt upon his eyes doth flame,  
Sped from the hand divine.  
This bliss be mine, ungrudged of God, to feel:  
To tread no city to the dust,  
Nor see my own life thrust  
Down to a slave's estate beneath another's heel!

Can the good tidings be true? We soon shall know, for a dust-covered messenger approaches. With the entrance of the messenger the elders resume their place by the altar, and the second *episode* begins.

The messenger greets the land of Argos, its gods and the king's palace, and bids prepare a loyal welcome for Agamemnon. The sufferings and losses of the Greek host were many and hard to bear, but the issue repays it all.

Farewell, a long farewell to all our woes!  
To us, the remnant of the host of Greece,  
Comes weal beyond all counterpoise of woe;  
Thus boast we rightfully to yonder sun,  
Like him, far-fleeted over sea and land:  
'The Argive host prevailed to conquer Troy,  
And in the temples of the gods of Greece  
Hung up these spoils, a shining sign to Time.'  
Let those who read this legend bless aright  
The city and its chieftains, and repay  
The meed of gratitude to Zeus who willed  
And wrought the deed. So stands the tale fulfilled.

Clytemnestra comes from the palace and tells of her joy at the knowledge of her husband's victorious home-coming.

What day beams fairer on a woman's eyes  
 Than this, whereon she flings the portal wide  
 To hail her lord, heaven-shielded, home from war?  
 This to my husband, that he tarry not,  
 But turn the city's longing into joy!  
 Yea, let him come, and, coming, may he find  
 A wife no other than he left her, true  
 And faithful as a watch-dog to his home—  
 His foeman's foe; in all her duties leal,  
 Trusty to keep for ten long years unmarred  
 The store whereon he set his master-seal.

She reënters the palace. The messenger tells the chorus of the storms that scattered the Greek fleet on its homeward voyage. After his departure the chorus sing the second *stasimon*. Their subject is the ruin which Helen brought on Troy. As a lion's cub, caressed by young and old, at length betrays its nature and rewards the kindness shown it by a bloody feast,

Even so to Ilion's city came by stealth  
 A spirit as of windless seas and skies,  
 A gentle phantom-form of joy and wealth,  
 With love's soft arrows speeding from its eyes,  
 Love's rose, whose thorn doth pierce the soul in subtle wise.

There is an ancient saying that prosperity breeds misfortune. It is rather sin that begets sorrow, and Justice works her will in spite of wealth.

Seeing Agamemnon and his train approaching, the chorus give him a loyal greeting (third *episode*). The king, still seated in his chariot, acknowledges their welcome and greets the gods of the land. Clytemnestra comes from the palace to welcome him, followed by attendants carrying rich cloths of purple. She describes the anxiety which she had felt for his safety, and tells how she had sent Orestes, the pledge and

symbol of their plighted troth, to the home of a distant friend, that he might not be exposed to danger in case of a revolt in the land. She then bids him enter the palace.

Sweet lord, step forth,  
 Step from thy car, I pray—nay, not on earth  
 Plant the proud foot, O King, that trod down Troy!  
 Women! why tarry ye, whose task it is  
 To spread your monarch's path with tapestry?  
 Swift, swift, with purple strew his passage fair,  
 That justice lead him to a home, at last,  
 He scarcely looked to see. For what remains,  
 Zeal, unsubdued by sleep, shall nerve my hand  
 To work as right and as the gods command!

Agamemnon bids her honor him as a mortal, not as a god, for he dreads the divine envy that follows excessive pride. "Count no man happy until he ends his days in prosperity." But the queen urges the point, and Agamemnon reluctantly yields, though he removes his sandals before stepping upon the purple, lest the envy of the gods smite him. Enjoining upon the queen to treat kindly the captive maiden Cassandra—Priam's daughter, whom he had chosen from the spoils of war—he descends from the chariot and enters the palace. Clytemnestra, as she follows him, utters this ominous prayer to Zeus:

Lord of Fulfilment, all my vows fulfil,  
 And whatsoe'er it be, work forth Thy will.

So ends the third *episode*. The words of the chorus in the third *stasimon* strike a note of foreboding:

Wherefore, for ever, on the wings of Fear  
 Hovers a vision drear  
 Before my boding heart? A strain,  
 Unbidden and unwelcome, thrills mine ear,  
 Oracular of pain.

Not as of old upon my bosom's throne  
 Sits Confidence, to spurn  
 Such fears, like dreams, we know not to discern. . . .

Ah! to some end of Fate, unseen, unguessed,  
 Are these wild throbbings of my heart and breast—  
 Yea, of some doom they tell—  
 Each pulse a knell.  
 Lief, lief I were, that all  
 To unfulfilment's hidden realm might fall.

The fourth *episode* opens with the entrance of Clytemnestra, who roughly orders Cassandra to enter the palace and begin her life of slavery. Cassandra remains silent in the chariot, and does not answer even the gentler words of the chorus. But when Clytemnestra has departed in anger, she bursts into a sobbing appeal to Apollo, the cause of all her woes,<sup>1</sup> and then in a frenzy of prophetic inspiration foretells, in impassioned lyrics, the doom impending over Agamemnon and herself; but in language the imagery of which the chorus but dimly understands.<sup>2</sup>

CAS. Home cursed of God! bear witness unto me,  
 The visioned woes within—  
 The blood-stained hands of them that smite their kin—  
 The strangling noose, and, spattered o'er  
 With human blood, the reeking floor!

CHO. How like a sleuth-hound questing on the track,  
 Keen-scented unto blood and death she hies!

CAS. Ah! can the ghostly guidance fail,  
 Whereby my prophet-soul is onwards led?  
 Look! for their flesh the spectre-children wail,  
 Their sodden limbs, on which their father fed!

<sup>1</sup>Apollo, who loved her, endowed her with the gift of prophecy in return for the promise of her affection. But the princess then repulsed his advances. Thereupon Apollo decreed that no one should believe her prophecies, and she was accordingly regarded as a madwoman and kept in confinement.

<sup>2</sup>Such a lyrical dialogue between an actor and the chorus was called a *kommos*.

CHO. Long since we knew of thy prophetic fame,—  
But for these deeds we seek no prophet's tongue.

CAS. God! 'tis another crime—  
Worse than the storied woe of olden time,  
Cureless, abhorred, that one is plotting here—  
A shaming death, for those that should be dear!  
Alas! and far away, in foreign land,  
He, that should help,<sup>1</sup> doth stand!

CHO. I knew th' old tales, the city rings withal—  
But now thy speech is dark beyond my ken.

CAS. God! a new sight! a net, a snare of hell,  
Set by her hand—herself a snare more fell!  
A wedded wife, she slays her lord;  
Helped by a dastard hand! Ye powers! whose hate  
Of Atreus' home no blood can satiate—  
Raise the wild cry above the sacrifice abhorred!

CHO. Why biddest thou some fiend I know not whom,  
Shriek o'er the house? Thine is no cheering word.  
Back to my heart in frozen fear, I feel  
My waning life-blood run—  
The blood that round the wounding steel  
Ebbs slow as sinks Life's parting sun—  
Swift, swift and sure, some woe comes pressing on!

CAS. Woe, Paris, woe on thee! Thy bridal joy  
Was death and fire upon thy race and Troy!  
And woe for thee, Scamander's flood!  
Beside thy banks, O river fair,  
I grew, in tender nursing care,  
From childhood unto maidenhood!  
Now not by thine, but by Cocytus' stream,  
Or Acheron's<sup>2</sup> banks, shall ring my boding scream.

CHO. Too plain is all, too plain!  
A child might read aright thy fateful strain!  
Deep in my heart their piercing fang,  
Terror and sorrow set, the while I heard  
That piteous, low, tender word,  
Yet to mine ear and heart a crushing pang.

<sup>1</sup>Referring to Orestes.

<sup>2</sup>Rivers of the lower world.

In calmer and clearer language she now depicts the doom of the house of Atreus, tracing the cause back to the crime of Thyestes in wronging his brother's wife, followed by the more horrible crime of Atreus:

Behold ye—yonder, on the roof aloft,—  
 The spectre-children sitting—look—such shapes  
 As dreams are made of—semblances of babes  
 Slain by their kinsman's hand.  
 And look, what loathsome burthen piteous,  
 Blasting the sight, within their hands they bear,  
 Their own rent flesh, on which their father fed!

Tearing off her prophet's robes. she foretells the vengeance of Orestes:

Ah me!  
 I die, yet not unheeded of the gods—  
 For by their will shall one requite my doom:  
 He, to avenge his father's blood outpoured,  
 Shall smite and slay, with matricidal hand.  
 Aye, he shall come—tho' far away he roam,  
 A banished wanderer in a stranger's land—  
 To crown his kindred's edifice of ill,  
 Called home to vengeance by his father's fall:  
 Thus have the high gods sworn, and shall fulfil.

She predicts her own death. The chorus counsel flight, but in vain. Cassandra sees that her hour is come, and is resolved to meet death bravely.

Once more—one utterance, but not of wail,  
 Though for my death—and then I speak no more.  
 Sun! thou whose beam I shall not see again,  
 To thee I cry: Let those whom vengeance calls  
 To slay their kindred's slayers, quit withal  
 The death of me, the slave, the fenceless prey.  
 Ah, state of mortal man, in time of weal,  
 A line, a shadow! and, if ill fate fall,  
 One wet sponge-sweep wipes all our trace away—  
 And this I deem less piteous, of the twain.

With these last words she enters the palace, while the chorus lament the uncertainty of human happiness. Agamemnon has returned triumphant from Troy, but is about to suffer guilt for the death of his ancestors. At this point, the beginning of the *exodus*, piercing cries issue from the palace. The members of the chorus debate about their course of action—shall they call for aid or rush within to the rescue? The doors of the palace are suddenly thrown open as the elders are on the point of entering.<sup>1</sup> They see the body of Agamemnon lying beside that of Cassandra, and Clytemnestra looking upon her bloody work. She steps forward and calmly exults in what she has done.

This is the sum and issue of the strife  
Wherein long since he gave my love defeat,  
Of me deep-pondered and at length fulfilled.  
All is avowed, and, as I smote, I stand  
With foot set firm upon a finished thing!  
Yea, thus I wrought—even I—ere he could move  
A foot to fly, an arm to ward his doom!  
Even as the trammel hems the scaly shoal,  
I trapped him with inextricable toils,  
The ill abundance of a baffling robe;  
Then smote him, once, again—and at each wound  
He cried aloud, then as in death relaxed  
Each limb, and sank to earth; and as he lay,  
Once more I smote him, with the third last blow,  
Sacred to Hades, Saviour of the Dead.

Answering the stern reproaches of the chorus, she justifies her deed, referring to the sacrifice of Iphigenia, whom he slew, as he would a sheep, to charm the

<sup>1</sup>It was an unwritten law of the Greek drama that no murder or violent death should be represented in view of the spectators. By a device such as is here employed the *chorus* is supposed to see and describe the horrible sight, which, in its details, is not visible to the others. The tragic effect is produced by their language alone, assisted by the imagination of the spectators.

winds of Thrace; and to his unfaithfulness in wedlock, for he brought home Cassandra, "who now lies as erst she lay, close to his side." She trusts to Ægisthus to defend her cause. The chorus raise a lament over the king, which Clytemnestra interrupts, now to defend her deed, now to exult in it. But the chorus chant the solemn warning:

The slayer of to-day shall die to-morrow—  
 The wage of wrong is woe.  
 While time shall be, while Zeus in heaven is lord,  
 His law is fixed and stern;  
 On him that wrought shall vengeance be outpoured—  
 The tides of doom return.  
 The Children of the Curse abide within  
 These halls of high estate—  
 And none can wrench from off the home of sin  
 The clinging grasp of fate.

Ægisthus enters from the side and gloats over the slain, for the day of vengeance has arrived for the slain children of Thyestes—his own brothers. The leaders of the chorus defy his authority. He shall not rule over Argos if Orestes still lives. The chorus advance upon the usurper with drawn swords, and Ægisthus stands ready to fight. But Clytemnestra intervenes and amid the taunts of the chorus leads Ægisthus away with the words:

"Let the cur-pack howl and yell—  
 I and thou will rule the palace and will order all things well!"

So ends the *Agamemnon*. Immediately after it, without change of scene, followed the *Libation Bearers*. As Electra and her maids pour a libation upon the tomb of Agamemnon, Orestes, her brother, appears, and their recognition ensues. They plan vengeance



together upon their mother, according to the command of Apollo given to Orestes. Gaining admission to the palace in the guise of a stranger, he tells Clytemnestra a false tale of his own death, at which she secretly rejoices. With Electra's aid Orestes kills Ægisthus and Clytemnestra. Then a frenzy of madness overcomes him, and he fancies that he sees in pursuit of him the dreadful Furies, with dark robes and snaky hair, coming to avenge his mother's murder. The tragedy closes with the following chant, accompanying the outward march of the maidens who form the chorus:

Behold, the storm of woe divine  
That raves and beats on Atreus' line  
Its great third blast hath blown.  
First was Thyestes' loathly woe—  
The rueful feast of long ago,  
On children's flesh, unknown.  
And next the kingly chief's despite,  
When he who led the Greeks to fight  
Was in the bath hewn down.  
And now the offspring of the race  
Stands in the third, the saviour's place,—  
To save—or to consume?  
O whither, ere it be fulfilled,  
Ere its fierce blast be hushed and stilled,  
Shall blow the wind of doom?

The third member of the trilogy is the *Furies*. The scene is at first at Delphi, before the temple of Apollo. We see, inside the temple, Orestes clinging to the altar, a suppliant of the god, and around him the dreadful avenging Furies slumbering. Apollo bids Orestes be of good cheer, and to escape to Athens while the Furies are still asleep. As he leaves, the ghost of

Clytemnestra rises and arouses the Furies to pursue. They rush forth, scenting like hounds the track of blood. The scene shifts to Athens. Orestes enters and throws himself upon the statue of Athene, seeking her protection. The Furies soon appear. Athene comes down and organizes a trial before citizens of Athens, thus constituting the court of the Areopagus. Apollo pleads in defense of Orestes, the Furies prosecute. The vote is a tie, but Athene, who presides, gives the casting vote in favor of the accused. The Furies, at first outraged by this result, are appeased by the promise of an honorable worship in Athens under the name of Eumenides, or "the Gracious Ones." The curse upon the house of Atreus is at last extinct. The play closes with a grand procession in which the Eumenides are solemnly escorted to their new home—a cave beneath the Areopagus. We quote the song of the Furies tracking Orestes to his refuge in Athens:

Ho! clear is here the trace of him we seek:  
 Follow the track of blood, the silent sign!  
 Like to some hound that hunts a wounded fawn,  
 We snuff along the scent of dripping gore,  
 And inwardly we pant, for many a day  
 Toiling in chase that shall fordo the man;  
 Far o'er and o'er the wide land have I ranged,  
 And o'er the wide sea, flying without wings  
 Swift as a sail, I pressed upon his track  
 Who now hard by is lurking, well I wot,  
 For scent of mortal blood allures me here.

Follow him, seek him — round and round  
 Scent and snuff and scan the ground,  
 Lest unharmed he slip away —

He who did his mother slay!

Hist—he is there! See him his arms entwine  
 Around the image of the maid divine —

Thus aided, for the deed he wrought  
Unto the judgment wills he to be brought!

The earliest of the extant plays is the *Suppliants*, named for the chorus, the fifty daughters of Danaus, who have fled with their father from Egypt to Argos in order to escape marriage with their cousins, the fifty sons of Egyptus. They are received and protected by the king of Argos. The earliest play the date of whose production is known is the *Persians*, brought out in 472 B. C. The scene is laid at Susa, capital of the Persian Empire. Persian elders, who form the chorus, are gathered at the tomb of Darius. The aged queen Atossa appears. While they exchange their anxious forebodings about the host which Xerxes has led against the Greeks, a messenger appears and announces the disaster at Salamis. Atossa summons up the ghost of her husband, Darius, who predicts still greater disaster to the army in Greece and warns the Persians to fight no more against the Greeks, "for the very land is an ally to them." Finally Xerxes appears with a few wretched followers, and, with the chorus, fills the scene with extravagant lamentations. The play contains some stately choral odes and a famous description of the battle of Salamis, from which the following selection is taken:

But when white-steeded Day, bright to behold,  
Held the wide earth, from the Hellenès first,  
Like joyous chant, rang out their battle-cry,  
And forthwith Echo, from the island rocks,  
Sent back responsive an inspiring shout.  
On all the Persians, cheated in their hopes,  
Fell terror; for by no means as in flight  
Their solemn pæan did th' Hellenès sing,  
But with stout courage speeding to the fray.

The trumpet's blare fired all their ranks, and straight,  
 With simultaneous dip of sounding oar,  
 They at the signal smote the surging brine,  
 And instant all conspicuous were to sight.  
 First the right wing, well marshall'd, took the lead:  
 Then their whole naval force in fair array  
 Bore down against us. All at once was heard  
 A mighty shout: "Sons of Hellenès, on,  
 Your country free, your children free, your wives,  
 The temples of your fathers' deities,  
 Your tombs ancestral; for your all ye fight."  
 And from our side clamour of Persian speech  
 In answer rose; no time was then for pause,  
 But instant galley against galley dashed  
 Her armature of brass. A ship of Hellas  
 Led the encounter, and from the Punic barque  
 Sheared her high crest. Thereon as fortune led,  
 Ship drave on ship; at first the Persian host,  
 A mighty flood, made head; but soon their ships  
 Thronged in the strait, of mutual aid bereft,  
 Each against each other dashed with brazen beak,  
 Crushing the oar-banks of their proper fleet;  
 While the Hellenès ships, not without skill,  
 Circling around them smote: dead hulks of ships  
 Floated keel-upwards, and, with wrecks o'erstrewn  
 And slaughtered men, lost was the sea from sight,  
 Ay, shores and reefs were crowded with the dead.  
 In flight disordered every ship was rowed,  
 Poor remnant of the Persian armament.  
 Then as men strike at tunnies, or a haul  
 Of captured fishes, the Hellenès, armed  
 With splint of oar, or fragment of the wreck,  
 Batter'd, and clave with dislocating blows.  
 Shrieks and loud wailing filled the ocean brine,  
 Till all 'neath eye of swarthy night was lost.  
 But all our losses, though for ten whole days  
 I told them over, could I not recount.  
 Of this be sure, that never in one day  
 Perished of men so vast a multitude.

*The Seven against Thebes* won the first prize in 467 B. C. The trilogy to which it belonged set forth the whole tragedy of the house of Labdacus, as the plays of the Oresteian trilogy give the story of the house of Atreus. The aim of the poet is here again to vindicate the divine government by exhibiting the ultimate triumph of justice and the certain punishment of sin. Since the legendary history of the kings of Thebes furnishes the theme of a number of extant tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides, we may briefly trace the story here. Laius, the son of Labdacus and husband of Jocasta, was king of Thebes. Seeking to evade the oracle which declared that he should be slain by his own son, he caused his infant to be exposed on Mount Cithæron. The child was found by a shepherd, and adopted as his son and heir by Polybus, the king of Corinth, receiving the name of Œdipus.<sup>1</sup> Grown to manhood, Œdipus was taunted with not being the true son of Polybus. He inquired of the oracle at Delphi, and was told only that he should slay his own father and marry his own mother. To escape this fate he resolved not to return to Corinth. On his way to Thebes he encountered Laius and slew him. At Thebes he solved the riddle of the Sphinx, obtained the kingdom as his reward, and married Jocasta. By her he became the father of two sons, Eteocles and Polyneices, and of two daughters, Antigone and Ismene. The city was visited with a plague, which could not be stayed until the murderer of Laius should be discovered and punished. Œdipus learned the truth concerning his birth, and putting out his eyes in grief, resigned the kingdom to his sons. Jocasta hung herself in shame. His sons confined

<sup>1</sup>i. e., "Swollen-foot," for his feet were pierced by thongs when exposed to die.

their father in prison, whereat Œdipus put a curse upon them. The brothers quarreled about the sovereignty. Polyneices collected an army under seven chieftains, including himself, and in the fight that followed the brothers slew each other. The story of the wanderings and death of Œdipus and of the fate of Antigone will be told elsewhere.

The other members of the trilogy brought the tragic events of this story down to the siege of Thebes by Polyneices. The *Seven against Thebes* opens with an address of Eteocles to the assembled Thebans. A messenger tells of the advance of the seven mighty chieftains against the gates. The chorus of Theban maidens enter in terror and supplicate the gods for protection. A scout tells Eteocles the names of the heroes stationed at the seven gates. Eteocles assigns his own chieftains one against each, and himself chooses his brother Polyneices to be his opponent, though he knows that the curse of his father is working out his doom. He goes forth to battle. Soon a messenger reports that the brothers have been slain by each other. Their bodies are brought in, Antigone and Ismene among the mourners. Then a decree is proclaimed that the body of Polyneices shall be cast out unburied. Antigone resolves to bury him in spite of the decree. The play closes with the funeral procession, Antigone and one-half of the chorus following the body of Polyneices, Ismene and the other half that of Eteocles. I quote from the passage in which Eteocles resolves to stand against his brother

MESS. Now at the seventh gate the seventh chief,  
Thy proper mother's son, I will announce;  
What curses for the state he imprecates;

That he may stand upon the walls, he prays:—  
That, heralded as a king to all the land,  
With pæans for its capture, he with thee  
Fighting, may slay thee, dying by thy side,  
Or thee, who wrong'd him, chasing forth alive,  
Requite in kind his proper banishment.  
Such words he shouts and calls upon the gods,  
Who o'er his race preside and Fatherland,  
With gracious eye to look upon his prayers.

ETEO. O heaven-demented race of Œdipus,  
My race, tear-fraught, detested of the gods.  
Alas, our father's curses now bear fruit!  
But it beseems not to lament or weep,  
Lest lamentations sadder still be born.  
For him, too truly Polybeikes named,—  
What his device will work we soon shall know;  
Whether his braggart words, with madness fraught,  
Gold-blazoned on his shield, shall lead him back.  
Had Justice, virgin child of Zeus, in sooth,  
Guided his deeds and thoughts, this might have been:  
But neither when he fled the darksome womb,  
Nor in his childhood, nor in youth's fair prime,  
Nor when his chin thick hair o'erspread, with him  
Hath Justice converse held, or claimed him hers;  
Nor in this outrage on his Fatherland  
Deem I she now beside him deigns to stand.  
For Justice would, in sooth, belie her name  
Did she with this all-daring man consort.  
In these regards confiding will I go,  
Myself will meet him. Who with better right?  
Brother 'gainst brother, chieftain against chief,  
And foeman against foe, I'll take my stand.  
Quick, bring my greaves, bulwark 'gainst spear  
and stones.

Swanwick.

The *Prometheus Bound* was produced some time between the *Seven against Thebes* and the *Agamemnon*. It is unique among the extant Greek tragedies in that

all the characters of the drama are gods or demigods. It appeals to our sympathies in some ways even more than the *Agamemnon*, the grandest and most majestic of Æschylus' creations, for its subject is the suffering of a god for man's sake. In the struggle between Zeus and the Titans, Prometheus, one of the Titans, had taken the part of Zeus. But when Zeus, established upon the throne, proposed to destroy mankind and to create a new race, Prometheus opposed his plan, and gave to mortals fire, the seed of civilization. Zeus condemned Prometheus to be nailed to a rock. At this point the *Prometheus Bound* begins. Hephæstus and two attendants, Force and Strength, bring in Prometheus and nail him to a rock in Scythia. The Titan deigns no answer to their taunts, but when they depart he appeals to nature to witness his unjust punishment. The chorus of sea-nymphs now enter upon a winged car and extend their sympathies to the sufferer. Prometheus tells them of a great danger which threatens Zeus, known only to himself.<sup>1</sup> The god Oceanus enters upon a flying steed and remonstrates with Prometheus for his stubborn resistance to Zeus, but in vain. Then Io, a victim of Zeus' love, another example of his ingratitude, visits the scene in her frenzied wanderings and learns her future from Prometheus. Zeus sends Hermes to wring the secret from the Titan. When Prometheus refuses the thunderbolt of Zeus crashes down upon him, burying him in Tartarus. So ends the tragedy. The play which followed it in the trilogy told how Prometheus was at length delivered from his torture and reconciled to Zeus.

<sup>1</sup>That, if he marry Thetis, she shall bear a son mightier than his father. See p. 23.



I quote a part of the soliloquy of Prometheus after he has been chained to the rock, and from the choral ode which follows:

PROM. O holy Æther, and swift-wingèd Winds,  
 And River-wells, and laughter innumeros  
 Of yon Sea-waves! Earth, mother of us all,  
 And all-viewing cyclic Sun, I cry on you!—  
 Behold me, a god, what I endure from gods!  
     Behold with throe on throe,  
     How, wasted by this woe,  
 wrestle down the myriad years of time!  
     Behold, how fast around me,  
 The new King of the happy ones sublime  
 Has flung the chain he forged, has shamed and bound  
     me!  
 Woe, woe, to-day's woe and the coming morrow's,  
 I cover with one groan! And where is found me  
     A limit to these sorrows?  
 And yet what word do I say? I have foreknown  
 Clearly all things that should be—nothing done  
 Comes sudden to my soul—and I must bear  
 What is ordained with patience, being aware  
 Necessity doth front the universe  
 With an invincible gesture. Yet this curse,  
 Which strikes me now, I find it hard to brave  
 In silence or in speech. Because I gave  
 Honour to mortals, I have yoked my soul  
 To this compelling fate! Because I stole  
 The secret fount of fire, whose bubbles went  
 Over the ferrule's brim, and manward sent  
 Art's mighty means and perfect rudiment,  
 That sin I expiate in this agony;  
 Hung here in fetters, 'neath the blanching sky!

[*The sea-nymphs draw near.*

Ah, ah me! what a sound!  
 What a fragrance sweeps up from a pinion unseen,  
 Of a god or a mortal, or a nature between,

Sweeping up to this rock where the earth has her  
 bound,  
 To have sight of my pangs, or some guerdon obtain.  
 Lo! a god in the anguish, a god in the chain!  
 The god Zeus hateth sore,  
 And his gods hate again,  
 As many as tread on his glorified floor,  
 Because I loved mortals, too much evermore!  
 Alas me! what a murmur and motion I hear,  
 As of birds flying near!  
 And the air undersings  
 The light stroke of their wings—  
 And all life that approaches I wait for in fear.

CHOR. Fear nothing! our troop  
 Floats lovingly up  
 With a quick-oaring stroke  
 Of wings steered to the rock;  
 Having softened the soul of our father below!  
 For the gales of swift-bearing have sent me a sound,  
 And the clank of the iron, the malleted blow,  
 Smote down the profound  
 Of my caverns of old,  
 And struck the red light in a blush from my brow,  
 Till I sprang up unsandaled, in haste to behold,  
 And rushed forth on my chariot of wings manifold.  
 Mrs. Browning.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SOPHOCLES

Sophocles—His Position in Attic Tragedy—The *Ajax*—The *Electra*—The *Philoctetès*—The *Women of Trachis*—The *Ædipus the King*—The *Ædipus at Colonus*—The *Antigone*.

Sophocles, the second great tragic poet of Athens, was born about 495 B. C. in the village of Colonus, near Athens. The wealth of his father secured him an excellent education and a position in the best Athenian society. As a lad he was remarkable for his beauty, and was chosen to lead the chorus of boys which sang a hymn of praise for the victory at Salamis in 480 B. C. His first victory at the City Dionysia, in 468 B. C., is said to have been won at his first competition. He defeated Æshcylus on this occasion. Early in his career he won applause both as a poet and as an actor in a play entitled the *Washerwomen*, in which he played the part of the maiden Nausicaä playing at ball. His weak voice, however, compelled him to give up acting, which was gradually becoming an independent profession. He made two important innovations in the dramatic art, the introduction of the third actor and the use of painted scenery. Both as a poet and as a man he was a favorite of the Athenians throughout his career, winning no less than eighteen victories at the City Dionysia alone and never falling below second place. Of the upward

of one hundred plays which he wrote in the course of his long dramatic career of over sixty years only seven survive.

Sophocles is a true representative of the age of Pericles, of the fine aristocracy of culture which makes the period lying between 460 and 430 B. C. the greatest and most splendid of antiquity. His relation to letters is comparable to that of Pheidias to art. Euripides, on the other hand, was the poet of the extreme democracy, and stood for entirely different ideals; while Æschylus, whose early manhood fell in the stirring times in which Athens wrestled first with the tyranny for political freedom and then with the Persian Empire for her very existence, was of the more rugged type, sturdily striving to maintain the older ideals both in politics and in religion. Sophocles stands nearer to Æschylus than to Euripides, though only ten years older than the latter. Of Euripides as a poet we shall speak later; as between Æschylus and Sophocles one or two characteristics may be pointed out.

✓ The actions of the characters in Æschylus are governed largely by destiny. The characters are heroic, in the first place, and their fate was already fixed in the legends of which the poet made use. Æschylus endeavors to show how their fate was worked out under the universal laws established by the gods. In this sort of fatalism less stress could be laid upon the operation of human motives in the individual. ✓ Sophocles, on the other hand, laid greater stress upon the individual and his motives and less upon the irresistible law. His characters are accordingly more human, though still heroic. In some of his plays we note the development of character during the progress

of the action — a thing unknown in Æschylus. The details of his plays are more carefully studied, both as regards the plot and the language. Under an apparent simplicity lies a subtlety of thought and a carefully studied adjustment of parts that only profound study and sympathy will reveal. The best of his tragedies are unsurpassed as works of art in the history of literature—embodiments of beauty and truth, harmony and grace.

The earliest extant play is the *Ajax*, produced before 440 B. C. Ajax, son of Telamon, one of the noblest of the heroes before Troy, contended with Odysseus for the prize of Achilles' armor, which was to be awarded to the bravest after Achilles. The prize was given to Odysseus. Smarting under the injustice of this decision, Ajax resolves to slay the leaders, Agamemnon and Menelaus. Athene thwarts his design and turns him, blinded by madness, against the flocks, upon which he exhausts his rage, thinking them his foes. At the opening of the play Athene shows to Odysseus the still demented hero sitting in his tent. Soon, however, Ajax returns to his senses, and is overwhelmed by the knowledge of the disgrace and ridicule which his act will bring upon him. He resolves to die, refusing to listen to the prayers of the chorus of sailors from his own home, Salamis, or of his faithful wife, the captive Tecmessa. At length, however, he pretends to yield to them, and goes down to the sea as if to cleanse himself. Meanwhile his brother Teucer arrives, and is anxious because of the absence of Ajax. The chorus and Tecmessa hasten away to search for him. The scene changes. Ajax is seen in the background, half hidden from view.

After an appeal to the gods he hurls himself upon his sword. Soon his body is found by Tecmessa and the chorus. An altercation ensues between Teucer and Menelaus on the question of his burial. At the request of Odysseus Agamemnon decides to award Ajax an honorable burial. The funeral procession closes the play. This last portion, like the close of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, serves as an epilogue to the real plot, which, to the modern mind, is concluded with the death of Ajax. I quote first the beautiful choral ode to Salamis:

O glorious Salamis!  
 Thou dwellest, blest within thy sea-girt shores,  
 Admired of all men still;  
 While I, poor fool, long since abiding here  
 In Ida's grassy mead,  
 Winter and summer too,  
 Dwell, worn with woe, through months innumerable,  
 Still brooding o'er the fear of evil things,  
 That I ere long shall pass  
 To shades of Hades terrible and dread.

And now our Aias comes,  
 Fresh troubler, hard to heal (ah me! ah me!)  
 And dwells with madness sore,  
 Which God inflicts; him thou of old didst send  
 Mighty in battle fierce;  
 But now in lonely woe  
 Wandering, great sorrow he to friends is found,  
 And the high deeds of worthiest praise of old,  
 Loveless to loveless souls,  
 Are with the Atreidæ fallen, fallen low.

And lo! his mother, worn with length of days,  
 And white with hoary age,  
 When she shall hear his frenzied soul's disease,  
 With wailing, wailing loud,

Will she, ill-starred one, cry, nor pour the strain  
 Of nightingale's sad song,  
 But shriller notes will utter in lament,  
 And on her breast will fall  
 The smiting of her hands,  
 And fearful tearing of her hoary hair.

For better would he fare in Hades dread,  
 Who liveth sick in soul,  
 Who, springing from the noblest hero-stock  
 Of all the Achæans strong,  
 Abides no longer in his native mood,  
 But wanders far astray.  
 O wretched father, what a weight of woe,  
 Thy son's, hast thou to learn,  
 Which none else yet has borne,  
 Of all the high Zeus-sprung Æacidæ.

Plumptre.

The monologue of Ajax just before his death is famous. I quote the last part of it:

Thou Sun, whose chariot in the heavens' high path  
 Rides on in glory, when thou see'st the land  
 Owned by my fathers, draw thy golden reins,  
 And tell all these my sorrows, and my doom,  
 To mine old father, and my mother lorn;  
 Ah! when she hears, poor wretch, the evil news  
 Through all the city, great and bitter cries  
 Will issue from her lips. But not for me  
 Is time for vain lament. The work must now  
 Begin more swiftly. Come and look on me,  
 O Death, O Death!— and yet in yonder world  
 I shall dwell with thee, speak enough with thee;  
 And Thee I call, thou light of golden day,  
 Thou Sun, who drivest on thy glorious car,  
 Thee, for this last time, never more again.  
 O Light, O sacred land that was my home;  
 O Salamis, where stands my father's hearth,  
 Thou glorious Athens, with thy kindred race;

Ye streams and rivers here and Troïa's plains,  
 To you that fed my life I bid farewell;  
 This last, last word does Aias speak to to you;  
 All else I speak in Hades to the dead.

Plumptre.

The *Electra*, of uncertain date, is on the same theme as the *Libation Bearers* of Æschylus—the vengeance of Orestes upon Clytemnestra and Ægisthus. But our interest is now centered upon Electra, who remained at home a witness to her mother's shame and the object of humiliating indignities. She bears her afflictions with fortitude, confident of the return of her brother. The character of her sister, Chrysothemis—of good intentions but weak and timorous—is an admirable foil to that of Electra. The plot is enhanced by the fact that the recognition of Orestes by Electra is postponed until just before the death of Clytemnestra. Electra, as well as her mother, is deceived by the report of his death brought by Orestes himself and Pylades, disguised as strangers. Electra's confidence is turned for a while to the deepest despair. Ægisthus is not slain until he has uncovered the face of the dead Clytemnestra, thinking to see the features of Orestes, whose death would mean security to him—a most effective situation, full of the tragic irony<sup>1</sup> for which Sophocles is famous. I quote a portion of the lyrical dialogue which takes place between Electra and the chorus of Argive maidens, soon after the entrance of the latter.

<sup>1</sup>By "tragic irony" we mean that contrast between the true state of things, known to the spectators, and the fancied state in which a character finds himself, so that his words, which to him are capable of only one construction, suggest to the spectators something altogether different. When the truth is revealed the character learns that his own words have mocked him. The mockery in the *Electra* is mostly in the situation itself. The *Edipus* is full of the more subtle irony of language applied to the situation.



- CHOR. Not unto thee alone,  
 My child, of those that live  
 Have grief and sorrow come;  
 Nor sufferest thou aught more than those within  
 With whom thou sharest home and kith and kin,  
 Iphianassa and Chrysothemis;  
 And one is mourning in a youth obscure;  
 Yet happy, too, in part,  
 Whom one day the Mykenians' glorious land  
 Shall welcome as the heir of noble race,  
 Coming to this our soil,  
 As sent by grace of Zeus,—  
 Orestes, come at last.
- ELEC. Ah! him I wait for with unwearied hope,  
 And go, ah! piteous fate!  
 Childless, unwedded still;  
 My cheeks are wet with tears,  
 And still I bear an endless doom of woe.  
 And he, alas! forgets  
 All he has met with, all that I had taught.  
 What message goes from me  
 That is not mocked? For still he yearns to come,  
 And yet he deigneth not,  
 Yearn though he may, to show himself to us.
- CHOR. Take heart, my child, take heart;  
 Mighty in heaven He dwells,  
 Zeus, seeing, guiding all:  
 Resign to him the wrath that vexes sore.  
 And as for them, the foes whom thou dost hate,  
 Nor grieve too much, nor yet forget them quite;  
 Time is a calm and patient deity:  
 For neither he who dwells  
 Where oxen graze on far Krisæan shore,  
 The boy who sprang from Agamemnon's loins,  
 Lives heedless of thy woe;  
 Nor yet the god who reigns  
 By Acheron's dark shore.
- ELEC. And yet the larger portion of my life  
 Is gone without a hope,  
 And I am all too weak,

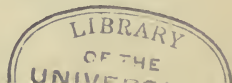
Who waste away in orphaned loneliness,  
 Whom no dear husband loves,  
 But, like an alien stranger in the house,  
 I do my task unmeet,  
 And tend the chambers where my father dwelt,  
 In this unseemly guise,  
 And stand at tables all too poorly filled.

Plumptre.

Still a third tragedy takes its subject from the legends of the Trojan cycle—the *Philoctetes*, which won the first prize in 409 B. C. This hero was bitten in the foot by a snake on the way to Troy. The wound became so noisome and the cries of the sufferer so annoying that, at the instance of Odysseus, Philoctetes was abandoned while asleep on the island of Lemnos. Nine years passed and Troy had not fallen. A prophecy was given to the Greeks that Troy would never be taken except by the son of Achilles, and with the bow of Heracles. Now this bow had been bequeathed by Heracles to Philoctetes. So the Greeks sent Neoptolemus, Achilles' son, with Odysseus to fetch Philoctetes and the bow. When the play opens they have just landed on the desolate island. Odysseus instructs Neoptolemus how to entrap Philoctetes and get possession of the bow by deceit. The noble nature of the lad revolts against such tricks, but at last he yields. Neoptolemus and Philoctetes meet. The hero implicitly trusts the son of his old friend Achilles, and after the latter has promised to take him to his home, puts the bow into his hands during a paroxysm of pain. Touched by his sufferings Neoptolemus tells him the truth, and is on the point of giving back the bow when Odysseus arrives and leads him away, since Philoctetes stoutly refuses to go to Troy with his betrayers.

Again the noble nature of Neoptolemus asserts itself. He returns in spite of Odysseus' threats and restores the bow. Heracles appears in the air and promises that his wound will be healed. The sufferings of Philoctetes and his despair at the loss of the bow, his only means of obtaining food as well as the precious relic of Heracles, lend pathos to the subject, which, however, is attractive mainly on account of the noble and generous character of Neoptolemus.

The *Women of Trachis* (about 420 B. C.), so named from its chorus of maidens from the village of Trachis, near Thermopylæ, is unlike any other play of Sophocles in that the passion of love is the ruling motive. The character of the heroine is exquisitely drawn—Deïaneira, wife of Heracles, daughter of Ceneus, king of Ætolia. She had been sought in marriage by the river-god Achelouïs, whom Heracles had conquered, taking Deïaneira as his bride. The centaur Nessus, whom Heracles slew on their journey home, had given Deïaneira a love-charm wherewith to win back her husband's love should he prove unfaithful. During the long years in which Heracles was performing the twelve labors she had not used it, though in his protracted absences from home he had not always remained true to her. When the play opens we find Deïaneira and her children at Trachis, driven from Argos by fear of Eurystheus. Heracles had been absent for fifteen months, nor knew she where he was. But he had told her before leaving of an oracle which said that when this period should expire he should have rest from troubles. So she awaits news of him with increasing anxiety. Soon a train of captive women appears, at their head Lichas, a trusted serv-



ant of Heracles, who announces the hero's speedy arrival. Deïaneira is filled with joy until she learns that the most beautiful of the maidens is loved by Heracles. She recalls the love-charm, and anointing a rich robe with it, sends it to her husband as a gift. When he put it on it burned into his flesh—no love-charm, but a poison designed by Nessus. Deïaneira, learning the result of her act, takes her own life. Heracles is borne in on a litter, wracked with torture, and learning how his suffering was caused, recognizes the fact that the "rest from trouble" promised by the oracle meant his death. The first choral ode is of unusual beauty:

Thee whom the starry night,  
 Beneath the spoiling hand  
 Breathing her last, brings forth,  
 Whom then she lays to sleep,—  
 Thee, Sun-god, the bright-burning, I implore—  
 O tell me of Alcmena's son,  
 O thou, whose rays are as the lightning bright:  
 Where, where he dwelleth—  
 Depths of the Ægean threading,  
 Or from mid-straight beholding either continent—  
 O tell me, god of keenest light!

For with an ever hungry heart, they say,  
 Fair Deïaneira, she for whom the suitors strove,  
 Like some unhappy bird  
 Lulls never into tearless sleep  
     That hunger of her eyes;  
     But unforgetful fear  
     For him, her absent lord,  
     She entertaining, pours  
 Upon her widowed couch of care—  
 Ill-starred, forboding all distressful chance.

For, as before the untiring blast of south or north,  
 Across the boundless sea  
 We watch the march of waves  
 That come, and ever come—

Even so upon this son of Cadmus's fate attends  
 His hard life's toilsomeness,  
 Increasing more and more,—  
 Of troubles a Cretan sea.  
 But from the halls of death  
 Some god restrains his feet,  
 Suffering them not to stray.

Therefore I chide thee, and this word  
 Of contradiction, not ungrateful, I will speak:

I say thou dost not well  
 To kill the better hope,

For think, a lot exempt from pain  
 The son of Cronos, king who governs all,  
 Ordained not for men.

To all men sorrow and joy alternate come,  
 Revolving, as in heaven

The twisting courses of the Bear.

For neither starry night

Abides with men, nor death, nor wealth—

But quickly is it gone:

And now another learns

The changeful tale of joy and loss.

Therefore I counsel thee, the queen,

To keep this ever in thy hopes:

For when was Zeus so careless for his sons?

Whitelaw.

We come now to the three dramas on the fate of the house of Labdacus, conceded to be the masterpieces of Sophocles—*Œdipus the King* (about 430 B. C.), *Œdipus at Colonus* (406 B. C.), and *Antigone* (441 B. C.). These three plays were not written to form a sequence, as the dates will show, but they are best considered in the order of the story which they tell. The *Œdipus*

*the King*, the greatest work of our poet and the most perfect tragedy of antiquity, received only the second prize at its production. The scene is laid at Thebes, and the chorus is formed of Theban elders. Œdipus, after delivering Thebes from the Sphinx by guessing her riddle, became king in the stead of Laius, and married his wife, Jocasta (see page 173). Twenty years have passed since then. A pestilence falls upon the city. Œdipus has sent to Delphi his brother-in-law, Creon, to inquire of the oracle of Apollo how the pest is to be stayed. Creon reports that the slayer of Laius must be found and punished. Œdipus zealously takes this duty upon himself. He makes proclamation that whoever has knowledge of the deed shall declare it, and that the murderer, whoever he is, shall be treated as one accursed, barred out from intercourse with men and the worship of the gods. He bids the prophet Teiresias reveal the guilty one. When he refuses, Œdipus insults and threatens him, until the prophet in anger says: "*Thou art the accursed defiler of the land.*" Œdipus indignantly drives Teiresias from his presence for forging prophecies in the interest of Creon. He also openly accuses Creon of conspiring for the throne. Jocasta strives to calm her husband by illustrating the futility of prophecies; it was predicted that Laius should be slain by his son, but a robber killed him where three roads meet, and the son was exposed upon a mountain. This revelation leads to anxious inquiries on the part of Œdipus. The circumstances of Laius' death remind him of a similar encounter in which he had slain a man; but it was a robber band that slew Laius. A messenger from Corinth enters announcing the death of the king,

Polybus, whom Œdipus believes to be his father. The oracle that Œdipus shall slay his father is false, but he will not return to claim the throne of Corinth lest the other part of the oracle, that he should wed his own mother, should yet be fulfilled. The messenger reassures him by telling him that he is not the son of Polybus, but was found upon a mountain when a babe, his feet pierced with thongs. Jocasta sees the horrible truth and begs her husband to question no further. She enters the palace and takes her own life. Meanwhile Œdipus pushes his inquiries. From a herdsman who is brought in the confession is wrung that the babe found on the mountain and taken to Corinth was the son of Laius. Œdipus rushes in despair into the palace, and seeing the dead body of his mother and wife, Jocasta, tears out his eyes. The tragedy closes with the pathetic farewell of Œdipus and his daughters.

It is difficult to quote from a drama like this, so closely knit together that every portion is essential to the whole. Step by step the proud king, conscious of his own innocence, yet arrogant and guilty of having tried to evade Apollo's oracle, probes into the secret of his own horrible crimes. The gradual unraveling of the terrible secret keeps the mind of the spectators constantly on the rack with conflicting emotions. Our sympathy with the unhappy prince, so eager to accomplish the work of justice at whatever cost, rises to admiration when, his spirit broken and his life ruined, he nobly resolves to live and does not forget his country and his children. The following ode illustrates Sophocles' treatment of the chorus. A suspicion has arisen of the guilt of Œdipus, and he has treated Creon with inexcusable arrogance. The chorus

breathes a prayer for purity in word and deed, and deprecates the pride and insolence of kings.

Mine be it, mine to hold,  
 With destiny to aid, the deathless sanctity  
 In words and actions manifold,  
 Whereof the laws do live and move on high,  
 Set in eternal spheres,  
 Born in the bright expanse of upper sky;  
 Birth of the high God, not of mortal years,  
 Nor unto dull oblivion a prey:  
 Strong, ageless deity is theirs, and waneth not away.

The child of earthly pride  
 Is tyranny, when once man's life doth teem  
 With wealth too great to profit or beseem.  
 Up, by a path untried,  
 Up to the crowning peak of bliss  
 She climbs, then headlong down the sheer abyss  
 Helpless she sinks to the unfooted void!  
 Yet unto God I pray that he may ne'er annul  
 Man's strife that man's estate be honoured to the full.  
 God is my help; to him my faith clings undestroyed.

But if a man, in deed or word,  
 Walks o'er-informed with pride and might,  
 By fear of justice undeterred,  
 Scorning the seats of deity,  
 Ill doom, to that man drawing nigh,  
 His ill-starred arrogance requite!  
 Unless toward his proper gain  
 With uncorrupted hand he strain,  
 Unless he loathe all filthiness,  
 If with lewd hands he touch the grace of holiness!  
 Henceforth, if such things be, no mortal evermore  
 Can from his life repel  
 The darts of heaven and boast that foiled they fell:  
 If he who walks such ways  
 Deserve man's honour and his praise,  
 Wherefore with holy dance should I the Gods adore?  
 Morshead.



The truth as regards the parentage of Œdipus is revealed in this conversation between the King, the Corinthian Messenger, and the Herdsman. This passage is a good example of the line-for-line dialogue with which Greek tragedy abounds:

- ME. Say then, dost thou recall that unto me  
A child thou gavest for my fosterling?
- HE. What say'st thou? wherefore askest thou of this?
- ME. (*Pointing to Œdipus.*) Good sir, there standeth he that  
was that child.
- HE. Hell silence thee! wilt thou not hold thy peace?
- ŒD. Peace, old man, chide him not—these words of thine,  
More than his tale, deserve a chastener.
- HE. Wherein, most goodly lord, do I offend?
- ŒD. Avowing not the child of whom he asks.
- HE. He speaks sans knowledge, frets himself in vain.
- ŒD. Thou wilt not speak with grace, thou shalt with tears
- HE. For God's sake, wrong me not, for I am old.
- ŒD. Ho, bind him, bind his arms behind his back.
- HE. Wherefore, O hapless man? what more wouldst learn?
- ŒD. Didst give to him the child of whom he asks?
- HE. I gave it—would that I had died that day!
- ŒD. This day thou diest, if thou hide the truth.
- HE. Yet I die doubly, if I hide it not.
- ŒD. Methinks he driveth yet at more delay.
- HE. Nay, nay—I have owned that I gave the child.
- ŒD. Whence having it? another's or thine own?
- HE. Mine it was not; but by another given.
- ŒD. By whom in Thebes, from what home, high or low?
- HE. For heaven's sake, O my master, ask no more.
- ŒD. Thou art but dead, if I shall ask again.
- HE. God help—it was a child of Laius' house.
- ŒD. A slave-child, or in his own lineage born?
- HE. Woe's me—in speech I stand on horror's verge.
- ŒD. And I in hearing: nathless I must hear.
- HE. Know then, his own child it was said to be,  
Go, ask thy queen within; she best can say.
- ŒD. Was it she gave it thee? HE. It was, O king.

ŒD. And for what end? HE. That I should quench its life.

ŒD. So hard a mother? HE. By ill presage scared.

ŒD. What presage? HE. That the child should slay his sire.

ŒD. Then why unto this graybeard didst thou give it?

HE. My lord, I pitied it, and deemed that he  
Would bear it hence away to his own land.

He saved it, well-a-day, for sorrow's crown.

For if thou art the child of whom he tells,

Be well assured thou wert to ill fate born.

ŒD. Woe, woe upon me! all the issue clear—

Light, be thou dark to me for evermore!

Cursed in my birth, and in my marriage cursed,

And cursed in blood-shedding I stand revealed!

*[He rushes into the palace.*

Morshead.

Œdipus resigned the throne to Creon after his unwitting crimes had been found out, and desired to leave Thebes forever, but the oracle forbade. But when his sons had grown to manhood, they and Creon cruelly thrust him forth, an outcast. Antigone attended him in his long wanderings as a beggar, but Ismene stayed at home. When the *Œdipus at Colonus* opens they have reached a grove at Colonus, near Athens, where they stop to rest. Warned by the citizens of the village, who form the chorus, that they stand upon holy ground sacred to the Furies, Œdipus recalls that the oracle had predicted that he should end his life here. Theseus, king of Athens, summoned by Œdipus, extends the protection of the city to the wanderers. Ismene arrives from Thebes with news of the quarrel of Eteocles and Polyneices. Soon Creon comes to take Œdipus back to Thebes, since his presence is necessary to the safety of the city. In the struggle that follows Antigone and Ismene are carried off, but Theseus rescues them and drives Cleon

back. Polyneices comes to supplicate his father for aid, but is sternly dismissed. Then, in an impressive scene, Œdipus enters the sacred grove and is miraculously translated amid thunder and lightning. The play is unsurpassed in beauty and in tenderness of feeling. The peaceful and glorious death of the unhappy Œdipus seems but a fitting close to a life so noble and yet so full of sorrows. The most beautiful choral passage is the famous ode to Colonus, the village birth-place of the poet:

Of all the land far-famed for goodly steeds,  
Thou com'st, O stranger, to the noblest spot,  
Colonus, glistening bright,  
Where evermore, in thickets freshly green,  
The clear-voiced nightingale  
Still haunts, and pours her song,  
By purpling ivy hid,  
And the thick leafage sacred to the god,  
With all its myriad fruits,  
By mortal's foot untouched,  
By sun's hot ray unscathed,  
Sheltered from every blast;  
There wanders Dionysos evermore,  
In full, wild revelry,  
And waits upon the Nymphs who nursed his youth.  
And there, beneath the gentle dews of heaven,  
The fair narcissus, with its clustered bells,  
Blooms ever, day by day,  
Of old the wreaths of mightiest goddesses;  
And crocus golden-eyed;  
And still unslumbering flow  
Kephisos' wandering streams;  
They fail not from their spring, but evermore,  
Swift-rushing into birth,  
Over the plain they sweep,  
The land of broad, full breast,  
With clear and stainless wave;

Nor do the Muses in their minstrel choirs  
 Hold it in slight esteem,  
 Nor Aphrodite with her golden reins.

And in it grows a marvel such as ne'er  
 On Asia's soil I heard,  
 Nor the great Dorian isle from Pelops named,  
 A plant self-sown, that knows  
 No touch of withering age,  
 Terror of hostile swords,  
 Which here on this our ground  
 Its high perfection gains,  
 The grey-green foliage of the olive-tree,  
 Rearing a goodly race:  
 And never more shall man,  
 Or young or bowed with years,  
 Give forth the fierce command  
 And lay it low in dust.  
 For lo! the eye of Zeus,  
 Zeus of our olive groves,  
 That sees eternally,  
 Casteth its glance thereon,  
 And she, Athena, with the clear, grey eyes.

And yet another praise is mine to sing,  
 Gift of the mighty God,  
 To this our city, mother of us all,  
 Her greatest, noblest boast,  
 Famed for her goodly steeds,  
 Famed for her bounding colts,  
 Famed for her sparkling sea.  
 Poseidon, son of Kron s, Lord and King,  
 To Thee this boas' we owe,  
 For first in these our streets  
 Thou to the untamed horse  
 Didst use the conquering bit:  
 And here the well-shaped oar,  
 By skilled hands deftly plied,

Still leapeth through the sea,  
Following in wondrous guise  
The fair Nereids with their hundred feet.

Plumptre.

After the death of Œdipus, Antigone and Ismene returned to Thebes. The seven chieftains of Argos, Polyneices at their head, came against the city, and the two brothers perished by each other's hands. Creon was made king. He decreed that Eteocles should be buried with due honor, but that the body of Polyneices should lie unburied, the offender against this decree to be stoned to death. At this point the action of the *Antigone* begins. Antigone, setting the divine law above the edict of man, resolves to bury her brother. Ismene in vain tries to dissuade her. Creon has no sooner made his solemn proclamation than a messenger reports that the decree has been violated. Soon Antigone is led in by the guard, and boldly defends her course to Cleon. Ismene would share her sister's fate, but Antigone refuses. The king's son, Hæmon, to whom Antigone is betrothed, pleads for her life in vain. Antigone is led away to be immured alive. The prophet Teiresias warns Cleon that he and the city shall suffer, but Cleon cannot be moved from what he arrogantly assumes to be the course of justice. Hæmon, cursing his father to his face, slays himself over the body of Antigone, who has taken her own life. At the news of her son's death the queen also takes her own life, cursing her husband. Creon, plunged into desperate grief and admitting his fault, is led away, praying for death. In this noble tragedy, for the understanding of which a mere outline is quite inadequate, the character of Antigone

is made to stand out in bold relief above the others. Symonds calls her "the most perfect female character in Greek poetry." It is notable that Sophocles does not accept the opportunity which his plot offered to temper her hard and resolute character by emphasizing her love for Hæmon. Loyalty to duty overrules all sentiment.

## CHAPTER IX

### EURIPIDES

Euripides — His Position in Attic Tragedy — His Popularity and Influence — The *Alcestis* — The *Medea* — The *Hippolytus* — The Trojan Plays: *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, *Iphigeneia among the Taurians*, *Orestes*, *Electra*, *Trojan Women*, *Hecabe*, *Andromache*, *Helen* — The Theban Plays: *Phœnician Women*, *Suppliants* — The *Children of Heracles* — The *Heracles* — The *Ion* — The *Bacchanals*.

Euripides was born in 485 B. C. on the island of Salamis. He received a liberal education under expensive teachers. It is said that he was first a professional athlete and subsequently a painter. We are told also that he was unhappily married, and his domestic relations are a topic for scandalous gossip in the comic poets. The ancients attributed to this fact in his life the many bitter sayings about women that are found in his tragedies. They called him a woman-hater; and yet he portrays with exquisite tenderness and grace the affectionate, self-sacrificing wife, the devoted mother, and noble, pure, high-minded maidenhood. His first play was brought out in 455 B. C., at the age of thirty. Of the ninety odd plays which he wrote eighteen survive, one of which, the *Cyclops*, is the only extant specimen of the satyr-drama. Another tragedy, the *Rhesus*, which is contained in the manuscripts of Euripides, is believed to be a work of the fourth century. Euripides was only moderately successful in the competitions, his victories

at both festivals amounting to fifteen, as against the twenty-eight of Æschylus and the twenty-four of Sophocles. He died in 406 B. C. in Macedonia, where the last years of his life had been spent at the court of the king Archelaus.

Euripides was distinctly the representative poet of the last part of the fifth century. Since the establishment of the Athenian Empire great changes had come over the spirit of the Athenian people. Imperialism had brought in its train a revolution in social life, a higher plane of living, an eagerness for advanced or novel views on ethics and religion, a larger interest in political affairs. After the death of Pericles the populace was all-powerful, and the success of the demagogue quickened the desire of the people for the new education, which was eminently "practical," great stress being laid upon the specious rhetoric by which the worse cause was made to seem the better. The audience in the theatre now took less delight than formerly in the old-fashioned presentation of the old doctrines of religion as exemplified in the figures of mythology. They demanded striking scenes, clever reasoning, splendid oratory, harrowing situations, brilliant musical effects. If a poet could present a well-worn subject in a novel way, either by introducing subtle dramatic devices or by reshaping the myth, so much the better. Sophocles conceded not a little to this tendency of the times, but always maintained the lofty ideal of the tragic art which Æschylus had bequeathed. But Euripides was the very embodiment of the spirit of his age. A consummate playwright, he employed every dramatic and theatrical means to gain the desired effects, even sacrificing the harmony



of the whole to the beauty and effectiveness of the parts. Though he rarely rises to the sublime heights of Æschylus, and though his tragedies are not always perfect works of art, like those of Sophocles, there is no doubt that they "staged" well.

A keen observer of the men and women about him, Euripides paints men as they are, while Sophocles paints them as they should be.<sup>1</sup> Indeed he seems to have been too bold an innovator even for his own time, if we may judge by the criticisms of Aristophanes. His popularity with the masses, however, is conceded by the comic poet, and is attested by the interesting fact that many of the Athenian prisoners taken by the Syracusans in 411 B. C. were given their liberty because they were able to recite from his plays.<sup>2</sup> In the fourth century he was easily the most popular of the three master poets, and his tragedies maintained themselves upon the stage well into the Christian era. His influence upon the later comedy was marked. The comic poet Philemon said: "If the dead, as some assert, have really consciousness, then would I hang myself to see Euripides." Euripides served the Roman poets as a model far more than either Æschylus or Sophocles, and through this medium he became the father of the classical tragedy in France. He appeals strongly to the average reader of to-day because he seems, relatively, so modern. His characters are generally less heroic than those of his predecessors, and therefore less remote. They exhibit the passions and weaknesses of ordinary mortals, and

<sup>1</sup>A criticism attributed to Sophocles himself, contrasting his own "idealism" with the "realism" of his rival.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Browning makes use of this story in the framework of his transcription of the *Alcestis* in *Balaustion's Adventure*.

are not merely instruments for revealing the workings of divine law. His qualities as a poet are summed up in the language of an enthusiastic admirer, Mrs. Browning:

Our Euripides the Human  
 With his droppings of warm tears,  
 And his touches of things common  
 Till they rose to touch the spheres.

The earliest extant play is the *Alcestis*, produced in 438 B. C. The victory was won by Sophocles, Euripides gaining second place. The *Alcestis* was the fourth drama in the tetralogy, taking the place of the usual satyr-drama. The subject is the voluntary death of Alcestis in place of her husband, Admetus, king of Pheræ, in Thessaly. Apollo, who had kept Admetus' flocks, condemned for a fault to serve a mortal for a time, loved his former master, and promised to persuade the Fates to accept a substitute when the hour of death should come. The fated day arrives. None but Alcestis will consent to die that Admetus may live. She bids farewell to her home and children, dies, and is borne forth to burial. But Heracles, who has come as a guest to the house of Admetus, learns the misfortune that has befallen his host, and goes forth to rescue Alcestis from Death. After a struggle Alcestis is delivered and restored to her home. I quote the farewell of Alcestis as reported by her maid:<sup>1</sup>

For when she knew the fatal day was come,  
 She bathed in river water her white flesh,

<sup>1</sup>This and the two following passages are quoted from *Three Dramas of Euripides* by permission of the author, Mr. William Cranston Lawton, and his publishers, Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

And from her chests of cedar choosing forth  
Raiment and ornament she decked her fair,  
And standing prayed before the hearthstone thus:  
"O Goddess,—for I pass beneath the earth,—  
Here at the last, a suppliant, I entreat  
Rear thou my children, and on him bestow  
A loving wife, on her a noble spouse.  
And may they not, as I their mother die,  
Untimely fall, but in their native land,  
And fortunate, fill out a happy life."  
And all the shrines throughout Admetos' halls  
She sought and decked with boughs, and prayed thereto,  
Breaking the foliage of the myrtle twigs.  
Nor wept, nor groaned; the sorrow near at hand  
Changed not the lovely color of her face.  
Then hastened to her marriage-chamber and bed;  
There she indeed shed tears, and thus she spoke:  
"O couch, where I put off my maiden zone  
For this my husband, for whose sake I die,  
Farewell. I hate thee not: thou hast destroyed  
Me only; slow to leave my spouse and thee  
I die. To thee another wife will come,  
Not truer, though perhaps more fortunate."  
And knelt, and kissed, and with the gushing tears  
That from her eyelids fell the bed was moist.

When she was sated with her many tears,  
In headlong haste she hurried from the spot,  
But often turned her as she left the room,  
And darted toward her nuptial couch once more.  
Her children clinging to the mother's robe,  
Were weeping; taking in her arms she kissed  
The two in turn, as though about to die.  
And all the servants wept throughout the halls,  
Pitying their mistress; and she gave her hand  
To every one; not one was there so base  
But she did greet him, and by him was hailed.

In a beautiful ode the chorus celebrates the terrible  
might of Necessity:

High aloft have I been lifted  
 On the poets' wings of song;  
 Many sages' words have studied;  
 Nothing have I known or found  
 Mightier than Necessity.  
 Neither in the Thracian tablets  
 By the Orphic voice recorded,  
 Nor in all the drugs that Phoibos to Asclepios' children gave,  
 Is a cure to break her power for the troubled sons of men.

She alone hath neither altars  
 Nor an image to adore.  
 Offerings she regardeth never.  
 Come not, Goddess, in my life,  
 Sterner than now thou art to me;  
 For whatever Zeus decreeth  
 Is fulfilled with thy assistance;  
 Even the Chalybean iron thou subduest in thy might,  
 And thy unrelenting spirit knoweth not regret or shame.

The *Medea* was brought out in 431 B. C., receiving the last place, although it is recognized as one of the most powerful of the tragedies of Euripides. Medea was the princess of Colchis, who, for love of Jason, helped him by her magic arts to win the golden fleece in quest of which he and the Argonauts had sailed. She fled with him to Greece as his wife. But Jason has abandoned her for the daughter of the king of Corinth. In her jealousy Medea causes the death of her rival, slays the children whom she had borne to Jason, and makes her escape through the air on an enchanted car. The following passage, addressed by Medea to the Corinthian maidens who compose the chorus, reflects, indeed, the position of woman in Athenian society in the fifth century, but might almost have been uttered by a woman of to-day, so well does Euripides understand womankind:

This trouble unforeseen befalling me  
Has crushed my soul; and since the grace of life  
Is wholly lost, I long to perish, friends.  
For he who was my all,— I know it well,—  
My husband, is revealed most base of men.

Of all created things endowed with soul  
And sense, we women are the wretchedest.  
Who, first, with overplus of gold must buy  
Our lord, and take a master to ourselves.  
This is an evil even worse than ill.  
And then the risk is great, if he we take  
Be base or good. No honorable release  
Have women, nor may we disown our lord.  
Entered on novel ways and customs, each  
Must needs divine, if she has never learned,  
How it is best to live with him she weds.

And if, while we are toiling faithfully,  
The husband is not chafing at the yoke,  
Our life is enviable: else, death is best.  
A man, when vexed with those within his home,  
Goes forth, and frees his heart of weariness,  
Betaking him to comrades, or a friend:  
While we may look but to one single soul.

They say we live at home a life secure  
From danger, while they struggle with the spear.  
A foolish thought! I thrice would choose to stand  
Beside my shield, ere once to bear a child.

But the same words suit not myself and thee.  
Thou hast a city and a father's house,  
A happy life and dear companionship.  
I, lonely, homeless, by my husband scorned,  
From a barbarian land as booty led,  
Have not a mother, brother, no, nor kin,  
With whom to seek a haven from these ills.

This much I wish I may obtain from thee.  
If any means or plan by me be found  
To avenge these wrongs on Jason, on the girl  
He has wedded, and the sire who gave him her,  
Speak not! A woman else is full of fear,

Nor dares to look on violence and arms:  
 But if it chance her marriage-bed is wronged,  
 There is no soul more murderous than hers.

The conflicting passions of love and jealousy are wonderfully depicted in this passage—the monologue of Medea just before she slays her children:

O sons, my sons, for you there is a home  
 And city where, forsaking wretched me,  
 Ye shall still dwell and have no mother more;  
 But I, an exile, seek another land,  
 Ere I have joyed in you and seen you glad,  
 Ere I have decked for you the nuptial pomp,  
 The bride, the bed, and held the torch aloft.  
 Ah me! forlorn by my untempered moods!  
 In vain then have I nurtured ye, my sons,  
 In vain have toiled and been worn down by cares,  
 And felt the hard child-bearing agonies.  
 There was a time when I, unhappy one,  
 Had many hopes in you, that both of you  
 Would cherish me in age; and that your hands,  
 When I am dead, would fitly lay me out—  
 That wish of all men; but now lost indeed  
 Is that sweet thought, for I must, reft of you,  
 Live on a piteous life and full of pain;  
 And ye, your dear eyes will no more behold  
 Your mother, gone into your new strange life.  
 Alas! why do you fix your eyes on me,  
 My sons? Why smile ye on me that last smile?  
 Alas! what must I do? for my heart faints,  
 Thus looking on my children's happy eyes.  
 Women, I cannot. Farewell my past resolves:  
 My boys go forth with me. What boots it me  
 To wrong their father with their cruel fates,  
 And earn myself a double misery?  
 It shall not be, shall not. Farewell resolves!—  
 And yet what mood is this? Am I content  
 To spare my foes and be a laughing-stock?  
 It must be dared. Why, out upon my weakness,

To let such coward thought steal from my heart!  
 Go, children, to the house: and he who lacks  
 Right now to stand by sacrifice of mine  
 Let him look to it. I'll not stay my hand.

Alas! alas!

No, surely, O my heart, thou canst not do it!  
 Racked heart, let them go safely: spare the boys.  
 Living far hence with me they'll make thee joy.  
 No: by the avenging demon gods in hell,  
 Never shall be that I shall yield my boys  
 To the despittings of mine enemies!  
 For all ways they must die, and since 'tis so,  
 Better I slay them, I who gave them birth.  
 All ways 'tis fated; there is no escape.  
 For now, in the robes, the wealth upon her head,  
 The royal bride is perishing. I know it.  
 But since I go on so forlorn a journey,  
 And them too send on one yet more forlorn,  
 I'd fain speak with my sons. Give me, my children,  
 Give your mother your right hands to clasp to her.  
 O darling hands! O dearest lips to me!  
 O forms and noblest faces of my boys!  
 Be happy: but *there*. For of all part here  
 Your father has bereft you. O sweet kiss!  
 O grateful breath and soft skin of my boys!  
 Go, go; I can no longer look on you,  
 But by my sufferings am overborne.  
 Oh, I do know what sorrows I shall make;  
 But anger keeps the mastery of my thoughts,  
 Which is the chiefest cause of human woes.

Mrs. Webster.

The *Hippolytus*, crowned with the first prize in 428 B. C., is not only one of the best tragedies of Euripides, considered as a work of art, but is of unique interest as the first extant Greek play in which the passion of love is the chief motive. The hero, Hippolytus, was the son of Theseus, the legendary

founder of Athens, by his union with the Amazon queen Hippolyta. He grew up to manhood in purity, paying worship to the chaste goddess Artemis, the huntress, and disdaining Aphrodite. Aphrodite is resolved to punish him. She therefore puts into the heart of Phædra, the wife of Theseus, a love for her step-son. Phædra struggles against the sinful passion until brought to death's door, when it is revealed unto Hippolytus by her nurse. Hippolytus is filled with horror by the disclosure. Phædra hangs herself for shame, accusing Hippolytus in a letter which Theseus finds. The father invokes upon his son a curse, which Poseidon fulfills before the innocence of Hippolytus is established by Artemis. I quote first a choral ode on the power of love, personified as Eros, son of Aphrodite:

O Eros, O Eros! how melts love's yearning  
 From thine eyes, when thy sweet spell witcheth the heart  
     Of them against whom thou hast marched in thy might!  
     Not me, not me for mine hurt do thou smite,  
 My life's heart-music to discord turning.  
 For never so hotly the flame-spears dart,  
     Nor so fleet are the star-shot arrows of light,  
     As the shaft from thy fingers that speedeth its flight,  
 As the flame of the Love-queen's bolts fierce-burning,  
 O Eros, the child of Zeus who art!

O vainly, O vainly by Alpheus's river  
 And in Phœbus's Pythian shrine hath the land  
     Of Hellas the blood of her oxen outpoured.  
     But Eros, but Love, who is all men's lord,  
 Unto whom Aphrodite is wont to deliver  
 Her keys, that the doors be unsealed by his hand  
     Of her holy of holies, we have not adored,  
     Though he marcheth through ruin victory-ward,  
 Though he raineth calamity forth of his quiver  
 On mortals against his on-coming that stand.



In the following passage Hippolytus protests his innocence to his father in language that is at once respectful and forceful:

Father, thy rage and strong-strained fury of soul  
 Are fearful: yet fair-seeming though the charge,  
 If one unfold it, all unfair it is.  
 I have no skill to speak before a throng:  
 My tongue is loosed with equals, and those few.  
 And reason: they that are among the wise  
 Of none account, to mobs are eloquent.  
 Yet needs I must, now this mischance hath lighted,  
 Unrein my tongue. And first will I begin  
 Where thou didst first assail, as thou wouldst crush me,  
 And I find no reply. See'st thou yon sun  
 And earth?—within their compass is no man—  
 Though thou deny it—chaster-souled than I.  
 For I have learned, first, to revere the gods,  
 Then, to have friends which seek to do no wrong,  
 Friends who think shame to proffer aught of base,  
 Yea, or to render others shameful service.  
 No mocker am I, father, at my friends,  
 But to the absent even as to the present:  
 In one thing flawless,—where thou thinkest me trapped,—  
 For to this day my body is clean of lust.

God grant I perish nameless, fameless all,  
 Cityless, homeless, exile, vagabond  
 On earth,—may sea nor land receive my corpse  
 When I am dead, if I be this vile thing!

Way.

Fully one-half of the extant plays of Euripides are based on legends of the Trojan war, and four of these treat of tragic events in the history of Agamemnon's family. The *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, which won the first prize (with the *Bacchanals*) after the poet's death, tells of the sacrifice of Agamemnon's daughter to bring favoring winds for the Greek fleet. Clytemnestra is induced

to bring Iphigeneia to the camp at Aulis on the pretext of her marriage with Achilles. When the true reason is known, Iphigeneia at first pleads piteously with her father to spare her life, but when she knows that her death is required by the army and that her father is helpless to save her, she faces her doom with marvelous heroism. When the fatal blow is given, lo! a hind is found lying slain upon the altar in the place of the maiden. I quote Iphigeneia's entreaty:

Had I the tongue of Orpheus, O my sire,  
 To charm with song the rocks to follow me,  
 And witch with eloquence whomsoe'er I would,  
 I had essayed it. Now — mine only cunning —  
 Tears will I bring, for this is all I can.  
 And suppliant will I twine about thy knees  
 My body, which this mother bare to thee.  
 Ah, slay me not untimely! Sweet is light:  
 Constrain me not to see the nether gloom!  
 'Twas I first called thee father, thou me child.  
 'Twas I first throned my body on thy knees,  
 And gave thee sweet caresses and received.  
 And this thy word was: "Ah, my little maid,  
 Blest shall I see thee in a husband's halls  
 Living and blooming worthily of me?"  
 And, as I twined my fingers in thy beard,  
 Whereto I now cling, thus I answered thee:  
 "And what of thee? Shall I greet thy gray hairs,  
 Father, with loving welcome in my halls,  
 Repaying all thy fostering toil for me?"  
 I keep remembrance of that converse yet:  
 Thou hast forgotten, thou wouldst murder me.  
 Ah no! — by Pelops, by thy father Atreus,  
 And by this mother, whose first travail-pangs  
 Now in this second anguish are renewed!  
 What part have I in Paris' rape of Helen?  
 Why, father, should he for my ruin have come?  
 Look on me — give me one glance — oh, one kiss,

That I may keep in death from thee but this  
Memorial, if thou heed my pleading not.

[To her infant brother, *Orestes*.

Brother, small help canst thou be to thy friends:  
Yet weep with me, yet supplicate thy sire  
To slay thy sister not!—some sense of ill  
Even in wordless infants is inborn.  
Lo, by his silence he implores thee, father—  
Have mercy, have compassion on my youth!  
Yea, by thy beard we pray thee, loved ones twain,  
A nestling one, and one a daughter grown.  
In one cry summing all, I *must* prevail!  
Sweet, passing sweet, is light for men to see,  
The grave's life nothingness! Who prays to die  
Is mad. Ill life o'erpasseth glorious death.

Way.

A few years before, Euripides had brought out the sequel to this story, the *Iphigeneia among the Taurians*, one of his finest plays. The scene is laid in the land of the Taurians, north of the Black Sea, whither Iphigeneia was borne by Artemis from the altar at Aulis. There she serves in the temple as priestess of the goddess, to whom she must sacrifice all strangers who come to the land. Orestes and Pylades are brought before her. Orestes gains his friend's life through the desire of Iphigeneia to send a message to her home in Argos. Through this message the recognition of brother and sister is effected. They plan a way of escape from the land, and succeed by the intervention of Athene. The recognition scene is here given:

IPH. All that is written in the letter's folds  
My tongue shall say, that thou mayst tell my friends.  
So all is safe: if thou lose not the script,  
Itself shall voiceless tell its written tale:

- But if this writing in the sea be lost,  
Then thy life saved shall save my words for me.
- PYL. Well hast thou said, both for thy need and me.  
Now say to whom this letter I must bear  
To Argos, and from thee that message speak.
- IPH. Say to Orestes, Agamemnon's son —  
" *This Iphigeneia, slain in Aulis, sends,  
Who liveth, yet for those at home lives not—*"
- OR. Where is she? Hath she risen from the dead?
- IPH. She whom thou seest — confuse me not with speech —  
" *Bear me to Argos, brother, ere I die;  
From this wild land, these sacrifices save,  
Wherein mine office is to slay the stranger;*" —
- OR. What shall I say? — Now dream we, Pylades?
- IPH. " *Else to thine house will I become a curse,  
Orestes*" — so, twice heard, hold fast the name.
- OR. Gods!
- IPH. Why in *mine* affairs invoke the gods?
- OR. 'Tis naught: say on: my thoughts had wandered far.  
[*Aside.*] This marvel may I yet by question fathom.
- IPH. Say—" *Artemis in my place laid a hind,  
And saved me,—this my father sacrificed,  
Deeming he plunged the keen blade into me,—  
And made me dwell here.*" This the letter is,  
And in the tablets this is what is writ.
- PYL. O thou who hast bound me by an easy oath —  
Hast fairly sworn! — I will not tarry long  
To ratify the oath that I have sworn.  
This tablet, lo, to thee I bear, and give,  
Orestes, from thy sister, yonder maid.
- OR. This I receive: — I let its folds abide —  
First will I seize a rapture not in words: —  
Dear sister mine, albeit wonder-struck,  
With scarce-believing arm I fold thee round,  
And taste delight, who hear things marvellous!

Way.

The *Orestes* (408 B. C.) is rather a melodrama than a tragedy, full of intrigue and flashy scenes, and

closing with an imposing tableau. It is said to have been very popular on the stage, but has received no commendation from critics. The *Electra* (about 413 B. C.) is the best illustration of Euripides' manner in revising the myths used by the older poets and in reducing the characters to the level of everyday life. Dealing with precisely the same theme as the *Libation-Bearers* of Æschylus and the *Electra* of Sophocles, it serves well to show the difference between Euripides and the other two poets in their conception of tragedy; although the comparison is not quite fair to Euripides, since the *Electra* is by no means his best play. In Æschylus our interest is less in the characters than in the process by which divine justice is visited upon Clytemnestra and Ægisthus. Orestes acts in accordance with a divine command, but even so he becomes guilty of a horrible crime which must be expiated. The plot is simple, and the action moves steadily toward the goal. In Sophocles the plot is more complicated, and the possibilities of dramatic situations are more fully grasped. Electra becomes the leading character instead of Orestes. Our interest for her is aroused by her courage and confidence in the face of indignity and insult, and our sympathies are drawn to her still more by the pathetic contrast between her calm hope at the beginning, when she believes that Orestes is alive, and her despair when she hears the false message of his death. Orestes now has two motives for slaying the guilty pair—vengeance for his father's murder and his moral obligation to rescue his sister from her cruel position. The characters are as noble as in Æschylus, but their human interest is greater and the play of motives more subtle.

The *Electra* of Euripides is a totally different conception from either of these plays. The scene is a peasant's cottage. Electra lives there with a peasant for her husband, to whom Ægisthus and Clytemnestra married her that they might have nothing to fear from her children. But she is wife only in name, for the peasant reverences her royal blood. Orestes, returning to Argos, finds her, and is at length recognized by a scar upon his forehead.<sup>1</sup> They entice Clytemnestra to the hut by a message that Electra is about to be delivered of a child. She comes in a chariot, with a train of servants, her splendor contrasting with the squalor of Electra's home. Before she enters and is slain, Electra rehearses all her sins to her. Meanwhile Ægisthus has been slain by Orestes and Pylades while performing a sacrifice. At the close of the play the Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux, appear from on high, arrange the marriage of Electra and Pylades, with a reward for her present husband, and foretell to Orestes his pursuit by the Furies and his trial in Athens. During the action we are scarcely conscious of the resistless power of the divine will driving Orestes and Electra forward, so prominent in Æschylus, nor are the principal persons the strong, unflinching characters that we find in Sophocles, accomplishing their vengeance without scruple. They

<sup>1</sup>The recognition scene is characteristic. In Æschylus Electra knows Orestes by a lock of hair, in color like her own, and by a footprint in the sand into which her own foot fits. In Euripides this mode of recognition is suggested to Electra, but is criticised by her. "Many men have hair like in color, even when not kin. Besides, Orestes' hair would be as becomes one trained in the wrestling-school, while mine is combed like a woman's. As for the footprint, how should the prints of the foot of brother and sister be alike, seeing that the man's is larger?" In Sophocles Orestes is known by a piece of embroidery which Electra had made. But the Electra of Euripides says: "How could he now wear the robes he wore as a child, unless the garment grew with his growth?" Such covert criticisms of his predecessors are found elsewhere in Euripides.

are, indeed, less noble in Euripides, but certainly more human from the modern point of view.

The *Trojan Women* (415 B. C.) and the *Hecabe* (about 424 B. C.) both depict scenes ensuing upon the fall of Troy. In fact the former play is rather a series of loosely connected scenes from this story than a connected plot. The Greek chieftains have cast lots for the captive Trojan women. Cassandra, the prophetess, falls to Agamemnon; Andromache, Hector's wife, to Neoptolemus, son of Achilles; Hecabe, Priam's aged queen, to Odysseus; and Polyxena, the beautiful daughter of Hecabe and Priam, is to be offered in sacrifice to the spirit of Achilles. The Greeks decree that Astyanax, the child of Hector and Andromache, shall be thrown from the battlements of Troy. Hecabe parts with one after another of her daughters, some to die, others to be slaves. The mangled body of Astyanax is laid before her, and she herself is led away a slave, overwhelmed by her crushing sorrows. The *Hecabe* sets forth the vengeance of the aged queen upon Polymnestor, the murderer of her son Polydorus. Enticing him and his children into her tent, she kills his children and puts out his eyes. In this play the sacrifice of Polyxena on Achilles' tomb is powerfully described. I quote first, from the *Trojan Women*, the wedding-song of the frenzied Cassandra:

Up with the torch!-- give it me -- let me render  
 Worship to Phœbus! -- lo, lo how I fling  
 Wide through his temple the flash of its splendour:--  
 Hymen! O Marriage-god, Hymen, my king!  
 Happy the bridegroom who waiteth to meet me;  
 Happy am I for the couch that shall greet me;

Royal espousals to Argos I bring:—  
 Bridal-king, Hymen, thy glory I sing.

Mother, thou lingerest long at thy weeping,  
 Aye makest moan for my sire who hath died,  
 Mourn'st our dear country with sorrow unsleeping;  
 Therefore myself for my own marriage-tide  
 Kindle the firebrands, a glory outstreaming,  
 Toss up the torches, a radiance far-gleaming:—  
 Hymen, to thee is their brightness upleaping;  
 Hekatê, flash thou thy star-glitter wide,  
 After thy wont when a maid is a bride.

Float, flying feet of the dancers, forth-leading  
 Revel of bridals: ring, bacchanal strain,  
 Ring in thanksgiving for fortune exceeding  
 Happy, that fell to my father to gain.  
 Holy the dance is, my duty, my glory:  
 Lead thou it, Phœbus; midst bay-trees before thee  
 Aye have I ministered, there in thy fane:--  
 Marriage-king, Hymen! sing loud the refrain.

Up, mother, join thou the revel:-- with paces  
 Woven with mine through the sweet measure flee;  
 Hitherward, thitherward, thrid the dance-mazes:  
 Sing ever "Marriage-king! — Hymen!" sing ye.  
 Bliss ever chime through the notes of your singing,  
 Hail ye the bride with glad voices outringing.  
 Daughters of Phrygia, arrayed like the Graces,  
 Hymn ye my bridal, the bridegroom for me  
 Destined by fate's everlasting decree.

Way.

The following description by the Herald of the death of Polyxena is taken from the *Hecabe*:

The whole vast concourse of the Achaian host  
 Stood round the tomb to see your daughter die.  
 Achilles' son, taking her by the hand,  
 Placed her upon the mound, and I stayed near;  
 And youths, the flower of Greece, a chosen few,  
 With hands to check thy heifer, should she bound,



Attended. From a cup of carven gold,  
Raised full of wine, Achilleus' son poured forth  
Libation to his sire, and bade me sound  
Silence throughout the whole Achaian host.  
I, standing there, cried in the midst these words:

“Silence, Achaians! let the host be still!  
Hush, hold your voices!” Breathless stayed the crowd;  
But he: “O son of Peleus, father mine,  
Take these libations pleasant to thy soul,  
Draughts that allure the dead: come, drink the black  
Pure maiden's blood wherewith the host and I  
Sue thee: be kindly to us; loose our prows,  
And let our barks go free: give safe return  
Homeward from Troy to all, and happy voyage.”  
Such words he spake, and the crowd prayed assent.  
Then from the scabbard, by its golden hilt,  
He drew the sword, and to the chosen youths  
Signalled that they should bring the maid; but she,  
Knowing her hour was come, spake thus and said:

“O men of Argos, who have sacked my town,  
Lo, of free will I die! let no man touch  
My body: boldly will I stretch my throat.  
Nay, but I pray you set me free, then slay;  
That free I thus may perish: 'mong the dead,  
Being a queen, I blush to be called slave.”  
The people shouted, and King Agamemnon  
Bade the youths loose the maid and set her free:  
She when she heard the order of the chiefs,  
Seizing her mantle, from the shoulder down  
To the soft centre of her snowy waist  
Tore it, and showed her breasts and bosom fair  
As in a statue. Bending then with knee  
On earth, she spake a speech most piteous:

“See you this breast, O youth? if breast you will,  
Strike it; take heart: or if beneath my neck,  
Lo! here my throat is ready for your sword!”  
He willing not, yet willing, pity-stirred  
In sorrow for the maiden, with his blade  
Severed the channels of her breath: blood flowed;

And she, though dying, still had thought to fall  
 In seemly wise, hiding what eyes should see not.  
 And when she breathed her life out from the blow,  
 Then was the Argive host in divers way  
 Of service parted; for some, bringing leaves,  
 Strewed them upon the corpse; some piled a pyre,  
 Dragging pine trunks and boughs; and he who bore none  
 Heard from the bearers many a bitter word:

“Standest thou, villain? Hast thou then no robe,  
 No funeral honours for the maid to bring?  
 Wilt thou not go and get for her who died  
 Most nobly, bravest-souled, some gift?” Thus they  
 Spake of thy child in death, O thou most blest  
 Of women, in thy daughter most undone!

Symonds.

The later fortunes of Hector's wife are followed in the *Andromache*, written in the early years of the Peloponnesian war, but not exhibited at Athens. In the *Helen* (412) Euripides takes up the legend that Paris did not carry off the real Helen to Troy, but only a phantom resembling her (see page 134).<sup>1</sup> The real Helen was taken by Hermes to Egypt, where she remained true to her husband, in spite of the ardent wooing of the king of the land. Menelaus, after many wanderings, comes to Egypt with the phantom Helen, discovers his true wife, and escapes with her by a stratagem, the phantom having meanwhile flown away.

Two of the extant plays of Euripides are on subjects connected with the house of Labdacus (see page 173)—the *Phœnician Woman* (about 410 B. C.) and the *Suppliants* (about 420 B. C.). The former covers

<sup>1</sup>The reason assigned by the poet for this deception was that Hera, angry at the decision rendered by Paris, desired “to turn his joy in Helen into air.” This version of the story was in the first instance invented, of course, to clear the reputation of Helen.

in general the same ground as the *Seven against Thebes* of Æschylus, but Euripides adds many details to the story, filling the drama with many moving scenes and complicating the plot. The chorus is formed of Phœnician maidens on their way to Delphi. Instead of the somewhat monotonous catalogue of the twice seven champions given by Æschylus, Euripides achieves the same result by having Antigone view the opposing army from the roof of the palace and by a description of the battle. An entirely new feature is added: the voluntary sacrifice of Menœceus, son of Creon, that the forces of Thebes may be victorious. In one important respect the poet deviates from the myth as given by Sophocles: Jocasta is represented as still alive. She tries to reconcile her two sons, but in vain; and finally, rushing to the field of battle, kills herself over the bodies of Eteocles and Polyneices, locked in the fatal embrace. Creon banishes Œdipus from Thebes. Antigone renounces her marriage with Hæmon, to whom she is betrothed, resolving to attend her father in exile after burying Polyneices in violation of the edict of Creon. In spite of the complicated plot the drama is well constructed, and is one of the most attractive of the extant plays of the poet. In the following passage Jocasta pleads with Eteocles to share the kingdom with his brother:

My son Eteokles, evil unalloyed  
Cleaves not to old age: nay, experience  
Can plead more wisely than the lips of youth.  
Why at Ambition, worst of deities,  
Son, graspest thou? Do not: she is Queen of Wrong.  
Homes many and happy cities enters she,  
And leaves for ruin of her votaries.  
Thou art mad for her! — better to honour, son,

Equality, which knitteth friends to friends,  
 Cities to cities, allies unto allies.  
 Man's law of nature is equality,  
 And the less, ever marshalled foe against  
 The greater, ushers in the dawn of hate.  
 Measures for men Equality ordained,  
 Meting of weights and number she assigned.  
 The sightless face of night and the sun's beam  
 Equally pace along their yearly round,  
 Nor either envieth that it must give place.  
 Sun, then, and night are servants unto men.  
 Shalt thou not brook to halve your heritage  
 And share with him? . . . Ah, where is justice then?  
 Wherefore dost thou prize lordship overmuch, —  
 A prosperous wrong, — and count it some great thing?  
 Is worship precious? Nay, 't is vanity.  
 Wouldst have, with great wealth in thy halls, great travail?  
 What is thy profit? — profit but in name;  
 Seeing enough sufficeth for the wise.  
 Mortals hold their possessions not in fee:  
 We are but the stewards of the gifts of God:  
 Whene'er he will, he claims his own again.  
 And wealth abides not, 't is but for a day.

Way.

The choral ode to Ares is spirited:

Ares the troublous, O whence is thy passion  
 For blood and for death, unattuned to the feasts  
     of the Revelry-king?  
 Not for the dances, the circlings of beauty,  
     in virginal fashion  
 Tossed are thy tresses abroad, nor to the breathings  
     of flutes dost thou sing  
 A strain to whose witchery dances are wreathing:  
 But with clangour of harness to fight through the Argive  
     array art thou breathing  
 War-lust for the blood of our Thebes athirst,  
 As thou ledest the dance of a revel accurst  
     Where no flutes ring.

Thou art found not where fawnskin and thyrsus  
 in mad reel mingle and sunder,  
 But with chariots and clashing of bits and with  
 war-horses' footfall of thunder  
 By Ismenus' brimming marge  
 With the rushing of steeds dost thou charge,  
 Into Argives breathing the battle-hate  
 Against the sons of the Dragon-state;  
 And with harness of brass and with targe,  
 Fronting our ramparts of stone, dost array  
 A host for the fray.  
 A fearful Goddess in sooth is Strife,  
 Of whose devising the troublous life  
 Of the Labdakid kings of the land is anguish-rife.  
 Way.

The *Suppliants* is an encomium of Athens, whose king, Theseus, in response to the supplications of the wives of the Argive heroes fallen at Thebes, compels Creon by battle to give up the bodies for burial. When the bodies of the dead are brought in, funeral pyres are lighted, and Evadne throws herself from a height upon the pyre of her husband, Capaneus—a stirring spectacle, unparalleled in the Greek drama.

Of the two plays which deal with the legends of Heracles, the older, the *Children of Heracles* (about 428 B. C.) resembles the *Suppliants*. Athens receives and protects Heracles' children and his mother, Alcmene, who have been driven out of Argos by Eurystheus. A battle ensues. The oracles demand as the price of victory for Athens the sacrifice of a virgin, and Macaria, eldest daughter of Heracles, heroically offers herself as the victim—a dramatic motive employed again by the poet in the *Phœnician Woman*.

The *Heracles* (about 422 B. C.) is one of the most tragic of the plays of Euripides. The last of the

twelve labors which the hero was to perform for Eurystheus, through the hatred of Hera, was to fetch the three-headed dog, Cerberus, from the lower world. Ere he departed he committed to Creon, king of Thebes and father of his wife, his aged father, Amphitryon, his wife, Megara, and his sons. Now during his long absence Creon was deposed and slain by Lycus, who assumed the throne. This Lycus, fearing lest Creon's murder should be avenged if any of the family of Heracles survived, plots against them. They take refuge at the altar, but Lycus respects not the sanctuary. When they are on the point of being slain, Heracles suddenly appears and kills Lycus. But a madness sent by Hera comes upon him, and he slays his own wife and children. His agony on awakening is terrible. Theseus takes him to Athens to be purified and to spend the rest of his days, closing his glorious career ruined, heartbroken, and bereft of his loved ones.

The chorus in Euripides often voices the thoughts of the poet himself. The best illustration of this tendency is found in the following ode from the *Heracles*, which is connected with the action of the tragedy by the last verses alone:

Youth is a pleasant burthen to me;  
 But age on my head, more heavily  
 Than the crags of Aitna, weighs and weighs,  
 And darkening cloaks the lids and intercepts the rays.  
 Never be mine the preference  
 Of an Asian empire's wealth, nor yet  
 Of a house all gold, to youth, to youth  
 That's beauty, whatever the gods dispense!  
 Whether in wealth we joy, or fret  
 Paupers — of all god's gifts most beautiful in truth!

But miserable murderous age I hate!  
Let it go to wreck the waves adown,  
Nor ever by rights plague tower or town  
Where mortals bide, but still elate  
With wings, on ether, precipitate,  
Wander them round — nor wait!

But if the gods to man's degree  
Had wit and wisdom, they would bring  
Mankind a twofold youth to be  
Their virtue's sign-mark, all should see,  
In those with whom life's winter thus grew spring.  
For when they died, into the sun once more  
Would they have traversed twice life's race-course o'er;  
While ignobility had simply run  
Existence through, nor second life begun.  
And so might we discern both bad and good  
As surely as the starry multitude  
Is numbered by the sailors, one and one.  
But now the gods by no apparent line  
Limit the worthy and the base define;  
Only a certain period rounds, and so  
Brings man more wealth,—but youthful vigour, no!

Well! I am not to pause  
Mingling together — wine and wine in cup —  
The Graces with the Muses up —  
Most dulcet marriage: loosed from music's laws,  
No life for me!  
But where the wreaths abound there ever may I be!  
And still, an aged bard, I shout Mnemosune —  
Still chant of Herakles the triumph-chant,  
Companioned by the seven-stringed tortoise-shell  
And Libuan flute, and Bromios' self as well,  
God of the grape, with man participant!  
Nor yet will we arrest their glad advance —  
The Muses who so long have led me forth to dance!  
A paian — hymn the Delian girls indeed,  
Weaving a beauteous measure in and out  
His temple-gates, Latona's goodly seed;

And païans — I too, these thy domes about,  
 From these gray cheeks, my king, will swan-like shout.  
 Old songster! Ay, in songs it starts off brave —  
 “Zeus’s son is he!” and yet, such grace of birth  
 Surpassing far, to man his labours gave  
 Existence, one calm flow without a wave,  
 Having destroyed the beasts, the terrors of the earth.

Robert Browning.

Passing over the *Cyclops*, the only extant specimen of the satyr-drama, and the *Rhesus*, wrongly attributed to Euripides, two plays remain to be considered, both of them tragedies of the romantic type: *Ion* (about 420 B. C.) and the *Bacchanals* (soon after 405). The former is notable for the beautiful character of Ion, son of Apollo and the Athenian princess, Creusa. Exposed by his mother by reason of her fear and shame, he is borne to Delphi by the god, where he grows up in the service of the sanctuary. Creusa marries Xuthus, king of Athens, but no child is born to them. After many years they journey to Delphi to ask Apollo to bless their union with children, Creusa secretly hoping that Apollo will reveal her son. By the god’s command Xuthus finds a son in the first person he meets as he leaves the temple, Ion. The queen, believing that Ion is the issue of her husband by some lawless connection, thinks that Apollo has forgotten her, and attempts to slay the boy. But the plan is frustrated. Apollo saves the queen from the anger of the people and reveals Ion to his mother. I quote the song of Ion as he comes from the temple of Apollo in the early morning:

	[blazing
Lo, yonder the Sun-god is turning to earthward his splendour-	
Chariot of light;	[chasing,
And the stars from the firmament flee from the fiery arrows	
To the sacred night:	



[as with yearning

And the crests of Parnassus untrodden are flaming and flushed,  
[returning  
 Of welcome to far-flashing wheels with the glory of daylight  
[burning  
 To mortal sight.  
 To the roof-ridge of Phœbus the fume of the incense of Araby  
 As a bird taketh flight.

On the tripod most holy is seated the Delphian Maiden  
 Chanting to children of Hellas the wild cries, laden  
 With doom, from the lips of Apollo that ring.  
 Delphians, Phœbus's priesthood-train,  
 Unto Castaly's silvery-swirling spring  
 Pass ye, and cleanse with the pure spray-rain  
 Your bodies, or ever ye enter his fane.  
 Set a watch on the door of your lips; be there heard  
 Nothing but good in the secret word  
 That ye murmur to them whose hearts be stirred  
 To seek to his shrine, that they seek not in vain.  
 And I in the toil that is mine—mine now,  
 And from childhood up,—with the bay's young bough,  
 And with wreathèd garlands holy will cleanse  
 The portals of Phœbus; with dews from the spring  
 Will I sprinkle his pavement and chase far thence  
 With the shaft from the string  
 The flocks of the birds: the defilers shall flee  
 From his offerings holy. Nor mother is mine  
 Neither father: his temple hath nurtured me,  
 And I serve his shrine.

Come, branch in thy freshness yet blowing,  
 God's minister, loveliest bay,  
 Over the altar-steps glide.  
 In the gardens immortal, beside  
 His temple, hath burgeoned thy pride,  
 Where the sacred waters are flowing  
 Through a veil of the myrtle spray,  
 A fountain that leapeth aye  
 O'er thy tresses divine to pour.  
 I wave thee o'er Phœbus' floor  
 As the sun's wing soars sudden-glowing.

Such service is mine each day.  
 O Healer, O Healer-king,  
 Let blessing on blessing upring  
 Unto Leto's son as I sing.

Way.

The *Bacchanals* is the only extant play based upon the legends of Dionysus, or Bacchus, in whose worship the drama originated. It was written while the poet was sojourning in Macedonia, and was produced in Athens after his death by his grandson, together with the *Taurian Iphigeneia* and two lost plays. It seems to have won the first prize. It is one of the strongest of the tragedies which survive—an enthusiastic tribute to the wine-god. Dionysus enters Thebes, his native city, after a victorious march through all the earth, accompanied by a band of Bacchanalian women who form the chorus. Pentheus, the king of Thebes, denies his godhead, seeing in him but the son of a mortal woman<sup>1</sup>; but the aged Cadmus, the prophet Teiresias, and the women of Thebes accept his worship and join the Bacchic revelers. Pentheus forbids the worship, and decrees that the youth Dionysus shall die. Soon the god himself, disguised as a Lydian, is led in a captive, and is cast into a cell, whence he suddenly appears, freed by his own power. Pentheus is induced to go forth in woman's garb to the mountains, where the reveling women are celebrating in honor of Dionysus the rites which no man may look upon and live. They discover Pentheus and tear him asunder, limb by limb, his own mother, Agave, and her sisters, in their madness not knowing him, taking the lead. Finally Dionysus appears before them in all his divine

<sup>1</sup>Dionysus was the son of Zeus by the Princess Semele, daughter of Cadmus, the founder of Thebes and grandsire of Pentheus.

glory and reveals their future. The following choral ode is much admired:

O when, through the long night,  
 With fleet foot glancing white,  
 Shall I go dancing in my revelry,  
 My neck cast back, and bare  
 Unto the dewy air,  
 Like sportive fawn in the green meadow's glee?  
 Lo, in her fear she springs  
 Over th' encircling rings,  
 Over the well-worn nets far off and fast;  
 While swift along her track  
 The huntsman cheers his pack,  
 With panting toil, and fiery storm-wind haste.  
 Where down the river-bank spreads the wide meadow,  
 Rejoices she in the untrod solitude.  
 Couches at length beneath the silent shadow  
 Of the old hospitable wood.

What is wisest? what is fairest,  
 Of God's boons to man the rarest?  
 With the conscious conquering hand  
 Above the foeman's head to stand.  
 What is fairest still is dearest.

Slow come, but come at length,  
 In their majestic strength,  
 Faithful and true, the avenging deities:  
 And chastening human folly,  
 And the mad pride unholy,  
 Of those who to the gods bow not their knees.  
 For hidden still and mute,  
 As glides their printless foot,  
 The impious on their winding path they hound.  
 For it is ill to know,  
 And it is ill to do,  
 Beyond the law's inexorable bound.  
 'Tis but light cost in his own power sublime  
 To array the godhead, whoso'er he be;

And law is old, even as the oldest time,  
Nature's own unrepealed decree.

What is wisest? what is fairest,  
Of God's boons to man the rarest?  
With the conscious conquering hand  
Above the foeman's head to stand.  
What is fairest still is rarest.

Who hath 'scaped the turbulent sea,  
And reached the haven, happy he!  
Happy he whose toils are o'er,  
In the race of wealth and power!  
This one here, and that one there,  
Passes by, and everywhere  
Still expectant thousands over  
Thousand hopes are seen to hover.  
Some to mortals end in bliss;

Some have already fled away:  
Happiness alone is his  
That happy is to-day.

Milman.

## CHAPTER X

### COMIC POETRY. ARISTOPHANES

The Origin of Comedy—Susarion—Epicharmus—Recognition of Comedy in Attica—The Subjects of Comedy—The Poets of the Old Comedy: Cratinus, Eupolis, Aristophanes—The Structure of Comedy, illustrated by the *Birds* of Aristophanes—The *Acharnians*—The *Peace*—The *Lysistrata*—The *Thesmophoriazusa*—The *Parliament of Women*—The *Plutus*—The *Knights*—The *Clouds*—The *Wasps*—The *Frogs*.

Comedy was born about the same time as tragedy, toward the middle of the sixth century, but it was long in taking its place beside tragedy as a recognized branch of literature. Like tragedy, it was from its origin connected with the worship of Dionysus, and had its beginnings among the Dorian peoples of the Peloponnesus. From early times the worship of the wine-god was celebrated by mirthful revelers, who sang at the festivals impromptu songs, accompanied by lively dancing. Such a band of Bacchic revelers was called a *comus*, and their song or performance was later given the name "comedy" (*comus* and *odê*, "comus-song") formed after the pattern of tragedy.

This rude performance seems to have received some sort of development at the hands of Susarion of Megara. We cannot make out precisely the changes which he introduced, but it is probable that he substituted verses of his own composition for the impromptu songs and speeches of the earlier time. It seems, also,

that he enlarged the license in scurrility and indecency which these sportive bands always enjoyed on festival days, by adding the element of abusiveness toward individuals, especially those prominent in public life. Such freedom could, of course, have developed under a popular government, such as Megara seems to have enjoyed in the sixth century. Susarion introduced his comus performances into Attica, tradition says, first at Icaria, the birthplace of tragedy. Out of the comus the comic chorus developed, the boisterous procession taking shape as a chorus gradually under the influence of the tragic chorus.

The real founder of comedy was Epicharmus of Sicily, a contemporary of Pindar and Æschylus. A poet of great creative power, he took the decisive step of introducing the plot. Before his time comic performances had not advanced beyond the stage of a series of episodes, each giving a fantastic or humorous situation, but on subjects unconnected with each other. There now was a more or less orderly progression from one episode to another, so that the comic subject received varied illustration in successive scenes. This simple unity of subject was far from constituting a plot in the strict sense of the term, for there was not necessarily a complication and a solution; but the innovation of Epicharmus transformed a rude and unliterary series of burlesques into a composition which had at least the elements of literary and artistic form. The comedy of Epicharmus did not grow out of the comus, as did that of Attica, but was the product of the imitative genius which has always characterized the people of <sup>Great Hellas Magna</sup> ~~southern~~ Italy. There never was a chorus in this branch of comedy. The

importance of Epicharmus for the history of Attic comedy is that he gave the impulse to the leaders of the Attic comus in the direction of literary unity—though by what channels this influence was communicated we do not know.

For a long time the comic performances in Attica were given at the festivals of Dionysus in an entirely unofficial manner. Soon after the Persian wars, however, they had assumed such importance and had reached such a stage of literary excellence that they were admitted to the official programme of the great festival in March, the City Dionysia. At this time the principal comic poets, to whom this recognition was largely due, were Chionides and Magnes. From now on comedy steadily increased in importance and improved in technique, conforming itself, so far as its nature would allow, to the type of drama already established by tragedy. The number of actors who might be together on the scene was restricted to three (in the earlier days, it is believed, the number was larger, not smaller, as in tragedy), and the number of the chorus was fixed at twenty-four—just double the number employed in tragedy down to Sophocles' time. In form and manner comedy underwent a gradual but constant change from the time of the Persian wars. We distinguish three great periods: Old Comedy, down to about 390 B. C.; Middle Comedy, from 390 to about 320 B. C., and the New Comedy, from 320 on.

Attic comedy was not restricted to subjects drawn from mythology, as was tragedy. Any situation in politics or society, any tendency in literature or religion or ethics, the foibles of the people or the idiosyncrasies of individuals—in short, any subject which the

exuberant fantasy of the poet could summon up and turn to account for purposes of burlesque, parody, or satire, made an acceptable theme for the laughter-loving Athenians. There was the mythological travesty, in which the heroes of mythology, and even the gods, were turned to ridicule. Epicharmus first developed this field, which became the favorite of the poets of the fourth century. A never-failing source of amusement were the parodies of the tragic poets. The extant plays are sprinkled with pathetic lines and touching situations from tragedy, so distorted as to be irresistibly funny. Imitations of animal life were much in vogue in the Old Comedy. We hear of choruses of snakes, ants, nightingales, goats, birds, wasps, and fishes, and in one extant play even the actors are dressed up as birds. Again we are transported to some Utopia, where everybody is rich and happy, or down to Hades, to witness the society of the illustrious dead. In the last quarter of the fifth century political subjects were most frequently chosen, and the utmost license was tolerated in lampooning leading statesmen and officials and in exposing faults in public policy and administration. The comedy of manners, characterized by good-natured satire upon the institutions of society and the weaknesses of mankind in general, came in with the New Comedy.

The three great poets of the Old Comedy were Cratinus, Eupolis, and Aristophanes. The services of Cratinus in establishing the type of the comedy of this period were of the first importance. He was considered the most fearless exponent of the tendency to criticise and abuse individuals. He never wearied of ridiculing the "onion-headed" Pericles and his policy.



It became necessary, in fact, for the state to restrict by law for a time the comic privilege of lampooning officials by name. Eupolis, a full generation younger than Cratinus, followed in the latter's footsteps but was more graceful and finished in style. Alcibiades was a favorite object of attack with him. By far the greatest of this trio was Aristophanes, who was born about 448 B. C. and died soon after 388 B. C. Little is known about his personality, except as the information is derived from his works. Eleven comedies of the fifty-four which he wrote are preserved to us—the only specimens of Greek comedy which we possess. Fortunately these plays are sufficiently representative in character to furnish a good idea both of the Old Comedy as a whole and of the fertility of the genius and marvelous poetic power of the great burlesque critic of Athenian life, whose dominating influence on the comic stage was felt for more than forty years.

Before taking up the several plays of Aristophanes, a few words are necessary on the structure of an Attic comedy of this period. In a general way, as has been said, comedy imitated tragedy in form. But the similarity of structure is found upon examination to be superficial, the more lusty and exuberant younger sister tending always to break over the bounds of literary art laid down for it. This tendency is observed in two general directions. In the first place, the chorus often drops its rôle and speaks directly to the audience as the mouthpiece of the poet. Such interludes are found in almost every extant comedy, sometimes twice in one play, occurring at some suitable pause in the action. This portion of a comedy is called the *parabasis*, or "coming forward"; for the

members of the chorus stripped off a part of their costume, "came forward" toward the audience, and sang and recited to lively dance movements their rollicking verses. It is in this portion of a play that the poet gives freest expression to his own opinions on topics of the day, explains his own ideals, and attacks his rivals or appeals to the judges for a favorable verdict. In the second place, after the plot has been fully developed and the solution reached, we often find a succession of short episodes, not at all necessary to the plot, which illustrate in fantastic, burlesque scenes the policy or condition which the main argument has developed. Such episodes are to be considered survivals of the early form of comedy of which we have already spoken. A third feature of comic structure may also be mentioned. The plot is unfolded generally by two conflicting elements, which oppose each other by vehement debate and often by physical encounter. One side or the other wins—the solution of the plot—and then the illustrative burlesque episodes follow—the application of the victorious policy. This element of antagonism is carried out in the management of the chorus also. It is generally conceived of as two choruses of twelve persons each, the speech or song of one chorus calling forth a response of the same length and in the same manner from the other.

Taking a concrete case for illustration, let us analyze the *Birds*, the most brilliant creation of the poet. It was produced at the City Dionysia of 414 B. C., and won only the second prize. The scene is laid in a wild, uninhabited country, with a bunch of shrubbery in the background. Enter two Athenians, Peithetærus (Plausible) and Euelpides (Hopeful).

They carry birds on their hands to guide them to a region where they will be free from the troubles of Athenian life. "For we," they say,

Have deemed it fitting to betake ourselves  
 To these our legs, and make our person scarce.  
 Not through disgust or hatred or disdain  
 Of our illustrious birthplace, which we deem  
 Glorious and free; with equal laws ordained  
 For fine and forfeiture and confiscation,  
 With taxes universally diffused;  
 And suits and pleas abounding in the Courts.  
 For grasshoppers sit only for a month  
 Chirping upon the twigs; but our Athenians  
 Sit chirping and discussing all the year,  
 Perched upon points of evidence and law.  
 Therefore we trudge upon our present travels,  
 With these our sacrificial implements,  
 To seek some easier unlitigious place,  
 Meaning to settle there and colonize.<sup>1</sup>

They reach the home of Hoopoe (represented in the scenery), who answers their summons. The make-up of the actor who represents the Hoopoe was, of course, as grotesque as possible, and was frankly ridiculed by the visitors: "Heracles, what plumage! Are you a bird or a peacock?" The scarcity of feathers upon his body is explained by Hoopoe as due to the moulting season. The life of the birds, as depicted by Hoopoe—no need of money, field sports, nothing to do but banquet in the gardens—seems so attractive to Peithetærus, the inventive genius, that he proposes a scheme for the aggrandizement of the birds: "Build a city in the air, between earth and heaven; intercept the savor of the sacrifices which

<sup>1</sup>The selections from Aristophanes are all taken from the translation of John Hookham Frere when not credited to others.

men make to the gods, and thus starve out the latter until they turn over the sovereignty to the birds." "Odds nets and bird-lime," says Hoopoe, "that's a clever notion! I'm with you if the other birds agree." So he calls to his wife, Nightingale:

Awake! awake!

Sleep no more, my gentle mate!  
 With your tiny tawny bill,  
 Wake the tuneful echo shrill,  
     On vale or hill;  
 Or in her airy, rocky seat,  
 Let her listen and repeat  
     The tender ditty that you tell,  
     The sad lament,  
     The dire event,  
 To luckless Itys that befell  
     Thence the strain  
     Shall rise again,  
     And soar amain,  
 Up to the lofty palace gate;  
 Where mighty Apollo sits in state;  
 In Jove's abode, with his ivory lyre,  
 Hymning aloud to the heavenly choir,  
 While all the gods shall join with thee  
     In a celestial symphony.

While the nightingale trills, Hoopoe calls the birds together:

Hoop! hoop!  
 Come in a troop,  
 Come at a call,  
     One and all,  
 Birds of a feather,  
 All together.  
 Birds of a humble, gentle bill,  
 Smooth and shrill,

Dieted on seeds and grain,  
 Rioting on the furrowed plain,  
     Pecking, hopping,  
     Picking, popping,  
 Among the barley newly sown.  
     Birds of a bolder, louder tone,  
     Lodging in the shrubs and bushes,  
     Mavises and thrushes,  
 On the summer berries brousing,  
 On the garden fruits carousing,  
 All the grubs and vermin smousing.

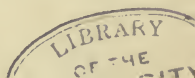
Four stately birds first make their appearance, followed by a troop of twenty-four—the chorus. When they learn that the two envoys are men, they are wild with rage and propose to tear them to pieces at once:

Form in rank, form in rank;  
 Then move forward and outflank:  
 Let me see them overpowered,  
 Hacked, demolished, and devoured;  
 Neither earth, nor sea, nor sky,  
 Nor woody fastnesses on high,  
 Shall protect them if they fly.

Peithetærus and Euelpides hastily erect a barricade of pots and pans, and propose to defend themselves; but Hoopoe arranges a truce. The chorus retire to listen to the envoys:

Back to the rear! resume your station,  
 Ground your wrath and indignation!  
 Sheathe your fury! stand at ease,  
 While I proceed to question these:  
 What design has brought them here?

Peithetærus first proves by comic instances that the birds, and not the gods, were originally sovereign over all. He then develops his plan:



Then I move, that the birds shall in common repair  
 To a central point, and encamp in the air;  
 And intrench and enclose it, and fortify there:  
 And build up a rampart, impregnably strong,  
 Enormous in thickness, enormously long,  
 Bigger than Babylon; solid and tall,  
 With bricks and bitumen, a wonderful wall.  
 As soon as the fabric is brought to an end,  
 A herald or envoy to Jove we shall send,  
 To require his immediate prompt abdication;  
 And if he refuses, or shows hesitation,  
 Or evades the demand; we shall further proceed,  
 With legitimate warfare avowed and decreed:  
 With a warning and notices, formally given,  
 To Jove, and all others residing in heaven,  
 Forbidding them ever to venture again  
 To trespass on our atmospheric domain,  
 With scandalous journeys, to visit a list  
 Of Alcmenas and Semeles; if they persist,  
 We warn them, that means will be taken moreover  
 To stop their gallanting and acting the lover.

The birds enthusiastically adopt the scheme. The Athenians enter Hoopoe's nest in order to provide themselves with plumage. While the scene is vacant, the chorus sings the parabasis, the first part of which consists of a parody on the cosmogony current in the philosophic speculations of the day, beginning:

Come on then, ye dwellers by nature in darkness, and like  
 to the leaves' generations,  
 That are little of might, that are moulded of mire, unendur-  
 ing and shadow-like nations,  
 Poor plumeless ephemerals, comfortless mortals, as visions  
 of shadows fast fleeing,  
 Lift up your mind unto us that are deathless, and dateless  
 the date of our being:

Us, children of heaven, ageless for aye, us, all of whose thoughts are eternal;  
That ye may from henceforth, having heard of us all things aright as to matters supernal,  
Of the being of birds, and beginning of gods, and of streams, and the dark beyond reaching,  
Truthfully knowing aright, in my name bid Prodicus pack with his preaching.  
It was Chaos and Night at the first, and the blackness of darkness, and Hell's broad border,  
Earth was not, nor air, neither heaven; when in the depths of the womb of the dark without order  
First thing first-born of the black-plumed night was a wind-egg hatched in her bosom,  
Whence timely with seasons revolving again sweet Love burst out as a blossom,  
Gold wings gleaming forth of his back, like whirlwinds gustily turning.  
He, after his wedlock with Chaos, whose wings are of darkness, in Hell broad-burning,  
For his nestlings begat him the race of us first, and upraised us to light new-lighted,  
And before this was not the race of the gods, until all things by Love were united:  
And of kind united with kind by communion of nature the sky and the sea are  
Brought forth, and the earth and the race of the gods everlasting and blest. So that we are  
Far away the most ancient of all things blest.

Swinburne.

The second part of the parabasis recounts various advantages in the possession of wings—for example:

Nothing can be more delightful than the having of wings to wear!

A spectator sitting here, accommodated with a pair,  
Might for instance (if he found a tragic chorus dull and heavy)

Take his flight, and dine at home; and if he did not choose  
to leave ye,  
Might return in better humour, when the weary drawl was ended.

Peithetærus and Euelpides come out in their new feathers and decide to call the new town by the imposing name of Cloudcuckootown. Then follows a series of short episodes, unnecessary to the plot, but illustrating at least the annoyances of colonizing. A priest comes to perform the religious rites of dedication. A poet produces samples of his skill in dedication odes. A soothsayer peddling oracles is followed by a surveyor with a load of mathematical instruments, the surveyor by a consul from Athens, the consul by a hawker of laws for colonies. These are driven out by Peithetærus, one after the other. A second parabasis follows, in which the chorus gives its opinion about certain people in Athens and promises the judges endless wealth if they give the poet the prize.

The episodes that follow resume the plot. Short odes by the chorus serve to break the monotony. Word is brought that the new town is finished. A messenger reports that some god has eluded the sentinels. It proves to be Iris, a saucy, frightened soubrette, on her way to tell men to pay up their sacrifices long due. But Peithetærus sends her back to Zeus with an ultimatum, after poking fun at her dress and her manners. Then come people from the earth, eager to join the bird-colony—a parricide, Cinesias (a well-known but despised poet of the day) and an informer—all of whom Peithetærus unceremoniously bustles out of his city. Prometheus sneaks down from Olympus, all muffled up and carrying an umbrella, looking about him with fear and trembling:



PRO. Oh dear! If Jupiter should chance to see me!  
Where's Peithetærus? Where? PEITH. Why, what's  
all this?

This fellow muffled up? PRO. Do look behind me;  
Is anybody watching? any gods  
Following and spying after me? PEITH. No, none,  
None that I can see, there's nobody. But you!

What are ye? PRO. Tell me, what's the time of day?

PEITH. Why, noon, past noon; but tell me, who are ye? Speak.

PRO. Much past? How much? PEITH. Confound the  
fool, I say,

The insufferable blockhead! PRO. How's the sky?  
Open or overcast? Are there any clouds?

PEITH. Be hanged! PRO. Then I'll disguise myself no  
longer.

PEITH. My dear Prometheus! PRO. Hold your tongue, I beg;  
Don't mention my name! If Jupiter should see me,  
Or overhear me, I'm ruined and undone.

But now, to give you a full, complete account

Of everything that's passing there in heaven—

The present state of things. . . . But first I'll  
trouble you

To take the umbrella, and hold it overhead,

Lest they should overlook us. PEITH. What a thought!

Just like yourself! A true Promethean thought!

Stand under it, here! Speak boldly; never fear.

He then relates that the gods are about ready to make terms, and advises him not to consent to any agreement until Zeus shall formally acknowledge the supremacy of the birds by giving him the hand of Sovereignty, "a most delightful, charming girl, Jove's housekeeper, that manages his matters, serves out his thunderbolts, arranges everything." Soon three pompous peace commissioners from Olympus arrive—Poseidon, Heracles, and a barbarian god. Peithetærus bribes Heracles by cooking savory dainties under his nose, promising a dinner for his vote. The barbarian

god's language cannot be understood; so his vote is counted with that of Heracles. Poseidon protests in vain. The commissioners have agreed to give the princess Sovereignty to Peithetærus in marriage. The play closes with a wedding-song by the chorus in celebration of the nuptials, while Peithetærus leads out his bride at the head of the procession, brandishing in his hand the thunderbolt of the ex-king, Zeus, and singing:

Birds of ocean and of air,  
 Hither in a troop repair,  
 To the royal ceremony,  
 Our triumphant matrimony!  
     Come for us to feast and feed ye!  
     Come to revel, dance, and sing!—  
 Lovely creature! Let me lead ye  
     Hand in hand, and wing to wing.

The earliest extant play of Aristophanes is the *Acharnians*, which won the first prize at the Lenæan festival in 425 B. C. Its subject is purely political—peace with the Spartans, with whom the Athenians had been at war for seven years. The leading character, Dicæopolis, ardently desires peace, that he may enjoy again the delights of country life; for all this while the people of Attica have been cooped up within the walls of the city. Failing to persuade the assembly, he makes peace with the Spartans on his own account. But the chorus of men of Acharnæ, whose vineyards have been laid waste by the Spartans, are hot for the continuance of the war. They seize Dicæopolis to put him to death, but he obtains a cast-off, ragged, tragic costume from Euripides, and clothed in this makes a speech in which he wins one-half of the chorus to his views about the war. The blessings of

peace are then illustrated in a succession of humorous scenes.

The same theme received an entirely different treatment in the *Peace* (421 B. C.). Trygæus, a countryman, distressed by the war, conceives the plan of ascending to heaven to fetch down Peace. The happy thought occurs to him of riding upon the back of a huge dung-beetle, as Bellerophon rode on Pegasus in a play of Euripides. Finding the gods not at home, he succeeds in pulling the goddess Peace out of a pit in which she has been imprisoned and in restoring her again to men. The following charming picture of the harvest-time is taken from one of the choral odes:

Oh, 'tis sweet, when fields are ringing  
With the merry crickets' singing,  
Oft to mark with curious eye  
If the vine-tree's time be nigh:  
Here is now the fruit whose birth  
Cost a throe to mother Earth.  
Sweet it is, too, to be telling,  
How the luscious figs are swelling:  
Then to riot without measure  
In the rich, nectareous treasure,  
While our grateful voices chime,—  
"Happy season! blessed time!"

Anonymous.

At a later period in the war the poet reverts to the same theme in the *Lysistrata* (411 B. C.), but this time he aims his shafts mainly at the women of Athens. Under the leadership of a strong-minded woman, Lysistrata, the women of Greece seize the acropolis of Athens, and make proclamation that they will have nothing to do with their husbands until peace is restored between Athens and Sparta. The men soon

come to terms. The play contains two choruses, one of men and the other of women, who oppose each other until the reconciliation is effected. Another satire against women, the *Thesmophoriazusæ*, was produced in the same year, Euripides coming in for a large share of the ridicule. The women of Athens are represented as celebrating the Thesmophoria, a festival in honor of Demeter, to which no men were admitted. Euripides, hearing that they intend to take action against him as an inveterate calumniator of the sex, contrives to smuggle his father-in-law into the meeting in woman's clothes. He defends Euripides by proving that women are in reality much worse than Euripides depicts them. The argument bids fair to carry the day when the speaker's sex is discovered, and he is rescued with difficulty by the help of Euripides. The play is crowded with side-splitting parodies of verses and scenes from the tragic poet. Here is a song by the chorus of women:

They're always abusing the women,  
 As a terrible plague to men:  
 They say we're the root of all evil,  
 And repeat it again and again;  
 Of war, and quarrels, and bloodshed,  
 All mischief, be what it may:  
 And pray, then, why do you marry us,  
 If we're all the plagues you say?  
 And why do you take such care of us,  
 And keep us so safe at home,  
 And are never easy a moment,  
 If ever we chance to roam?  
 When you ought to be thanking heaven  
 That your Plague is out of the way—  
 You all keep fussing and fretting—  
 "Where *is* my Plague to-day?"

If a Plague peeps out of the window,  
Up go the eyes of the men;  
If she hides, then they all keep staring  
Until she looks out again.

Collins.

While on the subject of Aristophanes' comedies on women, we may mention the *Parliament of Women* (392 B. C.), one of his latest productions. The woman's-rights women dress up as men and pack the assembly. They propose and carry a motion placing the government entirely in the hands of the fair sex—"the only change that has not yet been tried at Athens." The principal reform which they enact is that the ugly women shall have the first choice of husbands. The last play of our poet was the *Plutus* (*Wealth*), which received the first prize in 388 B. C. The blind god of wealth has his eyesight restored, and proceeds to undo the wrong which he has formerly committed, now making the good rich and the wicked poor.

Returning now to the earlier plays of Aristophanes, let us consider the *Knights*, with which he was victorious in 424 B. C.—a violent and bitter attack upon the popular demagogue Cleon, who succeeded Pericles as the leader of the people's party. The Athenian populace is represented as a testy, selfish, and suspicious old man, but easily cajoled if the proper means are employed. Cleon is his servant, obsequious to him, but insolent and overbearing to every one else. A sausage-seller, a low, vulgar fellow, bred in the slums, succeeds, with the help of the chorus of Athenian knights, in winning Cleon's place in the old man's favor, outbidding his rival in the latter's own

shameless methods. The chorus of knights attack Cleon as soon as they enter the orchestra, suiting their actions to the following vigorous words:

Close around him, and confound him, the confounder  
of us all.

Pelt him, pummel him, and maul him; rummage, ransack,  
overhaul him,

Overbear him and out-bawl him; bear him down and  
bring him under.

Bellow like a burst of thunder, robber! harpy! sink of  
plunder!

Rogue and villain! rogue and cheat! rogue and villain,  
I repeat!

Oftener than I can repeat it, has the rogue and villain  
cheated.

Close around him left and right; spit upon him; spurn  
and smite:

Spit upon him as you see; spurn and spit at him like me.  
But beware, or he'll evade ye, for he knows the private  
track,

Where Eucrates was seen escaping with the mill dust on  
his back.

The *Knights* was the first play which Aristophanes brought out in his own name; the earlier plays he had put into the hands of older and more experienced managers. The chorus explains the matter in the parabasis, which begins thus:

If a veteran author had wished to engage  
Our assistance to-day, for a speech from the stage;  
We scarce should have granted so bold a request;  
But this author of ours, as the bravest and best,  
Deserves an indulgence denied to the rest.  
For the courage and vigour, the scorn and the hate,  
With which he encounters the pests of the State;  
A thorough-bred seaman, intrepid and warm,  
Steering outright, in the face of the storm.

But now for the gentle reproaches he bore  
On the part of his friends, for refraining before  
To embrace the profession, embarking for life  
In theatrical storms and poetical strife.

He begs us to state, that for reasons of weight,  
He has lingered so long, and determined so late.  
For he deemed the achievements of comedy hard,  
The boldest attempt of a desperate bard!  
The Muse he perceived was capricious and coy,  
Though many were courting her, few could enjoy.  
And he saw without reason, from season to season,  
Your humour would shift and turn poets adrift,  
Requiting old friends with unkindness and treason,  
Discarded in scorn as exhausted and worn.

In the *Clouds* (423 B. C.) the poet attacks the new school of sophists which had arisen in Athens—the clever rhetorical teachers who undertook to show how a man by using their method might prove anything whatever. The play is a sharp protest against these free-thinkers, who were undermining, as the poet would have us believe, the old-fashioned morals of the Athenians. Socrates, who was just coming into prominence as an intellectual leader, is made the representative of the class—with gross injustice, for his aims and ideals, if not his methods, were totally opposed to those of the sophists, who were a strictly professional class. But it served the poet's purpose to make Socrates the butt of his satire. An old man who is heavily loaded with his son's debts applies to the thinking-shop of Socrates for lessons in argument, that he may clear off the debts without paying a cent. Socrates is found suspended in a basket in midair, engaged in speculation. He introduces the new student to the new goddess of philosophers, the Clouds, who come floating into the orchestra at his

summons. But the old man is soon dismissed for his stupidity, and sends his son to the school instead. The young man proves an apt pupil. When he has finished the course, he abuses his father to such an extent that the latter, enraged at the outcome of his experiment in the new education, sets fire to the thinking-shop, while Socrates within is "walking in air and contemplating the sun." I quote the beautiful entrance song of the chorus of Clouds, who come in response to Socrates' invitation:

Immortal Clouds from the echoing shore  
 Of the father of streams from the sounding sea  
 Dewy and fleet let us rise and roar;  
 Dewy and gleaming and fleet are we!  
 Let us look on the tree-clad mountain-crest,  
 On the sacred earth where the fruits rejoice,  
 On the waters that murmur east and west,  
 On the tumbling sea with his moaning voice.  
 For unwearied glitters the Eye of the Air,  
 And the bright rays gleam;  
 Then cast we our shadows of mist, and fare  
 In our deathless shapes to glance everywhere  
 From the height of the heavens, on the land and air,  
 And the Ocean Stream.  
 Let us on, ye Maidens that bring the Rain,  
 Let us gaze on Pallas' citadel,  
 In the country of Cecrops fair and dear,  
 The mystic hand of the holy cell,  
 Where the Rites unspoken securely dwell,  
 And the gifts of the gods that know not stain,  
 And a people of mortals that know not fear.  
 For the temples tall and the statues fair,  
 And the feasts of the gods are holiest there;  
 The feasts of Immortals, the chaplet of flowers,  
 And the Bromian mirth at the coming of spring,  
 And the musical voices that fill the hours,  
 And the dancing feet of the maids that sing!

Lang.



The *Wasps* (422 B. C.) is a satire directed against the passion of the Athenians for the law-courts. Six thousand citizens are said to have presented themselves daily at the courts for service upon the juries,<sup>1</sup> for which they received a fee. The pay was the object with the majority of them, but the love of litigious scenes was probably the motive with many. The chorus is composed of men costumed as wasps, an allusion to the acrimonious temper induced by the jury-habit.

To those who are familiar with the works of the Greek tragic poets, the *Frogs*, which received the first prize in 405, is one of the most delightful of the plays of our poet. It is a witty but discriminating piece of literary criticism directed against Euripides, who had died in the preceding year, a few months before Sophocles. Dionysus, the patron of the drama, is represented as disgusted with the tragic poets of the day. He conceives the plan of fetching one of the old poets from Hades. He prefers Sophocles, but Euripides, always fertile with schemes, is more likely to be able to find a way of escape from the lower world. So he fits himself out with the club and lion's skin of Heracles, and starts out on his voyage to the lower world, first receiving instructions from Heracles, who has been there. On the way he meets a dead man borne on a bier, with whom his slave tries to strike a bargain for the conveyance of the luggage. But the dead man "would sooner come to life again" than to accept the pittance offered. While Charon is rowing them across the Styx, the chorus of frogs

<sup>1</sup>This large number is partly explained by the size of the Athenian jury, which ranged from 201 to 2,501 members.

chant their song, with the famous refrain, brékkekekéx, koáx, koáx. On the other side the singing of the chorus of the Initiated<sup>1</sup> greets the travelers. After a number of amusing adventures, Dionysus reaches the house of Pluto, and learns of a tremendous contention among the dead. Euripides has gathered a party of rogues and vagabonds together, and is trying to oust Æschylus from the seat of honor assigned to the best tragic poet. Sophocles does not press his claim; in fact, when he first came down, he had kissed Æschylus, who gratefully offered him a part of the seat. Pluto proposes to hold a public trial to decide between Æschylus and Euripides. Dionysus is installed as judge, Pluto agreeing to let him take back to earth the poet whom he places first. Æschylus at first demurs to the plan as unfair to him, "because," he says, "my poems live on earth above, while his died with him and are here as witnesses for him." After a heated debate between the two poets, and a test by weighing their verses, Dionysus decides in favor of Æschylus. Dionysus then leads Æschylus away, the latter giving his chair to Sophocles.

This song of the chorus of Initiated illustrates the poet's facility in dropping from the sublime to the ridiculous:

Raise the fiery torches high!  
 Bacchus is approaching nigh,  
 Like the planet of the morn  
 Breaking with the hoary dawn  
     On the dark solemnity—  
 There they flash upon the sight;  
 All the plain is blazing bright,

<sup>1</sup>Those who had been initiated into the mysteries at Eleusis, who enjoyed special privileges in the world below.

Flushed and overflown with light;

Age has cast his years away,

And the cares of many a day,

Sporting to the lively lay—

Mighty Bacchus! march and lead

(Torch in hand toward the mead)

Thy devoted humble chorus;

Mighty Bacchus—move before us!

Keep silence,—keep peace—and let all the profane

From our holy solemnity duly refrain;

Whose souls, unenlightened by taste, are obscure;

Whose poetical notions are dark and impure;

Whose theatrical conscience

Is sullied by nonsense;

Who never were trained by the mighty Cratinus

In mystical orgies, poetic and vinous;

Who delight in buffooning, and jests out of season;

Who promote the designs of oppression and treason;

Who foster sedition, and strife and debate;

All traitors, in short, to the Stage and the State:

Who surrender a fort, or in private export

To places and harbours of hostile resort

Clandestine consignments of cables and pitch,—

In the way Thorycion grew to be rich

From a scoundrelly dirty collector of tribute:

All such we reject and severely prohibit;

All statesmen retrenching the fees and the salaries

Of theatrical bards, in revenge for the raileries

And jests and lampoons of this holy solemnity,

Profanely pursuing their personal enmity,

For having been flouted and scoffed and scorned—

All such are admonished and heartily warned:

We warn them once,

We warn them twice,

We warn and admonish—we warn them thrice,

To conform to the law,

To retire and withdraw

While the chorus again, with the formal saw,

(Fixt and assigned to the festive day)

Move to the measure and march away.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE HISTORIANS. HERODOTUS

The Late Development of Prose Writing — The Causes — The Earliest Prose — Hecataeus — Herodotus — His Life — The Perfection of his Style — The Character of his History — Its Theme — Its National Feeling — Religious Interpretation of History — The Division into Books — Analysis — Herodotus's Fondness for Digressions — *Selections*: The Customs of the Lydians, Persians, Babylonians, and Egyptians — The Experiment of Psammetichus.

It is a remarkable fact in the history of Greek literature that literary prose was not developed until after the great branches of poetry which we have considered had reached maturity. While the drama, the most perfect and highly finished form of poetry, was being perfected in Attica, the Greeks of Asia Minor were but just turning their attention to narrative in prose. The first work of real literature in prose, the history of Herodotus, was not published until after Sophocles had reached the zenith of his powers. The explanation of this phenomenon lies not in the absence of adequate materials for writing, nor in the fact that there was no reading public, properly so called, until about the age of Pericles. The earliest prose writings were intended for oral publication no less than the poetry, and long before the earliest prose writer of whom we know, the art of writing was freely practiced throughout the Greek world—a fact that implies the existence of suitable materials for writing other than

stone, metal, and wood. The late rise of prose was due rather to the perfection which narrative verse had early attained, and to the dominating influence which composition in verse, such as the narratives of Homer and the practical philosophy of Hesiod and the elegiac poets, had acquired among cultivated Greeks. Before the sixth century it did not occur to any one who desired to address the public to use any other form of expression than verse.

Naturally prose was employed for certain purposes long before it was used in literature. Codes of law, treaties, the annals of cities and sanctuaries, lists of officials and victors at the games, were certainly written down as early as the seventh century. The maxims of the Seven Sages, such as "Know thyself" and "Nothing in excess," may be regarded as the beginnings of a prose literature. The animal fables that passed under the name of Æsop seem to have been about as early and in prose form. But the impulse to extended composition in prose was first felt by the Ionians of Asia Minor about the middle of the sixth century, first by writers on speculative theology and natural philosophy, and a little later by writers on travel and geography. The style of these writers was crabbed and jerky, and often obscure. The first important name with which we meet is that of Hecataeus of Miletus (flourished about 500 B. C.), who wrote a work entitled *Genealogies* and a *Description of the World*.

Passing over the minor writers whose works are lost, we come to the "Father of History," Herodotus. He was born about 490 B. C., at Halicarnassus in Caria, a Dorian city with a large Ionian element in its

population. He came of a noble family of literary traditions, and seems to have inherited a taste for the antiquities of history. When a little more than thirty years of age, he was obliged to leave his native city on account of political dissensions there, and for more than ten years lived the life of a wanderer. His travels carried him north as far as Byzantium and the Black Sea, as far east as Babylon, and into Egypt and the northern portions of Africa to the south. He also visited the principal cities of the continent of Greece, and seems to have been often in Athens, where on one occasion he received a gift of ten talents for a recitation from his works. He read portions of his history also at the great national festival at Olympia, and also at Sparta, Argos, and Corinth. He made his home at last in the Athenian colony at Thurii, in southern Italy, where he died about 428 B. C.

We are fortunate in possessing in its entirety the one great work which Herodotus produced, the History. It is written in the Ionic dialect, and in a style so simple, and withal so graphic and entertaining, that the reader is forced to marvel at the degree of literary merit attained in the first artistic work in prose which Greek literature produced. Certainly no subsequent Greek historian ever attained to the perfection of style which Herodotus, the first great writer of prose and the first historian, seems so easily to have reached. And yet the work is rather to be regarded as a piece of pure literature than as a history. "Rich as it is in the materials of history," to use the words of Professor Wheeler, "it cannot be history for the people of to-day. It is better than that, for it is a picture of what history was to people then." The Greeks had not yet reached

the conception of what a history should be. Herodotus was not a trained observer, nor did he make the use of such documents as existed which our modern historical critics would demand. He had traveled far and wide, keen to observe the customs of the different peoples whom he visited, and ever ready to listen to the anecdotes of his guides and acquaintances. Knowing no language but Greek, he was at the mercy of the dragomans, who were not more scrupulous then than they are to-day. But he at least is careful to distinguish between what he had seen with his own eyes and what he had heard from others. As a story-teller Herodotus stands without a peer, but his earnest purpose was to be more than a story-teller.

The subject which Herodotus chose for his history was the conflict of the Greeks and the Barbarians which culminated in the great struggle known as the Persian wars. Thus the first European history was a presentation of the earliest phase of the eternal Eastern Question. Herodotus introduces his subject in these words:

These are the researches of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, which he publishes, in the hope of thereby preserving from decay the remembrance of what men have done, and of preventing the great and wonderful actions of the Greeks and the Barbarians from losing their due meed of glory; and withal to put on record what were their grounds of feud.

His own native city was one of the early victims of this feud, and his youthful imagination must have been deeply stirred by the glorious conflict for freedom through which his people had passed. While his extensive travels gave him a cosmopolitan view, they did not diminish the strong national feeling which the

events of his youth had enkindled in him, as in all other Greeks. He approached his subject, also, with something of the religious feeling with which Æschylus interpreted the 'heroic legends of Greece: the hand of divine providence alone will explain the miraculous overthrow of the enormous power of Persia by a handful of Greeks; the successful become insolent and overweening, are infatuated, and God brings them low. This thought recurs again and again, and is applied to Persia in a speech put into the mouth of a Persian nobleman, Artabanus, who thus addresses Xerxes:

Seest thou how God with his lightning smites alway the bigger animals, and will not suffer them to wax insolent, while those of lesser bulk chafe him not? How likewise his bolts fall ever on the highest houses and the tallest trees? So plainly does he have to bring down everything that exalts itself. Thus oftentimes a mighty host is discomfited by a few men, when God in his jealousy sends fear or storm from heaven, and they perish in a way unworthy of them. For God allows no one to have high thoughts but himself.

This old doctrine, which constitutes Herodotus' philosophy of history, gives a dramatic unity to his story, which thus becomes the Tragedy of Xerxes.

The History of Herodotus was divided into books by the scholars of Alexandria, who assigned to them the names of the nine Muses. In spite of the countless digressions which occupy the larger portion of the first six books, the thread of the main narrative is never lost from view. In the first book, after presenting the mythical conflicts of the Greeks and the Barbarians which culminated in the Trojan war, he finds the first historical cause of offense in the subjugation



of the Ionian cities by Cræsus, king of Lydia. This leads to an account of the kings of Lydia, the country, and its wonderful sights. Cræsus is overthrown by Cyrus the Great, king of Persia. An account of the foundation of the empire of the Medes and the Persians follows, and the charming story of Cyrus himself. The growth of the Persian Empire until it came into conflict with Greece may be considered the main subject of the first six books. The overthrow of the Babylonian kingdom and the death of Cyrus fall within the first book. Cambyses succeeded Cyrus on the throne and invaded Egypt. This leads to the wonderful description of Egypt which occupies the second book. The third book tells of the conquest of Egypt, the death of Cambyses, and the upbuilding of the empire of Darius, his successor. The fourth book is taken up by the campaigns of Darius, with long accounts of the Scythians and Libyans. In the fifth book, after a description of the Thracians, we come to the beginning of the conflict between the Persians and Greeks, which occupies the sixth book. The revolt of the Ionian cities from Persia, their successful appeal to Athens for aid, the two campaigns of Darius against Athens, the second of which resulted in the glorious victory of Marathon, prepare us for the life-and-death struggle depicted in the last three books. In these Herodotus rises fully to the grandeur of his imposing theme. After describing the stupendous preparations of Xerxes and the march of his army of five millions across the Hellespont and down into Greece, he depicts the dismay of the Greeks, the resistance of the few brave Spartans at Thermopylæ, then the crushing defeat of the Persian fleet at Salamis

and the flight of Xerxes, and finally the battle of Plataea and the rout of the Persian army in the west, and on the same day the defeat of the Persian army in the east, at Mycale.

Herodotus distinctly states that he makes a specialty of digressions from his main theme. For example, whenever his narrative brings him to a new people, he invariably turns aside to describe the monuments of their country, their dress, customs, institutions, history, or whatever he has seen or heard about them that may be of interest. And he never fails to be interesting. These descriptions are delightful reading to us because of their charming naïveté; by the Greeks of his time, almost entirely unacquainted with the world beyond the coasts of the Mediterranean, they must have been listened to with open-mouthed wonder. In selecting specimen passages from the History, I have passed over the strictly historical portions in favor of these digressions, which show Herodotus in his best rôle, that of story-teller. First a few passages on the strange customs of various peoples. I use Rawlinson's translation :

The Lydians have very nearly the same customs as the Greeks, with the exception that these last do not bring up their girls in the same way. So far as we have any knowledge, they were the first nation to introduce the use of gold and silver coin, and the first who sold goods by retail. They claim also the invention of all the games which are common to them with all the Greeks. These they declare that they invented about the time when they colonized Tyrrhenia, an event of which they give the following account: In the days of Atys, the son of Manes, there was great scarcity throughout the whole land of Lydia. For some time the Lydians bore the affliction patiently, but finding that it did not pass away, they set to work

to devise remedies for the evil. Various expedients were discovered by various persons; dice and huckle-bones and ball, and all such games were invented, except tables, the invention of which they do not claim as theirs. The plan adopted against the famine was to engage in games one day so entirely as not to feel any craving for food, and the next day to eat and abstain from games. In this way they passed eighteen years.—I, 94.

It is also their (i. e., the Persians') general practice to deliberate upon affairs of weight when they are drunk; and then, on the morrow, when they are sober, the decision to which they came the night before is put before them by the master of the house in which it was made, and if it is then approved of they act on it; if not, they set it aside. Sometimes, however, they are sober at their first deliberation, but in this case they always reconsider the matter under the influence of wine. . . .

Next to prowess in arms, it is regarded as the greatest proof of manly excellence to be the father of many sons. Every year the king sends rich gifts to the man who can show the largest number; for they hold that number is strength. Their sons are carefully instructed, from their fifth to their twentieth year, in three things alone, to ride, to draw the bow, and to speak the truth. Until their fifth year they are not allowed to come into the sight of their father, but pass their lives with the women. This is done that, if the child die young, the father may not be afflicted by its loss. To my mind it is a wise rule.—I, 133, 136.

Of their (i. e., the Babylonians') customs, whereof I shall now proceed to give an account, the following (which I understand belongs to them in common with the Illyrian tribe of the Eneti) is the wisest in my judgment. Once a year in each village the maidens of age to marry were collected all together into one place; while the men stood round them in a circle. Then the herald called up the damsels one by one, and offered them for sale. He began with the most beautiful. When she was sold for no small sum of money, he offered for sale the one who came next to her in beauty. All of them were sold to be wives. The richest of the Babylonians who wished to wed bid against each other for the loveliest maidens, while the humbler wife-

seekers, who were indifferent about beauty, took the more homely damsels with marriage-portions. For the custom was that when the herald had gone through the whole number of the beautiful damsels, he should then call up the ugliest—a cripple, if there chanced to be one—and offer her to the men, asking who would agree to take her with the smallest marriage-portion. And the man who offered to take the smallest sum had her assigned to him. The marriage-portions were furnished by the money paid for the beautiful damsels, and thus the fairer maidens portioned out the uglier. No one was allowed to give his daughter in marriage to the man of his choice, nor might any one carry away the damsel whom he had purchased without finding bail really and truly to make her his wife; if, however, it turned out that they did not agree, the money might be paid back. All who liked might come, even from distant villages, and bid for the women. This was the best of all their customs, but it has now fallen into disuse.—I, 196.

Concerning Egypt itself I shall extend my remarks to a great length, because there is no country that possesses so many wonders, nor any that has such a number of works which defy description. Not only is the climate different from that of the rest of the world, and the rivers unlike any other rivers, but the people also, in most of their manners and customs, exactly reverse the common practice of mankind. The women attend the markets and trade, while the men sit at home at the loom; and here, while the rest of the world works the woof up the warp, the Egyptians work it down; the women likewise carry burthens upon their shoulders, while the men carry them upon their heads. They eat their food out of doors in the streets, but retire for private purposes to their houses, giving as a reason that what is unseemly, but necessary, ought to be done in secret, but what has nothing unseemly about it, should be done openly. A woman cannot serve the priestly office, either for god or goddess, but men are priests to both; sons need not support their parents unless they choose, but daughters must, whether they choose or no.

They are the only people in the world—they at least, and such as have learnt the practice from them—who use circum-

cision. Their men wear two garments apiece, their women but one. They put on the rings and fasten the ropes to sails inside, others put them outside. When they write or calculate, instead of going, like the Greeks, from left to right, they move their hand from right to left; and they insist, notwithstanding, that it is they who go to the right, and the Greeks who go to the left. They have two quite different kinds of writing, one of which is called sacred, the other common.

Medicine is practiced among them on a plan of separation; each physician treats a single disorder, and no more: thus the country swarms with medical practitioners, some undertaking to cure diseases of the eye, others of the head, others again of the teeth, others of the intestines, and some those which are not local.—II, 35, 36, 84.

Before entering upon his famous account of the Egyptians and their country, Herodotus gives a description of a curious experiment of King Psammetichus, which reads almost like a report from a modern laboratory:

Now the Egyptians, before the reign of their king Psammetichus, believed themselves to be the most ancient of mankind. Since Psammetichus, however, made an attempt to discover who were actually the primitive race, they have been of opinion that while they surpass all other nations, the Phrygians surpass them, in antiquity. This king, finding it impossible to make out by dint of inquiry what men were the most ancient, contrived the following method of discovery: He took two children of the common sort, and gave them over to a herdsman to bring up at his folds, strictly charging him to let no one utter a word in their presence, but to keep them in a sequestered cottage, and from time to time introduce goats to their apartment, see that they got their fill of milk, and in all other respects look after them. His object herein was to know, after the indistinct babblings of infancy were over, what word they would first articulate. It happened as he had anticipated. The herdsman obeyed his orders for two years, and at the end of that time, on his one day opening the door of their

room and going in, the children both ran up to him with outstretched arms, and distinctly said "becos." When this first happened the herdsman took no notice; but afterwards when he observed, on coming often to see after them, that the word was constantly in their mouths, he informed his lord, and by his command brought the children into his presence. Psammetichus then himself heard them say the word, upon which he proceeded to make inquiry what people there was who called anything "becos," and hereupon he learnt that "becos" was the Phrygian name for bread. In consideration of this circumstance the Egyptians yielded their claims, and admitted the greater antiquity of the Phrygians. That these were the real facts I learnt at Memphis from the priests of Vulcan. The Greeks, among other foolish tales, relate that Psammetichus had the children brought up by women whose tongues he had previously cut out; but the priests said their bringing up was such as I have stated above.—II, 2-3.

## CHAPTER XII

### THUCYDIDES AND XENOPHON

The Earliest Attic Prose — Thucydides — His Life — The *History of the Peloponnesian War* — The Plan and Purpose of the Historian — Contrast with Herodotus — Style — The Reported Speeches — The Divisions of the History — *Selections*: Contrast of the Athenian and Spartan Characters — Extracts from Pericles' Funeral Oration — The Spectators of the Naval Battle at Syracuse — Xenophon — His Life — His Historical Writings, the *Anabasis* and the *Hellenica* — The Essays and Minor Writings — Xenophon's Position in Greek Literature — *Selections*: The First Glimpse of the Sea — Xenophon's Tact.

The Ionians produced no great writer of prose literature after Herodotus. After his death, the masters in prose were Athenians, either by birth or by adoption, so long as Greece was free, or rather until the literary centre of the Greek-speaking world was transferred from Athens to Alexandria. The earliest extant specimens of Attic literary prose is a small treatise on the *Constitution of Athens*, written about 420 B. C., and formerly attributed to Xenophon. Next come the early orators, and then the great historian, Thucydides.

The little that we know about Thucydides is furnished by himself. At the outbreak of the Peloponnesian war, in 431 B. C., he was a man of maturity; we may therefore place the date of his birth about 470 B. C. An Athenian by birth, his father's family were originally Thracians, closely related to the wife of Miltiades, the hero of Marathon. We can only con-

jecture what were the influences which surrounded his youth and early manhood; but since his family was wealthy and influential, and he himself exceptionally endowed by nature, we may believe that he participated fully in the marvelous and many-sided culture for which the age of Pericles was distinguished. For a time after the outbreak of the war he was one of the Athenian generals. In 424 B. C. an event occurred, however, which doubtless seemed a heavy misfortune to him, though in reality it was the turning-point of his life and opened to him the career for which his talents best fitted him. While he was in command of an Athenian fleet off the Thracian coast, the Spartan general Brasidas surprised and captured Amphipolis, the principal Athenian possession in northern Greece. Thucydides was near enough to have prevented the capture of the stronghold, but he lingered in the neighborhood of some gold mines which belonged to him and arrived too late. Whatever the reason was for his delay, the Athenians promptly deprived him of his command, and he lived in exile for twenty years, until the end of the war in 404 B. C. During this time he followed the war closely, gathered facts from the Spartan as well as from the Athenian side, visited many important sites, probably including Sicily, and thus laboriously and conscientiously got together the materials for his history. He died about 398 B. C.

The *History of the Peloponnesian War* was the life-work of Thucydides. He himself, in the opening paragraph, tells us how he came to write it:

Thucydides, an Athenian, wrote the history of the war in which the Peloponnesians and the Athenians fought against one another. He began to write when they first took up arms,



believing that it would be great and memorable above any previous war. For he argued that both states were then at the full height of their military power, and he saw the rest of the Hellenes either siding or intending to side with one or other of them. No movement ever stirred Hellas more deeply than this; it was shared by many of the Barbarians, and might be said even to affect the world at large.

Thucydides did not underestimate the magnitude of the task to which he applied himself, nor did he approach it in the uncritical spirit of Herodotus. These are his own memorable words, which sound the keynote both to the form and style in which he composed his history, and to his high ideal of the scope and method of historical inquiry:

“Of the events of the war I have not ventured to speak from any chance information, nor according to any notion of my own; I have described nothing but what I either saw myself or learned from others of whom I made the most careful and particular inquiry. The task was a laborious one, because eye-witnesses of the same occurrences gave different accounts of them, as they remembered or were interested in the actions of one side or the other. And very likely the strictly historical character of my narrative may be disappointing to the ear. But if he who desires to have before his eyes a true picture of the events which have happened, and of the like events which may be expected to happen hereafter in the order of human things, shall pronounce what I have written to be useful, then I shall be satisfied. My history is an everlasting possession, not a prize composition which is heard and forgotten.”

In these last words we may detect a covert criticism of Herodotus, who delighted in anecdotes and narrations “pleasing to the ear.” Thucydides sedulously avoids digressions from his theme, though he goes aside two or three times to set right a false popular tradition. We should gladly have learned from him

something about the great literary, artistic, and social movements in Athens, or about the personality of the great men of the day; but he confines himself strictly to the facts of political history. In interpreting these facts he has no theory of his own to expound. Destiny and the gods play no part with him. He deals with the actions of men and the motives which actuate them. Nor is he deceived by the false motives which partisans assign to their own side. The Spartans professed to desire to free Greece from the tyranny of the Athenian Empire. "The real, though unavowed, cause," says Thucydides, "I believe to have been the growth of the Athenian power, which terrified the Lacedæmonians and forced them into war." Again, with reference to the Sicilian expedition, he says that the Athenians "virtuously professed that they were going to assist their own kinsmen and their newly acquired allies, but the simple truth was that they aspired to the empire of Sicily." Unincumbered, therefore, by preconceived theories of his own, and remarkably free from partisan bias, with the sole purpose of setting forth the facts concerning a war of momentous importance to the Greeks, not as an entertainment, but as a "possession forever," Thucydides tells the tragic story of the downfall of Athens with a calm but vigorous eloquence, a sincerity of purpose, and a moral elevation of tone that place him at once upon the level of the world's greatest minds. He is justly entitled to be called the first critical historian, the first philosopher of history, whom Greece and Europe have produced.

The history of Thucydides was the first serious attempt in Attic prose. We cannot expect, and we

do not find, the perfection of style reached by Isocrates or Plato in the next generation. Rhetoric was just beginning to be cultivated; neither the diction nor the style suitable to prose discourse had as yet been developed. We can see that Thucydides struggled with the language to make it the appropriate and adequate vehicle of his thought. He succeeds best in the simple narration of events, but when he begins to generalize and to indulge in philosophical reflections he often becomes obscure. Such reflections and generalizations he usually embodies in the speeches which he attributes to the actors in his story. This is a peculiar feature of his history, in which the later historians of Greece and Rome imitated him. It would seem that he felt obliged, in giving a faithful recital of events, to relate what generals and statesmen said, as well as what they did. Public speaking was so important a part of the political life of the day that it could not be overlooked in an historical narrative. Thucydides explains his position in this matter: "As to the speeches which were made either before or during the war, it was hard for me, and for others who reported them to me, to recollect the exact words. I have therefore put into the mouth of each speaker the sentiments proper to the occasion, expressed as I thought he would be likely to express them, while at the same time I endeavored, as nearly as I could, to give the general purport of what was actually said." The result of this practice was to make the speeches a sort of rhetorical exercise, in which the writer tried to represent the character and motives, if not the exact language, of each speaker. In the speeches, accordingly, we are

apt to find the writer's own judgments of men and events, his diagnosis of situations, and his critical estimate of causes and effects.

The History of the Peloponnesian War was left incomplete at the author's death. It was his intention to give a complete account of the war from its beginning, in 431 B. C., to the fall of Athens, in 404 B. C.; but the story breaks off abruptly at the end of the twenty-first year. The work has come down to us divided into eight books, but the divisions were not made by Thucydides. After the introductory chapters, in which he compares the magnitude of this war with the other great wars which have stirred Hellas, "magnified by the exaggerated fancies of the poets," he takes up the causes which led to the terrific struggle between Athens and Sparta, and then proceeds to give the events of the war in chronological order by campaigns. The work falls into three main divisions. The first four books and a part of the fifth bring the story down to the peace of Nicias, in 421 B. C. The next three books cover the eight years of the doubtful truce, in which Athens and Sparta were not engaged in open hostilities, but war raged in the Peloponnesus between Argos and Sparta, while Athens was active in fostering the quarrel and in strengthening her empire on the sea. Finally, from 415 to 413, Athens engaged in the disastrous expedition against Sicily. The account of this expedition which Thucydides gives in a marvelous piece of writing. The eighth book begins the third part of the war, the renewal of fighting between Athens and Sparta.

From the following selections from the history, in the admirable translation of Jowett, some idea of the

qualities of Thucydides' style in narrative, description, analysis of character, and in speech-writing, may be gained. The first selection, on the contrast of the Athenian and Spartan characters, is taken from a speech put in the mouth of the Corinthian envoys to Sparta, who urge an alliance against Athens.

And you have never considered what manner of men are these Athenians with whom you will have to fight, and how utterly unlike yourselves. They are revolutionary, equally quick in the conception and in the execution of every new plan; while you are conservative—careful only to keep what you have, originating nothing, and not acting even when action is most urgent. They are bold beyond their strength; they run risks which prudence would condemn; and in the midst of misfortune they are full of hope. Whereas it is your nature, though strong, to act feebly; when your plans are most prudent, to distrust them; and when calamities come upon you, to think that you will never be delivered from them. They are impetuous, and you are dilatory; they are always abroad, and you are always at home. For they hope to gain something by leaving their homes; but you are afraid that any new enterprise may imperil what you have already. When conquerors they pursue their victories to the utmost; when defeated, they fall back the least. Their bodies they devote to their country as though they belonged to other men; their true self is their mind, which is most truly their own when employed in her service. When they do not carry out an intention which they have formed, they seem to themselves to have sustained a personal bereavement; when an enterprise succeeds, they have gained a mere instalment of what is to come; but if they fail, they at once conceive new hopes, and so fill up the void. With them alone to hope is to have, for they lose not a moment in the execution of an idea. This is the life-long task, full of danger and toil, which they are always imposing upon themselves. None enjoy their good things less, because they are always seeking for more. To do their duty is their only holiday, and they deem the quiet of inaction to be as disagreeable as the most tiresome

business. If a man should say of them, in a word, that they were born neither to have peace themselves nor to allow peace to other men, he would simply speak the truth.—I, 70.

I quote next two extracts from the magnificent funeral oration of Pericles, delivered over the bodies of the Athenian soldiers who fell in the first campaign of the war:

To sum up: I say that Athens is the school of Hellas, and that the individual Athenian in his own person seems to have the power of adapting himself to the most varied forms of action with the utmost versatility and grace. This is no passing and idle word, but truth and fact; and the assertion is verified by the position to which these qualities have raised the state. For in the hour of trial Athens alone among her contemporaries is superior to the report of her. No enemy who comes against her is indignant at the reverses which he sustains at the hands of such a city; no subject complains that his masters are unworthy of him. And we shall assuredly not be without witnesses; there are mighty monuments of our power which will make us the wonder of this and of succeeding ages; we shall not need the praises of Homer or of any other panegyrist whose poetry may please for the moment, although his representation of the facts will not bear the light of day. For we have compelled every land and every sea to open a path for our valour, and have everywhere planted eternal memorials of our friendship and of our enmity. Such is the city for whose sake these men nobly fought and died; they could not bear the thought that she might be taken from them; and every one of us who survive should gladly toil on her behalf. . . .

I would have you day by day fix your eyes upon the greatness of Athens, until you become filled with the love of her; and when you are impressed by the spectacle of her glory, reflect that this empire has been acquired by men who knew their duty and had the courage to do it, who in the hour of conflict had the fear of dishonour always present to them, and who, if ever they failed in an enterprise, would not allow their virtues to be lost to their country, but freely gave their lives to

her as the fairest offering which they could present at her feast. The sacrifice which they collectively made was individually repaid to them; for they received again, each one for himself, a praise which grows not old, and the noblest of all sepulchres—I speak not of that in which their remains are laid, but of that in which their glory survives, and is proclaimed always and on every fitting occasion both in word and deed. For the whole earth is the sepulchre of famous men; not only are they commemorated by columns and inscriptions in their own country, but in foreign lands there dwells also an unwritten memorial of them, graven not on stone but in the hearts of men.—II, 41-43.

In the year 413 B. C. the Athenian fleet, in the harbor of Syracuse, engaged in a final battle with the Syracusan fleet and was defeated. The men on shore watched the conflict with fearful anxiety:

While the naval engagement hung in the balance the two armies on shore had great trial and conflict of souls. The Sicilian soldier was animated by the hope of increasing the glory which he had already won, while the invader was tormented by the fear that his fortunes might sink lower still. The last chance of the Athenians lay in their ships, and their anxiety was dreadful. The fortune of the battle varied; and it was not possible that the spectators on the shore should all receive the same impression of it. Being quite close and having different points of view, they would some of them see their own ships victorious; their courage would then revive, and they would earnestly call upon the gods not to take from them their hope of deliverance. But others, who saw their ships worsted, cried and shrieked aloud, and were by the sight alone more utterly unnerved than the defeated combatants themselves. Others again, who had fixed their gaze on some part of the struggle which was undecided, were in a state of excitement still more terrible; they kept swaying their bodies to and fro in an agony of hope and fear as the stubborn conflict went on and on; for at every instant they were all but saved or all but lost. And while the strife hung in the balance you might

hear in the Athenian army at once lamentation, shouting, cries of victory or defeat, and all the various sounds which are wrung from a great host in extremity of danger. Not less agonizing were the feelings of those on board. At length the Syracusans and their allies, after a protracted struggle, put the Athenians to flight, and triumphantly bearing down upon them, and encouraging one another with loud cries and exhortations, drove them to land. Then that part of the navy which had not been taken in the deep water fell back in confusion to the shore, and the crews rushed out of the ships into the camp. And the land forces, no longer now divided in feeling, but uttering one universal groan of intolerable anguish, ran, some of them to save the ships, others to defend what remained of the wall; but the greater number began to look to themselves and to their own safety.—VII, 71.

Xenophon, the only other historian of the classical period whose works are extant, was born near Athens about 431 B. C. In his youth he came under the influence of Socrates, who inspired in him feelings of profound admiration and affection. A few years after the fall of Athens, Xenophon received an invitation from a friend to take service under Cyrus, a Persian prince, who was gathering a force of Greek mercenaries to aid him in an attempt to wrest the throne from his brother Artaxerxes. After consulting with Socrates and the oracle at Delphi, Xenophon joined the expedition, an account of which he afterward gave in the *Anabasis*. This adventure occupied him from 401 to 399, the year in which Socrates was put to death. On his return to Asia Minor he served under the Spartan king, Agesilaus, for whose character and military ability he conceived a great admiration. He not only wrote an encomium upon him, the *Agesilaus*, but even fought under him with the Spartan forces against his own country at the battle of Coronea in 394 B. C. For



This act of treason he was formally banished from Athens. He had long been unfriendly to the extreme democracy of Athens and an enthusiastic admirer of the Spartan character and government, on which he wrote the laudatory essay entitled the *Polity of the Lacedæmonians*. The unjust condemnation and death of Socrates still further alienated him from his native city. Retiring to an estate near Olympia, granted him by the Spartans for his services to their cause, he devoted himself to the pleasures of country life and to literary work. After some years the turn of political events deprived him of his estate, and he took up his residence in Corinth, where he died soon after 357 B. C. Although the decree of banishment from Athens was revoked, he seems not to have cared to make it his home again.

The chief historical works of Xenophon are the *Hellenica* and the *Anabasis*. In the former he takes up the narrative of Thucydides, and brings the account of the Peloponnesian war to a close at the end of the second book. In the other five books he gives the history of Greece down to the battle of Mantinea, in 362 B. C. The work is valuable as our principal source of information on the history of this period, but in many respects falls short of what a history should be, the prejudice of its author in favor of Sparta constantly cropping out. Many important facts are omitted, and the story is not told in an attractive manner. Xenophon was far from being a worthy successor to Thucydides as an historian. The *Anabasis*, on the other hand, though dealing with an episode of minor interest in itself, gives us a much better idea of Xenophon's ability as a writer. The author's own participation in

the expedition of Cyrus lends the narrative the charm of a personal experience. The title, which means "*The March Inland*," strictly applies only to the first part of the work. After Cyrus had been slain in battle near Babylon, the Greek troops, numbering ten thousand, began their retreat. The story of the retreat occupies the larger part of the book, and is by far the more interesting. When most of the Greek leaders had been slain by treachery, Xenophon, who had not been attached to the expedition in an official capacity hitherto, rallied the surviving officers and virtually assumed command. It was mainly due to his ability as a general, his resourcefulness in critical situations, his imperturbable coolness and cheerfulness, and his Athenian readiness in persuasive oratory, that the ten thousand made their way through Kurdistan, Armenia, and Georgia to the Black Sea. After further adventures in Byzantium and Thrace, the remnant of the army, now reduced to six thousand, was incorporated in a Spartan army operating in the Troad, while Xenophon attached himself to the staff of the Spartan king Agesilaus.

Besides these two historical works, Xenophon wrote a number of essays, two of which, the *Agesilaus* and the *Polity of the Lacedæmonians*, have already been mentioned. In the *Memorabilia* or *Recollections of Socrates*, he vindicates the character and teachings of his master. Defending him first against the charges brought against Socrates at the trial, he exhibits what kind of a man he was by reporting his conversations with various men on many subjects. This work is valuable for the information which it gives about the daily life of Socrates and the character of his teach-

ings, but is not a great piece of literature. Socrates figures in two other essays, the *Symposium* and the treatise on *Domestic Economy*. In the former Socrates is represented as the principal guest at a typical Athenian banquet, which is enlivened by his conversation and the performances of jugglers and dancers—a charming picture. In the latter Socrates discourses on domestic affairs, and relates an interesting conversation with a newly married Athenian, who explains the method by which he broke in and trained in housewifely virtues his girl-wife of fifteen. The *Education of Cyrus* (Cyrus the Great, not the young prince for whom Xenophon had fought) is an idealized picture, not a biography, of a perfect prince and ruler, with enough of local color to lend verisimilitude to the account. It is the earliest attempt at an historical romance, and contains the first love-story in European prose literature. We have, besides the above, a few minor essays, the more interesting of which are the treatises *On Horsemanship* and *On Hunting*.

Xenophon does not hold an exalted position in the history of Greek literature, although there is much to admire in his character and in his writings. He had neither the critical ability nor the intellectual and moral force to be a great historian, although he was a careful observer and a fair judge of character. An Athenian by birth and education, he became alienated from his own country and people and adopted Spartan views. The events of contemporary history and the character of the leading men of the time were judged by him with a frankly avowed Spartan bias. His writings seem to have been generally admired in antiquity, not for purity of Attic style, but for their straightfor-

ward simplicity and grace—the words of a man of letters who was also a man of action. The story told in the *Anabasis* awakened the Greeks to the essential weakness of the great Persian Empire, and taught them that the terrible power with which they had once fought, and to which the several states had since become accustomed to look for protection, might crumble before the attack of a well-organized, though numerically inferior, foe. A later Greek writer coined the saying: “Alexander the Great would not have been great had not Xenophon been.” Xenophon's greatest merit is that he was an entertaining writer on a variety of subjects, furnishing useful information and standing for all that was esteemed noble and manly in character and conduct. He was the earliest essayist of Greece, and the first writer who employed the dialogue form in literature.

No passage in the *Anabasis* is more famous than the description of the excitement and joy of the Greek troops when, after their long and perilous march through an unknown and hostile country, after the severe privations and sufferings to which many of their number had succumbed, they at last caught a glimpse of the sea. Dakyn's translation is used:

On the fifth day they reached the mountain, the name of which was Theches. No sooner had the men in front ascended it and caught sight of the sea than a great cry arose, and Xenophon, with the rearguard, catching the sound of it, conjectured that another set of enemies must surely be attacking in front; for they were followed by the inhabitants of the country, which was all aflame; indeed the rearguard killed some and captured others alive by laying an ambush; they had taken also about twenty wicker shields, covered with the raw hides of shaggy oxen. But as the shout became louder and

nearer, and those who from time to time came up began racing at the top of their speed towards the shouters, and the shouting continually recommenced with yet greater volume as the numbers increased, Xenophon settled in his mind that something extraordinary must have happened, so he mounted his horse, and taking with him Lycius and the cavalry, he galloped to the rescue. Presently they could hear the soldiers shouting and passing on the joyful word, "The sea, the sea!" Thereupon they began running, rearguard and all, and the baggage animals and horses came galloping up. But when they had reached the summit, then indeed they fell to embracing one another—generals and officers and all—and the tears trickled down their cheeks.

*Anabasis*, IV, 7.

Xenophon's tact in dealing with men is illustrated in the following selection. The Greek army, after it had been safely brought out of Asia, was filled with mutinous murmurings against its leaders. A trial was instituted against them, and some of them were fined. It will be observed that Xenophon always refers to himself in the third person, and that quite without affectation.

Against Xenophon a charge was brought by certain people, who asserted that they had been beaten by him, and framed the indictment as one of personal outrage with violence. Xenophon got up and demanded that the first speaker should state "where and when it was he had received these blows." The other, so challenged, answered, "When we were perishing of cold and there was a great depth of snow." Xenophon said: "Upon my word, with weather such as you describe, when our provisions had run out, when the wine could not even be smelt, when numbers were dropping down dead beat, so acute was the suffering, with the enemy close on our heels; certainly, if at such a season as that I was guilty of outrage, I plead guilty to being a more outrageous brute than the ass, which is too wanton, they say, to feel fatigue. Still, I wish you would tell us," said he, "what led to my striking you? Did I ask

you for something, and, on your refusing it to me, did I proceed to beat you? Was it a debt, for which I demanded payment? or a quarrel about some boy or other? Was I the worse for liquor, and behaving like a drunkard?" When the man met each of these questions with a negative, he questioned him further: "Are you a heavy infantry soldier?" "No," said he. "A peltast, then?" "No, nor yet a peltast;" but he had been ordered by his messmates to drive a mule, although he was a free man. Then at last he recognized him, and inquired: "Are you the fellow who carried home the sick man?" "Yes, I am," said he, "thanks to your driving; and you made havoc of my messmates' kit." "Havoc!" said Xenophon. "Nay," I distributed it: some to one man, some to another to carry, and bade them bring the things safely to me; and when I got them back I delivered them all safely to you, when you, on your side, had rendered an account to me of the man. Let me tell you," he continued, turning to the court, "what the circumstances were; it is worth hearing:—A man was left behind from inability to proceed farther; I recognized the poor fellow sufficiently to see that he was one of ours, and I forced you, sir, to carry him to save his life. For, if I am not much mistaken, the enemy were close at our heels?" The fellow assented to this. "Well, then," said Xenophon, "after I had sent you forward, I overtook you again, as I came up with the rearguard; you were digging a trench with intent to bury the man; I pulled up and said something in commendation; as we stood by the poor fellow twitched his leg, and the bystanders all cried out: 'Why, the man's alive!' Your remark was: 'Alive or not as he likes, I am not going to carry him.' Then I struck you. Yes! you are right, for it looked very much as if you knew him to be alive." "Well," said he, "was he any the less dead when I reported him to you?" "Nay," retorted Xenophon, "by the same token we shall all one day be dead, but that is no reason why meantime we should all be buried alive!" Then there was a general shout: "If Xenophon had given the fellow a few more blows, it might have been better."

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE ORATORS. DEMOSTHENES

Eloquence among the Early Greeks—The Conditions under which Oratory became an Art—The Sophists and the Rhetoricians—The Influence of Sicily—The Professional Speech-writers—The Ten Attic Orators: Antiphon—Andocides—Lysias—Isocrates—Isæus—Æschines—Hyperides—Lycurgus—Deinarchus—Demosthenes—His early Training—The Prosecution of his Guardians—The Private Orations—The Public Prosecutions—The First Orations before the People—The Orations against Philip—After the Battle of Chæronea—The Oration *On the Crown*—The Harpalus Affair—His Death—Demosthenes the Consummation of Greek Oratory—Selections from the *Third Olynthiac*, the *Third Philippic*, the Oration *On the Crown*, and from Æschines' *Against Ctesiphon*.

The gift of persuasive speech was always highly prized among the Greeks. In the Homeric poems it was a rarer possession than valor, and was esteemed no less highly. Peleus sent Phœnix to the wars with his son Achilles to teach him to be "both a speaker of words and a doer of deeds." Odysseus was preëminent among the heroes as an orator. "When he uttered his great voice from his chest, and words like unto the snowflakes of winter, then no mortal man could contend with Odysseus." Into the mouth of Odysseus Homer puts this estimate of the value of eloquence: "The gods do not give every gracious gift to all, neither shapeliness, nor wisdom, nor skilled speech. For one man is feebler than another in presence, yet the gods crown his words with beauty, and men behold

him and rejoice, and his speech runs surely on his way with sweet modesty, and he shines forth among the gathering of the people, and as he passes through the town men gaze on him as a god." In later times it was the impassioned appeal of Solon that stirred the Athenians to renew the struggle for the possession of Salamis. The influence of Themistocles is expressly attributed to his ready oratory; and without his remarkable gift of persuasion, to which his contemporaries bear ample witness, Pericles could not have swayed to his will for over thirty years the fickle Athenian democracy.

But during all this time eloquence was considered an unusual gift, and its triumphs were due to the imposing personality of the speaker, an impressive manner of delivery, and the force of the facts presented, rather than to the arts of rhetoric. Oratory had not yet come to be regarded as an art, nor were the effects of speech upon an audience studied with the conscious purpose of enhancing them by improving the style and composition. But with the growth of democratic institutions and the spread of education among the masses, the importance of a skilful arrangement of the thoughts to be presented before the popular assemblies and the courts of law and of a perspicuous and vigorous style was more clearly recognized. The cultivation of oratory as an art and the rise of rhetoric was the result. In communities where absolute freedom of speech was allowed and where the populace had been accustomed for generations to hear and criticise the works of the greatest poets, as at Athens, the demands made upon the public speaker grew apace. The quick-witted audience reacted promptly



and powerfully upon the speaker. A neatly-phrased maxim, a novel turn of expression, a clever parry of an objection, striking collocations of words, figures of thought and of speech—such things delighted the ear and won applause and success. In the last quarter of the fifth century the tendency toward a highly developed rhetoric set in strongly. It exercised a marked influence upon tragedy, as is seen especially in the dialogue portions of the plays of Euripides, and is clearly observed in the speeches in Thucydides.

Oratory as a branch of literature was developed under the influence of two classes of teachers, the sophists and the rhetoricians, although the former term was often applied to the latter class also. The sophists ("wise men," "teachers of wisdom") were professional teachers of all the branches which tended to fit the youth for a successful public life. Public speaking was naturally included. The principal sophists who taught in Athens were all aliens—i. e., non-Attic Greeks: Protagoras of Abdera, Prodicus of Ceos, Thrasymachus of Calcedon, and Hippias of Elis. They were clever rather than profound, and the "art of speech" which they taught rested upon a superficial and often disingenuous method of argumentation by which they professed to be able "to make the worse argument appear the better." By their ostentatious dress and manner, the high fees which they charged, their subtlety and shallowness, and also because they were innovators from abroad, great prejudice was aroused against them on the part of the old-fashioned and the more thoughtful Athenians. Men like Socrates, who employed similar methods to some extent, but who was in no sense a professional teacher, shared in the

reproach which came to attach to the name of "sophist," although the name itself was honorable enough.

It was in Sicily, however, and not in Athens, that the theory of rhetoric was first developed. The social and political conditions there were in many points similar to those in Athens in the latter half of the fifth century. For the practical purpose of meeting the needs of people who had to plead cases before the law courts, Corax wrote a manual, developed later by a pupil, Tisias, through whom it came to Athens. Besides some hints on arguments, this manual gave little but elementary instruction as to the parts into which a speech should be divided. But the greatest impulse which Athenian oratory received from Sicily came from an accomplished speaker, Gorgias of Leontini, who came on a mission to Athens in 427 B. C. His brilliant style made a deep impression on the Athenians, who, largely through his persuasion, ventured upon the disastrous Sicilian expedition.

The teachings of the sophists and the influence of the Sicilian school of rhetoric brought oratory to the level of a department of literature through the professional speech-writers of Athens. The Athenian who was obliged to prosecute or defend a case before the court could not employ a lawyer to speak for him, but had to speak for himself. If he had no skill in oratory, he employed a professional speech-writer to prepare a speech for him. This he committed to memory and delivered as his own, but the real author, to further his own interests, published the composition under his own name. A large proportion of the extant orations owe their origin and their preservation to this custom. The skill of the speech-writer was shown not only in

the disposition and arrangement of the subjects which his client was to bring before the court, and the style and diction of the speech, but also in his adaptation both of subject-matter and of style to the individuality of the client. Most of the speech-writers were accomplished orators themselves; but qualities of another kind were needed to make the orator a successful pleader by proxy.

The later Greek critics drew up a canon of ten Attic orators, the greatest of whom was Demosthenes. Before considering him, we must pass briefly in review the lesser names, some of which are of great significance in the development of Attic oratory. The earliest was Antiphon, whom Thucydides considered the greatest orator of the day. He was deeply interested in the political movements of Athens, and was tried and executed in 411 B. C. for his participation in the revolution of the Four Hundred. Of the fifteen extant speeches twelve are rhetorical exercises, sketches of speeches which might be delivered in imaginary cases of homicide, two on each side. The other three were written for real causes, the best being *On the Murder of Herodes*, a defense of a young man from Mytilene charged with the murder of Herodes, an Athenian. In Antiphon the art of the speech-writer is not very highly developed. Little is said about the evidence, but a great deal about the improbability of the charge. His style was vigorous and elaborate, but not easy and graceful. No attempt was made to adapt the speeches to the personality of the client who delivered them.

Unlike Antiphon, Andocides was not a professional writer of speeches nor especially trained in the

schools of rhetoric. Our interest in him is largely personal, for he was involved in the scandal of the mutilation of the Hermæ,<sup>1</sup> which so shocked and terrified Athens in 415 B. C. He went into exile, and was restored to citizenship only by the general amnesty of 402 B. C. In 411 he unsuccessfully applied for a pardon, delivering a speech, *On the Return*, which is still extant. The old charges were revived against him in 399 B. C., but he defended himself successfully in the speech *On the Mysteries*, in which his best qualities as an orator are exhibited. A third speech is preserved, *On the Peace with Sparta*, being a report of the results of an embassy on which he was sent in 390 B. C.

Lysias, one of the most perfect of all writers of Attic prose, was born at Athens about 440 B. C. His father was a citizen of Syracuse, so that the son could not become an Athenian citizen except by a special enactment. Political reasons prevented such action in his case. After spending some years in southern Italy, he removed to Athens in 412 B. C., where he continued to live, excepting a brief period of exile in 404 B. C., until his death at the age of eighty. During the reign of terror under the Thirty Tyrants his property and that of his brother was confiscated, and his brother put to death, Lysias barely escaping with his life. On his return, after the restoration of the democracy, he delivered his most famous speech, *Against Eratosthenes*, one of the Thirty who was directly

<sup>1</sup>Statues of Hermes, which stood before the private houses and public buildings. One night, just before the fleet was to sail for Sicily, all these statues were mutilated. It was the sacrilege of this act, and the suspicion that it was the work of conspirators, which caused the consternation of the populace. Stories were then circulated that some of the young men had committed another act of sacrilege—the revealing of the sacred rites connected with the mysteries of Eleusis. Alcibiades, one of the Athenian generals in charge of the Sicilian Expedition, was implicated in these scandals and obliged to go into exile.

responsible for his brother's execution—the only oration which we know to have been delivered at Athens by Lysias himself. One other oration, of which only a fragment is preserved, he delivered at the festival at Olympia in 388 B. C., urging all the Greeks to unite against their common enemies. The rest of the orations still preserved, thirty-two in number, were written for others to deliver. As a speech-writer Lysias won unprecedented success. He probably took up this profession on account of the loss of his property, and must have been constantly employed, for over two hundred speeches by him were known in antiquity. The qualities in which he excelled were his simplicity and lucidity of style, his purity of diction, and especially his skillful adaptation of both style and matter to the character and condition of the speaker. He was a good student of human nature, knowing how to put his client into sympathy with his hearers at the outset, employing all the resources of his art to conciliate and to persuade, yet at the same time concealing his art by indulging in no rhetoric which would betray the speech-writer behind the speaker.

With Isocrates we come to an orator of an altogether different type. While Lysias was eminently practical, Isocrates aimed not at practical results but at a literary reputation. He was also a fashionable teacher, receiving large fees for his services, so that the term "sophist" was correctly applied to him, although he felt that he was far above the common level of the class, for he was a creative artist as well as a teacher. Born at Athens in 436 B. C., he studied under the greatest sophists of the day, and had some

connection with the circle of Socrates. He lacked the courage and physical vigor to enter upon a public career, and devoted himself at first to writing speeches for others. Six orations of this class are preserved. He then became a teacher of rhetoric, numbering among his pupils many of the eminent statesmen, historians, orators, and tragic poets of the next generation. His reputation as a teacher, however, was more than equaled by his fame as a writer of artistic prose. He brought the florid, periodic style to perfection. He was not content with purity of diction, well-rounded, sonorous periods, and the use of the various figures of speech; he gave to his prose the further advantage of rhythms, especially at the close of his periods, and carefully avoided the concurrence of vowels between words, which gave an effect displeasing to the ear. The style perfected by him became the model for later Greek prose, formed the basis of Cicero's style, and, through Cicero, has influenced modern literary prose. But the orations of Isocrates are monuments of style rather than of thought. They were written for display, and suffer from the defects in substance incident to merely epideictic composition. We feel that the political doctrines on which he expends so much skill were but a literary pretense. The most brilliant of his writings is the *Panegyricus*, intended for delivery at the gathering (*panegyris*) of the Greeks at Olympia, on the elaboration of which he is said to have spent ten years. In it he develops the idea which he cherished through life—the necessity of the united action of all the Greeks against the Persian Empire. Of the twenty-one orations extant the majority belong to the same class as the *Panegyricus*,

of which the *Areopagiticus*, a plea for the restoration of its ancient functions to the Court of the Areopagus, may be especially mentioned. Isocrates died, at an advanced age, in 338 B. C., just after the battle of Chæronea.<sup>1</sup>

Isæus was a contemporary of Isocrates, but his orations place him rather in the same class with Lysias. He was a speech-writer by profession, and devoted himself particularly to cases involving the laws of inheritance. Eleven of his orations are preserved. They all deal with abstruse and complex legal questions, and are of the highest importance for our knowledge both of Athenian family life and of the laws of intestate succession. Isæus combined a clear and forceful style with complete technical mastery of his subject, and, as the first great artist of forensic controversy, may be regarded as a forerunner of Demosthenes.

Æschines was born of respectable Attic parents in 389 B. C., being a few years older than his great rival, Demosthenes. His father was obliged by poverty to fit his son for a useful rather than a public career. After the usual military service, in which he acquitted himself honorably, Æschines became a clerk in some government office. The possession of an excellent voice and a good presence, however, directed him to the stage, where he spent a number of years as a tragic actor, taking rôles of minor importance. Returning again to his clerical office, he gradually made his way, by means of influence and of his native ability, to

<sup>1</sup>The story that he committed suicide is probably a fable. Milton refers to it in the lines:

“That dishonest victory  
At Chæronea, fatal to liberty,  
Killed with report that old man eloquent.”

a position of some importance in political life. He was sent on several embassies, twice as a colleague of Demosthenes. He was bitterly attacked for his part in the mission to Philip of Macedon, which resulted in the peace of Philocrates (346), and defended himself first in the oration *Against Timarchus* (345), and again against Demosthenes in the speech *On the Embassy* (343), both of which are still extant. On the latter occasion he narrowly escaped conviction. A bitter feud with Demosthenes was the result. When, in 336 B. C., Ctesiphon proposed that Demosthenes should receive a golden crown from the state in recognition of his public services, Æschines opposed the motion in the oration *Against Ctesiphon*, an elaborate and eloquent attack upon the whole life and public conduct of his rival. The attack failed, and Æschines, who received less than one-fifth of the votes cast, chose to leave Athens rather than submit to the heavy fine which was imposed in such cases. As a representative of the Macedonian party in Athens and an opponent of the patriotic policy of Demosthenes, Æschines fails to win our sympathy and respect; but it cannot be denied that he was an orator of first-rate ability and of brilliant natural gifts, probably the greatest orator of his time after Demosthenes. The three extant orations were published as a vindication of his conduct. He had not received the elaborate training of Demosthenes, nor did he look upon oratory as a profession. He seems generally to have spoken extempore. He excels in brilliant narrative rather than in close argumentation; but there is a lack of the conviction, moral earnestness, and high patriotic motives that distinguish Demosthenes.



The patriotic party at Athens received the support of two other of the ten great orators of the canon, Hypereides and Lycurgus. The former was a man of wealth and influence and an orator of the highest order. His speeches reveal the simplicity and grace of Lysias, but lack the passion and fire of Demosthenes. He cultivated the easy, conversational style in addressing the jury (for the custom had arisen of allowing friends of the parties directly interested in a case to make supplementary speeches), thus adopting the tactics of the modern lawyer. There is a refinement in the tone of his speeches which is often wanting in Demosthenes, especially in referring to his opponents. He became an opponent of Demosthenes after the latter had adopted a conciliatory policy toward Alexander. A considerable portion of the speech *Against Demosthenes* is preserved, in which a serious charge of bribing is brought against the latter. This and five other orations have been discovered on papyrus fragments found in Egypt at various times since 1847, the latest in 1892. Among these is a large portion of the *Funeral Oration* on the soldiers who fell in the Lamian war (322 B. C.), regarded in antiquity as the most perfect oration of its kind. Only one oration of Lycurgus, the remarkable statesman who had charge of the Athenian finances from 338 to 326, is extant. By the force of his character and intellectual attainments he gained a place among the Ten Orators, although he did not cultivate oratory for its own sake. The last of the Ten Orators in the canon was Deinarchus, a Corinthian by birth, a supporter of the party which opposed Demosthenes and favored Philip of Macedon. Three of his speeches are preserved.

We come now to the greatest orator of antiquity. Demosthenes was born in 384 B. C. His father, a wealthy manufacturer of weapons, died when he was seven years old. Discovering at an early age that his inheritance had greatly diminished through either the dishonesty or the mismanagement of his guardians, he determined to become an orator, that he might himself gain redress through the courts of law. He seemed little fitted either by nature or by his education to become a public speaker. His voice was weak and he lisped, and his manner was awkward. He had been allowed to neglect outdoor sports and the training of the gymnasium, which constituted an important part of the education of the Athenian youth. With indomitable determination he applied himself to overcome these defects. We are told that he declaimed with pebbles in his mouth to correct the lisping, spoke against the roar of the breakers to gain voice and presence of mind in the face of a tumult, confined himself for long periods to an underground chamber in study, took lessons in delivery from a famous actor and in legal argumentation from Isæus. At the age of twenty he prosecuted his guardians and obtained a verdict. The four speeches which grew out of these cases, *Against Aphobus* and *Onetor*, are still preserved.

But his patrimony was so impaired that he became a professional speech-writer. His activity in this direction was confined to the next fifteen years. Thirty-two private orations are preserved, of which only about one-third, including the four above mentioned, are considered genuine. The speech *For Pharmio* is considered the best of this class. Meanwhile he began to take part in public affairs. Before

appearing before the public assembly, however, he came before the courts and the Senate in cases involving public interests. The speeches *On the Naval Crown* (359), *Against Androtion* (355), and *Timocrates* were written for others to deliver. His first appearance in person in a public prosecution was in 354, with the speech *Against Leptines*, a brilliant effort, in which he defends the policy of rewarding by exempting from special taxation citizens who have deserved well of their country. The speech *Against Aristocrates* (352) introduces him to matters of foreign policy. The speech *Against Meidias* (349), who had assaulted Demosthenes in the theatre while the latter was discharging his duties as choregus, was never delivered, but shows at least how the young reformer had already got himself hated.

Meanwhile Demosthenes had steadily pushed forward into active participation in the affairs of the state. In the speeches before the Assembly *On the Navy Boards* (354), *For Megalopolis* (352), and *For the Rhodians* (351) he advocated administrative reforms and a more vigorous foreign policy. But his real strength was not shown until, in a succession of nine speeches, he warned Athens of the great danger that threatened her and all Hellas from the north in the person of Philip, king of Macedon, who had gradually been enlarging his dominions and was now threatening some of the Athenian possessions. The *First Philippic* (351) was followed by the three *Olynthiac* orations (349-8). Olynthus, the most powerful Greek city in the north, the head of a strong confederacy of cities, was threatened by Philip. Demosthenes, realizing that the interests of free Greece were vitally concerned

in its safety, urged the Athenians to send a strong force of troops to its assistance. He failed, however, to convince Athens of the gravity of the situation and to arouse her to put forth all her strength at the critical moment.

Olynthus fell in the year 348. Philip now directed his attention southward. By his admission to the Amphietyonic Council in 346 he became a Greek power, and by his diplomacy and intrigue won a strong party of supporters in Athens itself. Demosthenes at first, in the oration *On the Peace* (346), supported the treaty of peace that was concluded with Philip, he himself, with Æschines, having taken part in the embassy which had arranged the terms. But he soon saw through the designs of Philip, and renewed his attacks upon him in the *Second Philippic* (344), *On the Chersonese*, and the *Third Philippic* (341). The oration *On the Embassy* (343) was directed against Æschines, who was charged with having betrayed the interests of Athens in the mission which resulted in the peace of 346. So step by step Demosthenes, who was now the acknowledged leader of the anti-Macedonian party, opposed the designs of Philip with all the fervor of his oratory. The conflict broke out into open warfare in 340. Demosthenes succeeded in prevailing upon Thebes to join Athens in the field against Philip. The decisive battle was fought at Chæronea in 338. Philip inflicted a crushing defeat upon the allies. Demosthenes took part in the battle and fled with the rest.

After the defeat at Chæronea Demosthenes was chosen to deliver the funeral oration over the fallen. The blow which overthrew the liberties of Athens did not break his spirit. He courageously faced the situ-

ation, and contributed both time and money to improving the affairs of the state. For his services Ctesiphon proposed that the city should crown him with a golden crown at the City Dionysia. Æschines opposed the motion by bringing action against Ctesiphon for making an illegal proposal. For some reason the case was not tried before the people until the year 330. Demosthenes defended Ctesiphon in his masterpiece, the oration *On the Crown*, in which he reviewed his own line of conduct. Æschines was defeated and obliged to leave Athens. In the last period of his life the leadership gradually passed out of the hands of Demosthenes. He was charged with having received money from Harpalus, the treasurer of Alexander, who had absconded to Athens. He claimed that he had used the money for the city, but the Areopagus inflicted a heavy fine upon him, which he could not pay. He accordingly went into exile. In 322 he took poison to escape falling into the hands of the Macedonians, and died on the island of Calauria, off the coast of Argolis.

To one who studies the growth of Athenian eloquence in the century that preceded the maturity of Demosthenes, it seems that Greece had been preparing the way all this time for her greatest and most perfect orator, the champion of her liberty. The natural and unimpeded growth which we have marked in other branches of Greek literature is illustrated perhaps nowhere so clearly as in oratory. The ancients found in Antiphon the best representative of the grand style, in Lysias of the simple style, and in Isocrates of the middle style, best suited to rhetorical display. Each had achieved success according to his ideals of art. Furthermore, Isæus had attained the mastery of the

art of legal argumentation. These stages in the growth of oratory were each built upon the foundations laid by the earlier theoretical and practical exponents of forensic rhetoric, and corresponded to the external conditions of legal and public speaking in each period. And finally Demosthenes, having at his command all of the resources which his predecessors had severally learned to employ, united in himself all of the excellences of them all. But there was something more in his oratory than rhetorical excellence, though he surpassed in wealth of vocabulary, variety of expression, and melody of rhythm. He was intellectually and morally the superior of any of his contemporaries. These are the qualities which made Demosthenes the far-sighted and loyal statesman. His public speeches are penetrated with a lofty morality and a fervent patriotism, which, in spite of the bitter and sometimes coarse invective which he too often discharges against his adversaries, lift them to a higher plane than that reached by any other orator in antiquity. In tardy recognition of his self-sacrificing patriotism, his fellow-citizens a generation after his death set up a statue of him, bearing this inscription: "If thou hadst had strength equal to thy wisdom, Demosthenes, never would the Ares of Macedon have ruled over Hellenes."

It is impossible to gain an adequate idea of Demosthenes' style through the medium of any existing English translation. A few selections will serve at least to show his earnestness and some of the broader features of his manner in the public orations. For the other orations Kennedy's translation is used; for the oration *On the Crown* that of Sir Robert Collier.

## THE DANGER OF TRUSTING PHILIP

They who advise for the best cannot always gratify their audience, though they would; for the safety of the state must be attended to; their opponents, by the very counsel which is agreeable, advance Philip's interest. One party required contribution; the other said there was no necessity; one was for war and mistrust; the other for peace, until they were ensnared. And so on for everything else; not to dwell on particulars, the one made speeches to please for the moment, and gave no annoyance; the other offered salutary counsel that was offensive. Many rights did the people surrender at last, not from any such motive of indulgence or ignorance, but submitting in the belief that all was lost. Which, by Zeus and Apollo, I fear will be your case, when on calculation you see that nothing can be done. I pray, men of Athens, it may never come to this! Better die a thousand deaths than render homage to Philip, or sacrifice any of your faithful counsellors. A fine recompense have the people of Oreus got for trusting themselves to Philip's friends and spurning Æuphræus! Finely are the Eretrian commons rewarded for having driven away your ambassadors and yielded to Clitarchus! Yes; they are slaves, exposed to the lash and the torture. Finely he spared the Olynthians, who appointed Lasthenes to command their horse and expelled Apollonides! It is folly and cowardice to cherish such hopes, and, while you take evil counsel and shirk every duty, and even listen to those who plead for your enemies, to think you inhabit a city of such magnitude that you cannot suffer any serious misfortune. Yea, and it is disgraceful to exclaim on any occurrence, when it is too late: "Who would have expected it? However, this or that should have been done, the other left undone." Many things could the Olynthians mention now, which, if foreseen at the time, would have prevented their destruction. Many could the Orites mention, many the Phocians, and each of the ruined states. But what would it avail them? As long as the vessel is safe, whether it be great or small, the mariner, the pilot, every man in turn should exert himself, and prevent its being overturned either by accident or design; but when the sea hath rolled over it,

their efforts are vain. And we likewise, O Athenians, whilst we are safe, with a magnificent city, plentiful resources, lofty reputation — what must we do? many of you, I dare say, have been longing to ask. Well, then, I will tell you: I will move a resolution; pass it if you please.

*Third Philippic, 63-71.*

#### THE ORATIONS ON THE CROWN

Demosthenes begins the oration *On the Crown* by an appeal to the gods for a fair and impartial hearing. Then, after briefly indicating the issues of the trial, of vast importance to himself but involving no serious consequences for Æschines, he introduces his answer to the charges brought against his conduct by the following impressive adjuration:

As I am, it appears, to render an account to-day both of the whole of my private life and of my public conduct, I desire once more to invoke the gods; and in your presence I here implore them, in the first place, that whatever measure of good will I have entertained to the state and to you all, the same may be meted to me upon this trial; and next, that you may be guided to such a determination of this cause as may consist with our country's honour and with the sacred duty of every juror.

The concluding words of the oration are no less impressive. I use Lord Brougham's rendering:

Let not, O gracious God, let not such conduct receive any measure of sanction from thee! Rather plant even in these men a better spirit and better feelings! But if they are wholly incurable, then pursue them, yea, themselves by themselves, to utter and untimely perdition, by land and by sea; and to us who are spared vouchsafe to grant the speediest rescue from our impending alarms, and an unshaken security.

For the sake of comparison, one of the most effective passages in the oration of Æschines, in which he holds Demosthenes up to scorn, is introduced here



side by side with a passage from the speech of Demosthenes, in which the latter pays his respects to Æschines:

O thou, who on every occasion of great and important action hast proved of all mankind the most worthless, in the insolence of language the most astonishing, canst thou attempt, in the face of these thy fellow-citizens, to claim the honor of a crown for the misfortunes into which thou hast plunged thy city? Or, should he claim it, can you restrain your indignation, and has the memory of your slaughtered countrymen perished with them? Indulge me for a moment, and imagine that you are now not in this tribunal, but in the theatre, imagine that you see the herald approaching and the proclamation prescribed in this decree on the point of being delivered, and then consider whether the friends of the deceased will shed more tears at the tragedies, at the pathetic stories of the great characters to be presented on the stage, or at the insensibility of their country? What inhabitant of Greece, what human creature, who has imbibed the least share of liberal sentiments, must not feel the deepest sorrow when he reflects on one transaction which he must have seen in the theatre, when he remembers, if he remembers nothing else, that on festivals like these, when the tragedies were to be presented (in those times when the state was well governed and directed by faithful ministers), a herald appeared, and introducing those orphans whose fathers had died in battle, now arrived at maturity, and dressed in complete armor, made a proclamation the most noble and the most effectual to excite the mind to glorious actions; that these youths, whose fathers lost their lives in fighting bravely for their country, the people had maintained to this their age of maturity; that now, having furnished them with complete suits of armor, they dismiss them, with prayers for their prosperity, to attend to their respective affairs, and invite them to aspire to the highest offices of the state. Such were the proclamations in old times, but such are not now heard. And were the herald to introduce the person who had made these children orphans, what could he say or what could he proclaim? Should he speak in the form prescribed in this decree, yet the odious truth would still force itself upon you; it would seem to strike your ears

with a language different from that of the herald. It would tell you that the Athenian people crowned this man, who scarcely deserves the name of a man, on account of his virtue, though a wretch the most abandoned, and on account of his magnanimity, though a coward and a deserter of his post. Do not, Athenians, I conjure you by all the powers of heaven, do not erect a trophy in your theatre to perpetuate your own disgrace. Do not expose the weak conduct of your country in the presence of the Greeks, do not recall all their grievous and desperate misfortunes to the minds of the wretched Thebans, who, when driven from their habitations by this man, were received within these walls, whose temples, whose children, whose sepulchral monuments were destroyed by the corruption of Demosthenes and the Macedonian gold.

*Æschines, Against Ctesiphon, 152-157.*

Compare this passage from Demosthenes :

Contrast then, Æschines, calmly and dispassionately, the principal incidents of our respective lives, and put it to the audience, whose fortune would each of them take for a choice. You were a schoolmaster, I a scholar; you performed initiations, I was initiated; you danced in the chorus, I paid the dancers; you sat as clerk, I spoke in the assemblies; you acted third parts, I was a spectator; you broke down, I hissed. All your public conduct has been in the interest of our enemies; mine of my country. Omitting other subjects of comparison, let us come to this very day: my merits are being considered, and it is admitted by general consent that I have done no wrong. You have come to be regarded as a calumniator; nay, more, you run a serious risk of failing to obtain one-fifth of the votes, and being incapacitated from calumniating again. Such is the brilliant fortune, observe you, which has attended your life, and which inspires you with such contempt of mine! Come, now, let me read to you all the public testimonials relating to the office which I have filled; and by way of counterblast do you recite to us the quotations which you murdered:

“I come from darkness and the gates of Hell.”

And—

“Unwillingly I bring the news of ill.”

Ill betide you, say I — may you be confounded for a vile citizen and bad actor by gods above and men below! [*To the clerk.*] Read the testimonies.

*On the Crown, 265-268.*

In the following noble appeal Demosthenes maintains that the course of wisdom is always the course of honor, whatever the outcome may be:

What is past and gone is, by general consent, thrown aside; there is little use in even discussing it; the future it is or the present which calls for the action of the statesman. At that time some calamity seemed impending; others had already befallen us. By the existing circumstances judge my policy, instead of reproaching me with the event. The issue of all things is in the hands of Providence; the choice of measures it is which indicates the sagacity of the statesman. Impute it not as a crime to me if it was Philip's fortune to conquer in battle; the event of the battle was not in my hands, but in the hands of God. That I did not conceive all the expedients which human foresight could suggest, that I did not put them into practice honestly, diligently, and with exertions beyond my strength, or that I did not adopt an honorable policy, worthy of the State and necessary to its preservation—show me this, and accuse me if you will. But if the tempest that has swept over us has been too strong, not only for ourselves but for all the other states of Greece—what then? You might as well hold the ship-owner, who has taken all precautions and furnished every necessary equipment, answerable for the wreck of his vessel if her tackle were broken or torn in pieces by a storm! "But I did not pilot the vessel," he might say; no more did I lead your troops to battle. I was not the disposer of Fortune. Fortune is the disposer of all things. . . .

Why, if right were done, the man who has made the calamities of Greece the capital on which to found his reputation ought to perish, instead of being an accuser; that man can be no friend to his country who has profited by the same conjunctures as his enemies. That this is so you make manifest by your life, by your actions, by the part which you take in public affairs, and, what is more, by the part which you do not

take. Is anything on foot which promises public advantage? Æschines is mute. Has anything gone wrong and taken a turn adverse to your interests? Æschines is ready for action; as old fractures and sprains become painful afresh when the body is attacked by disease.

But as he bases his invective so much on the event, I will venture on an assertion which may appear somewhat paradoxical. By all the Heavenly Powers be not amazed at my audacity, but give me your favorable attention. I affirm, then, that if the future had been apparent to us all; if all men had foreseen it; if you, Æschines, had foretold it and proclaimed it at the top of your voice instead of preserving total silence, nevertheless the State ought not to have deviated from her course, if she had regard to her own honor, the traditions of the past, or the judgment of posterity. As it is, she is looked upon as having been unsuccessful in her policy—the lot of all mankind when such is the will of Heaven; but if, claiming to be the foremost state in Greece, she had deserted her post, she would have incurred the reproach of betraying all Greece to Philip. . . . But counsels such as these were intolerable to the Athenians of those former days—opposed to their traditions, alien to their nature—nor in all time has any man ever succeeded in persuading this country to side with powerful wrong-doers and to embrace secure slavery; but our whole national existence has been one continual struggle for the foremost place in the career of glory and renown. How sacred you deem these sentiments, how consonant with the genius of your country, you yourselves testify by the veneration in which you hold the memories of your ancestors who have acted upon them. And you are in the right; for who can withhold admiration from the heroism of those men who had the resolution to leave this city and their fatherland, and to embark on shipboard, rather than submit to the dictation of a foreign power, choosing Themistocles, the adviser of the measure, for their commander, and stoning to death Cyrsilus, who counselled submission to the imperial mandates? Stoning him, do I say? why, your very wives stoned his wife! The Athenians of those days went not in quest of an orator or general who could help them to prosperous slavery; but they

scorned life itself, if it were not the life of freedom. Each of them regarded himself as the child, not only of his father and of his mother, but of his country. And what is the difference? He who regards himself as the child of his parents only awaits the approach of death in the ordinary course of nature, but he who regards himself as the child also of his country will be ready to lay down his life rather than see her enslaved, and will deem the insults and indignities to which the citizens of a subjected state must needs submit more terrible than death.

*On the Crown, 192-206.*

## CHAPTER XIV

### PHILOSOPHICAL PROSE. PLATO

The Separation of Natural Philosophy from Mythology — The Protest of Xenophanes — The Pre-Socratic Speculations and the Sophists — Socrates, his Life and Teachings — Plato — The Foundation of the Academy — The Dialogue as a branch of Prose Literature — The Personality of Socrates in the Platonic Writings — Sketch of the Principal Dialogues — Plato's Style — *Selections*: Socrates' Views about Death — The Death of Socrates.

The mythological system of the early Greeks, first worked out and reduced to a system by the poets, especially by Hesiod, included not only a theology but also a cosmogony. The origin of the universe was explained in accordance with the prevalent conception of the nature and attributes of the gods. In other words, the agencies of nature were personified and the phenomena of the physical world were but the outward manifestations of the activities of the gods, each working in his appropriate sphere. But this system did not long satisfy the more thoughtful minds of Greece. In the sixth century men began to look for a more rational explanation of nature, for some fundamental principles which would account for the origin of the visible world without recourse to the gods. Thus natural philosophy, out of which grew the natural sciences on the one hand and philosophy and ethics on the other, became separated from theology. The first clear protest against the traditional and current anthropomorphic religion,

with its low standards of conduct, is found in the verses of the poet Xenophanes, who flourished toward the middle of the sixth century. Lawton has thus translated his memorable hexameters:

Everything is ascribed to the gods by Hesiod and Homer,  
Whatsoever among mankind is shameful and wicked.  
Numberless lawless deeds of the gods by them are recorded,  
Thievishness, unchastity, ay, and deceit of each other!  
Still men hold the belief that the gods were born and  
begotten,

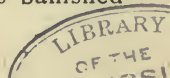
Wear such garb as themselves, and have like bodies and  
vices. . . . .

Yet it is certain, if hands were bestowed upon oxen or lions,  
If with their hands they could draw, and the works of men  
should accomplish, —

Horses like unto horses, and oxen in likeness of oxen,  
So would they draw their figures of gods, and fashion the  
bodies,

Like in every way to their own!

Greek philosophy had its origin not in Greece proper, but in the colonies of Ionia and southern Italy. We cannot attempt here to mention the founders of the various schools, or to outline their theories as to the origin of the universe—matters which belong properly to the history of Greek philosophy rather than to the history of literature. They wrote some in verse and others in prose, but only scanty fragments of their writings have come down to us. The first of the pre-Socratic philosophers who exercised an important influence upon Attic literature was Anaxagoras of Clazomenæ, in Asia Minor, who resided in Athens for many years during the age of Pericles and contributed largely to the intellectual awakening which characterized the end of the fifth century. He was banished



from Athens in 431 for impiety, one of the charges against him being that he declared the sun to be a clod and not a god. Then followed the sophists, of whose influence on the development of artistic prose discourse we have already spoken. They were not interested in the speculations about the origin of things so much as in the practical questions of ethics, politics, and knowledge in general. Their influence on the spirit of the time in breaking up the old faith and in transforming education was enormous.

So the way was paved for Socrates, the greatest figure in the history of Greek thought. Though he contributed nothing to Greek literature directly, yet his influence as a teacher upon the philosophical literature of the ancient world was so profound that we may well pause a moment to review his life and teachings. Born in 469 B. C., he followed at first his father's trade as a sculptor. Soon, however, he devoted himself to ethical speculation. He did not, like the sophists, teach for pay, but mingled freely with all men in the streets, in the market-place, or in the gymnasia—in short, wherever he could find an audience. He conceived that he had a divine call to question men as to their beliefs, and thus to awaken in them first a consciousness of their own ignorance and then a desire for real knowledge. His method was that of question and answer, or dialectic. By this process he sought to obtain clearer notions of virtue and knowledge, framing tentative definitions by comparing a number of specific cases involving the same general term—that is, by the method of inductive reasoning. In this way he proved that no one wittingly does wrong, for right-doing is the only way to happiness,



and every man desires happiness. Therefore virtue is the knowledge of what really conduces to happiness—that is, wisdom. And the various qualities which constitute virtue—for example, courage, piety, and temperance—are determined by reference to what is wise in the particular class of circumstances involved. Thus, bravery depends upon the knowledge of what is really dangerous and what is not, and so on.

Socrates' teachings covered the whole range of practical ethics. He believed that every man should contribute to the welfare of the state, and himself set an example by taking part in several campaigns. His course of life kept him in great poverty, but he had trained himself to want so little that he was never in want. As to matters of religion he did not expressly discard the old polytheism, but he held that there was one supreme God, who ordered all things for good and to whom men should look for guidance in matters beyond their own range of knowledge. He believed in the immortality of the soul, though he could not prove the doctrine by reasoning. Socrates further thought that he possessed a sort of inward monitor, which he termed a deity, which never, indeed, told him what course of action to follow, but checked him when about to take a wrong step. The views which he held were so original, his method of propagating them so calculated to provoke the personal hostility of the men whom he questioned and refuted, and his own indifference both to the conventionalities of society and to the accepted beliefs so frankly avowed, that he early became an object of dislike to many. As early as 423 he was the object of attack of the *Clouds* of Aristophanes. The fact that some of his followers, as

Alcibiades and Critias, became prominent as disturbing factors in Athenian politics, increased the prejudice against him. After the democratic reaction that followed the revolution of 404, charges were brought against him to the effect that he undermined religion and corrupted the youth. He was tried, condemned, and put to death in 399 B. C.

Our knowledge of Socrates is derived mainly from the writings of his pupils, especially Xenophon and Plato, through whom he comes to have a place in the history of Greek literature. Plato, whose real name was Aristocles, but who was called Plato from the breadth of his shoulders, was probably born in 429, the year of the death of Pericles. He received a liberal education in the three branches, letters, music, and athletics. He made the acquaintance of Socrates and joined his followers when about twenty years of age. After the death of his master he left Athens for a time, spending several years in extensive travel and in study. He visited the court of Dionysius I, tyrant of Syracuse, but offended the monarch, and was sold into slavery by a Spartan to whom Dionysius delivered him. Ransomed by a friend, he returned, about 387 B. C., to Athens, where he purchased an estate northwest of the city, near the precinct of the hero Academus, called the Academeia, or Academy—a grove which contained promenades and a gymnasium. Here he set up his school of philosophy. Men came from all quarters of Greece to hear him. He limited his hearers to a small number, and though he charged no fee, he accepted presents. After ten years he revisited Syracuse, hoping to make a model king out of Dionysius II, who had succeeded to the tyranny.

In this hope he was grievously disappointed and was glad to escape to Athens again. Again he visited Syracuse in order to reconcile the king with his friend Dion, at whose invitation he had previously gone to Syracuse but whom the tyrant had exiled. In this plan, too, he failed. He died at Athens about 347 B. C.

Plato is almost the only writer of antiquity whose writings have come down to us complete. We have forty-two dialogues under his name, of which some twenty-five are probably genuine. This is not the place to consider Plato's philosophical system; we can at most give some idea of the subject-matter of his principal works and define his place in the history of literature. In the first place he adopted the dialogue form of composition, and was the first to bring it to perfection. He chose the dialogue, doubtless, in the first instance, because it truthfully reproduced the manner of Socrates' intercourse with his followers, and retained it because the dialectic method suited best his plan of philosophical inquiry and exposition. We are told that in his youth he essayed not only other branches of poetry but also tragedy. The dramatic form of the dialogue undoubtedly appealed to his artistic literary instincts. He graphically indicates the scenery, draws his characters with realism and fidelity, and develops the plot with all of the skill of a dramatic artist. In fact the dialogue, in his hands, takes a place in prose literature beside history and oratory that corresponds closely to the position of tragedy in poetry after the epic and lyric forms. But some exceptions must be made as regards the dramatic form of the Platonic dialogues. Plato pays little attention to chronological consistency in choosing his

characters and fixing the time of action. In one instance he makes Socrates, who died in 399, refer to an event of the year 387. Again, in the later dialogues the dramatic elements are neglected and become a mere frame for the discussion, which tends to become a monologue. Two of Plato's works, the *Apology* and the *Menexenus*, are not dialogues, but speeches.

It is to be observed, in the second place, that the personality and the teachings of Socrates pervade all of Plato's writings. Socrates is always one of the characters in the dialogues, and it is he who is represented as delivering the two speeches. The doctrines that are developed are always put in the mouth of Socrates, and Plato never claims them as his own. He mentions himself but twice. It is therefore a question how far we are to suppose that the Socrates of Plato is the real Socrates. We may believe that he depicts the character and personality of his master with essential fidelity, and truthfully exhibits his methods of inquiry after truth. But the great philosophical ideas<sup>1</sup> which are developed are those of Plato; no: can we determine how largely he was indebted to Socrates for the suggestions which led up to them. Naturally the earlier dialogues contain more of Socrates and less of Plato.

No chronological arrangement of Plato's dialogues that has yet been proposed is entirely satisfactory. Several attempts at a logical classification were made in antiquity, the most valuable of which recognizes

<sup>1</sup>We may mention especially the Theory of Ideas, the Doctrine of Recollection, and the Theory of Love, for the explanation of which we must refer to the manuals of Greek philosophy, or to Professor Shorey's article on Plato in Warner's Library of the World's Best Literature.

two classes—the Dialogues of Search, in which Plato attacks a problem from all sides, with only tentative, or even negative, results; and the Dialogues of Exposition, in which positive results are reached. For literary study, however, a simpler grouping will be convenient. Let us consider first the four pieces which relate to the trial and death of Socrates, the *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Phædo*. In the first-named Socrates, on his way to the trial, is represented as meeting Euthyphro and engaging him in a discussion on piety. The *Apology* is Plato's version of Socrates' noble speech before the jurors. The first part is the defense proper, followed by the proposal by Socrates of the counter-penalty, and ending with an address to the jurors after the rendering of the verdict. In the *Crito* we find Socrates in prison. Crito, one of his followers, visits him and tries to win his consent to a plan of escape, but Socrates proves that he cannot, as a good citizen, violate the laws of his country. The *Phædo* contains an account of the last conversation and of the death of Socrates. The theme of the conversation is the immortality of the soul. This dialogue is the most famous of Plato's writings, not only on account of the sublime picture of Socrates' death, of a pathos unapproached in literature, but also on account of the infinite importance for mankind of the main subject. Five of the shorter dialogues in the more intimate Socratic spirit may be grouped together: the *Lysis*, on friendship; the *Charmides*, on chastity; the *Laches*, on courage; the *Hippias minor*, a comparison of Achilles and Odysseus; and the *Ion*, an interesting discussion with a Homeric rhapsodist.

In four dialogues the attitude of Socrates toward

the sophists is illustrated. These are the *Protagoras*, *Gorgias*, *Euthydemus*, and *Cratylus*, each named after the sophist with whom Socrates holds a discussion. The *Protagoras* is one of Plato's masterpieces as a dramatic dialogue. With fine irony the arrogance and empty pretensions of the sophists as a class, illustrated by their principal representative, are exposed. The subject of the debate is the possibility of teaching virtue. No decision is reached, but the subject is taken up again in the *Meno*, in which the proposition is defended that virtue is knowledge, and that knowledge is but a recollection of what the soul knew in a previous existence—a doctrine familiar to us from Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*, and used again by Plato in the *Phædo*. The *Gorgias* is directed against the pretensions of the rhetoricians, represented by the great Sicilian, but discusses some of the higher questions of ethics. For example, the Christian doctrine is maintained that it is a greater evil to do than to suffer injustice. Socrates also protests against the theory that good is pleasure and evil is pain, and insists on an absolute standard of morality without regard to consequences. In a similar manner, in the *Phædrus*, Socrates, beginning and ending with a criticism of rhetoric, devotes his attention mainly to another theme. Here the subject is love—philosophic love, "the divine impulse which leads us to long for immortality and to seek after perfection." The opening scene is one of the most beautiful in Greek literature—the meeting of Socrates and his young friend Phædrus on the banks of the Ilissus. The *Symposium* is closely connected with the *Phædrus* in subject, for

a large part of it is devoted to a consideration of love. It is perhaps the most perfect as a work of literature, as it is certainly one of the most charming of the dialogues of Plato. It is an account of a banquet given at the house of Agathon, the tragic poet. Among the guests were Alcibiades, the poet Aristophanes, and Socrates. Toward the close Alcibiades gives a wonderful description of Socrates, extolling his virtues, but not sparing his ugliness.

Passing over the dialogues of more strictly philosophical interest, as the *Theætetus*, *Sophistes*, *Politicus*, *Timæus*, *Critias*, *Parmenides*, and *Philebus*, and the spurious or suspected writings, of which but one is of literary interest—the *Menexenus*, a funeral oration which Socrates pretends to have learned from Aspasia—we come to the greatest constructive work of Plato, the *Republic*. It has come down to us in ten books, but was originally conceived as a smaller work, gradually growing in the author's hands to its present compass. It is thrown into the form of a dialogue held in Peiræus at the house of Cephalus, the father of the orator Lysias. Socrates, Cephalus, and his son Polemarchus, Glaucus and Adeimantus, brothers of Plato, and several others were present. The thread of the dialogue is, however, very slender, since Socrates talks most of the time, with few interruptions. The conversation turns first upon the question as to what justice is, then upon the founding and organization of an ideal city or state based upon justice. This leads to the consideration of the education both of mind and of body which the citizens of such a state should receive, and the virtues—viz., wisdom, courage, self-control, and righteousness—which in such a well-

ordered state must result from such an education. Socrates then develops his theory of the community of wives and children, and of the training of those who are to be the "guardians," or qualified rulers of the state. Returning in the last book to the subject of poetry as a part of education, he lays down the rule that the only poetry allowed in the ideal state will be hymns in honor of the gods and of righteous men. He had already decided against Homer and Hesiod because they attribute wicked actions to the gods and dwell upon the unworthy passions of men. After a few words on the immortality of the soul, the hope of which is to inspire the righteous citizen, he closes with the famous myth of Er the son of Armenius.

We cannot dwell longer upon this book, which has charmed and stimulated the world of letters and philosophy, and has inspired such works as St. Augustine's *City of God* and More's *Utopia*, nor upon Plato's last work, the *Laws*, in which he modifies some of his views about the ideal state, and works out some of the details of its government. After a word about Plato's style we may pass to the selections from his writings. Plato was essentially a poet, though he chose to work in prose. His style "is on the borderland between poetry and prose; it has exquisite conversational ease and grace; it has also bursts of soaring eloquence, when we seem to be listening to the words of one who is actually looking on some glorious vision" (Jebb). A characteristic of his dialogues is his occasional employment of "myths," or parables drawn from the realm of fancy, by which he enlivens the dialogue and illustrates his doctrines. Plato occupies a place in English literature as well as in Greek, thanks to Jow-



ett's incomparable translation, from which the following selections are taken:

### SOCRATES' VIEWS ABOUT DEATH

Let us reflect in another way, and we shall see that there is great reason to hope that death is a good; for one of two things — either death is a state of nothingness and utter unconsciousness, or, as men say, there is a change and migration of the soul from this world to another. Now if you suppose that there is no consciousness, but a sleep like the sleep of him who is undisturbed even by dreams, death will be an unspeakable gain. For if a person were to select the night in which his sleep was undisturbed even by dreams, and were to compare with this the other days and nights of his life, and then were to tell us how many days and nights he had passed in the course of his life better and more pleasantly than this one, I think that any man, I will not say a private man, but even the great king, will not find many such days or nights, when compared with the others. Now if death be of such a nature, I say that to die is gain; for eternity is then only a single night. But if death is the journey to another place, and there, as men say, all the dead abide, what good, O my friends and judges, can be greater than this? If indeed when the pilgrim arrives in the world below, he is delivered from the professors of justice in this world, and finds the true judges, who are said to give judgment there, Minos and Rhadamanthus and Æacus and Triptolemus, and other sons of God who were righteous in their own life, that pilgrimage will be worth making. What would not a man give if he might converse with Orpheus and Musæus and Hesiod and Homer? Nay, if this be true, let me die again and again. . . .

Wherefore, O judges, be of good cheer about death, and know of a certainty, that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death. He and his are not neglected by the gods; nor has my own approaching end happened by mere chance. But I see clearly that the time had arrived when it was better for me to die and be released from trouble;

wherefore the oracle gave no sign. For which reason, also, I am not angry with my condemners, or with my accusers; they have done me no harm, although they did not mean to do me any good; and for this I may gently blame them.

Still I have a favour to ask of them. When my sons are grown up, I would ask you, O my friends, to punish them; and I would have you trouble them, as I have troubled you, if they seem to care about riches, or anything, more than about virtue; or if they pretend to be something when they are really nothing,—then reprove them, as I have reproved you, for not caring about that for which they ought to care, and thinking that they are something when they are really nothing. And if you do this, both I and my sons will have received justice at your hands.

The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways—I to die, and you to live. Which is better God only knows.

*Apology, 32-33.*

#### THE DEATH OF SOCRATES

“Wherefore, Simmias, seeing all these things, what ought not we to do that we may obtain virtue and wisdom in this life? Fair is the prize, and the hope great! A man of sense ought not to say, nor will I be very confident, that the description which I have given of the soul and her mansions is exactly true. But I do say that, inasmuch as the soul is shown to be immortal, he may venture to think, not improperly or unworthily, that something of the kind is true. The venture is a glorious one, and he ought to comfort himself with words like these, which is the reason why I lengthen out the tale. Wherefore, I say, let a man be of good cheer about his soul, who having cast away the pleasures and ornaments of the body as alien to him and working harm rather than good, has sought after the pleasures of knowledge; and has arrayed the soul, not in some foreign attire, but in her own proper jewels, temperance, and justice, and courage, and nobility, and truth—in these adorned she is ready to go on her journey to the world below, when her hour comes.” . . . .

Now the hour of sunset was near, for a good deal of time had passed while he was within. When he came out, he sat

down with us again after his bath, but not much was said. Soon the jailer, who was the servant of the Eleven, entered and stood by him, saying:—"To you, Socrates, whom I know to be the noblest and gentlest and best of all who ever came to this place, I will not impute the angry feelings of other men, who rage and swear at me, when, in obedience to the authorities, I bid them drink the poison—indeed, I am sure that you will not be angry with me; for others, as you are aware, and not I, are to blame. And so fare you well, and try to bear lightly what must needs be—you know my errand."

Then bursting into tears he turned away and went out. Socrates looked at him and said: "I return your good wishes, and will do as you bid." Then turning to us, he said: "How charming the man is: since I have been in prison he has always been coming to see me, and at times he would talk to me, and was as good to me as could be, and now see how generously he sorrows on my account. We must do as he says, Crito; and therefore let the cup be brought, if the poison is prepared: if not, let the attendant prepare some."

"Yet," said Crito, "the sun is still upon the hill-tops, and I know that many a one has taken the draught late, and after the announcement has been made to him, he has eaten and drunk, and enjoyed the society of his beloved; do not hurry—there is time enough. Socrates said: "Yes, Crito, and they of whom you speak are right in so acting, for they think that they will be gainers by the delay; but I am right in not following their example, for I do not think that I should gain anything by drinking the poison a little later; I should only be ridiculous in my own eyes for sparing and saving a life which is already forfeit. Please then to do as I say, and not to refuse me."

Crito made a sign to the servant, who was standing by; and he went out, and having been absent for some time, returned with the jailer carrying the cup of poison. Socrates said: "You, my good friend, who are experienced in these matters, shall give me directions how I am to proceed." The man answered: "You have only to walk about until your legs are heavy, and then to lie down, and the poison will act." At the same time he handed the cup to Socrates,

who in the easiest and gentlest manner, without the least fear or change of colour or feature, looking at the man with all his eyes, Echecrates, as his manner was, took the cup and said: "What do you say about making a libation out of this cup to any god? May I, or not?" The man answered: "We only prepare, Socrates, just so much as we deem enough." "I understand," he said: "but I may and must ask the gods to prosper my journey from this to the other world—even so—and so be it according to my prayer." Then raising the cup to his lips, quite readily and cheerfully he drank off the poison. And hitherto most of us had been able to control our sorrow; but now when we saw him drinking, and saw too that he had finished the draught, we could no longer forbear, and in spite of myself my own tears were flowing fast; so that I covered my face and wept, not for him, but at the thought of my own calamity in having to part from such a friend. Nor was I the first; for Crito, when he found himself unable to restrain his tears, had got up, and I followed; and at that moment, Apollodorus, who had been weeping all the time, broke out in a loud and passionate cry which made cowards of us all. Socrates alone retained his calmness: "What is this strange outcry?" he said. "I sent away the women mainly in order that they might not misbehave in this way, for I have been told that a man should die in peace. Be quiet then, and have patience." When we heard his words we were ashamed, and refrained our tears; and he walked about until, as he said, his legs began to fail, and then he lay on his back, according to the directions, and the man who gave him the poison now and then looked at his feet and legs; and after a while he pressed his foot hard, and asked him if he could feel; and he said, "No"; and then his leg, and so upwards and upwards, and showed us that he was cold and stiff. And he felt them himself, and said, "When the poison reaches the heart, that will be the end." He was beginning to grow cold about the groin, when he uncovered his face, for he had covered himself up, and said—they were his last words—he said: "Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius; will you remember to pay the debt?" "The debt shall be paid," said Crito; "is there anything

else?" There was no answer to this question; but in a minute or two a movement was heard, and the attendants uncovered him; his eyes were set, and Crito closed his eyes and mouth.

Such was the end, Echecrates, of our friend; concerning whom I may truly say, that of all men of his time whom I have known, he was the wisest and justest and best.

*Phædo, 63-67.*

## CHAPTER XV

### THEOCRITUS AND HIS AGE

Literary Athens in the Fourth Century—The Effect of the Loss of Political Freedom upon Greek Literature—The Spread of Greek Civilization with Alexander's Conquests—Characteristics of the Alexandrine Literature—Bucolic Poetry—Theocritus—Bion and Moschus—*Selections*.

During the fourth century before Christ Athens maintained unchallenged her position as the fountain-head and home of Greek letters. After the Peloponnesian war the political leadership had passed first to Lacedæmon and then to Thebes; and Athens had not fully regained her old prestige when the power of Macedon began to dominate Greek politics. But none the less the greatest poets, historians, and philosophers continued as before to make their home in the Attic capital. To have a recognized standing there in the schools of rhetoric and philosophy, before the courts and popular assembly, in the theatre, or in the more purely literary circles, was the natural ambition of every aspiring writer of the Greek world. Syracuse had not ceased to produce writers of merit, but even the efforts and example of the elder Dionysius could not make her a rival of Athens. The literary aspirations of Dionysius himself were not satisfied until his tragedies had been crowned by a victory in the Athenian theatre; and Plato, in spite of his dissatisfaction with the Athenian democracy, found the atmosphere of the

Sicilian capital uncongenial. The attitude of Athens toward the stranger of Greek birth was hospitable and generous. Merit was frankly recognized, and even Athenian citizenship was freely conferred upon those who brought honor to their adopted city. The society of literary people there consequently became more and more cosmopolitan.

The political supremacy of Macedon after the battle of Chæronea (338) was responsible for momentous changes both in the character of Greek literature and in the relation of Athens to it. With the death of political liberty in Greece, the creative spirit, and the genius which goes with it, slowly but surely passed away. There were still writers innumerable. The art of elegant composition in prose and verse survived, but the spirit was fettered. The conditions which had produced Homer, Sappho, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Thucydides, Plato, and Demosthenes had departed forever. Greece was yet to produce great writers, but the distinctively Hellenic flavor which had made the earlier literature preëminent for all time was gradually weakened, and then lost altogether. The quick and wholesome reaction of an intelligent populace upon the poets, orators, and historians, who addressed the public directly and depended upon the popular verdict—a relationship which was possible only in a free citizen-state—now gave place to the unsafe and often capricious judgment of a literary oligarchy. The result was affectation in place of simplicity. One exception, however, must be noted. For at least two generations after Alexander's death the conditions of dramatic performances at Athens favored the cultivation of the comedy of manners. The New Comedy of

Philemon, Menander, and their successors was essentially a new type of literature, a fresh and natural adaptation of an old form to new conditions. It was the last flower of literature that sprang spontaneously from the soil of Attica.

The loss of the old creative spirit, however, was in part compensated by the wider diffusion of Greek culture which followed the conquests of Alexander. Greek civilization was spread throughout Asia and Egypt, and over portions of Europe which had once been counted barbarian. The cultivated world came to speak and to write Greek. In the kingdoms which arose from Alexander's empire new centres of culture sprang up and became centres of learning and literature. Alexandria in Egypt, and later, Pergamum in the Troad, now shared with Athens, Syracuse, and the lesser capitals the distinction which had once belonged almost exclusively to Athens. Athens continued to be the greatest university town, on account of her ancient prestige and her flourishing schools of philosophy; but Alexandria soon attracted the writers of best ability. The period extending from about the beginning of the third century down to the Roman conquest is known as the Alexandrine period of Greek literature. The literature of the post-classical period—in fact, the whole civilization—is often called "Hellenistic," from the fact that, while Hellenic in its general character, the people who participated in it were not exclusively pure Hellenes. But the term is somewhat vague and often misused.

The literature of the Alexandrine age, with the exception of the New Comedy, was essentially a book-literature—that is, the authors addressed a reading



public and no longer the people at large through oral recitation or performance. This was true even of tragedy to a considerable extent, Chæremon, a poet of the fourth century, having first set the example of writing tragedies not intended for the stage. In the second place, it was mainly an imitative or derivative, and not an original, literature. The canons of the great classical writers in each branch were established, their unapproachable excellence acknowledged, and the new poets, instead of drawing their inspiration directly from life, labored, by careful study of the old models, to reproduce their literary qualities. The most extensive as well as the best work of this kind was the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes (194 B. C.), an epic narrative of Jason's quest of the golden fleece—a good example of the "literary" as opposed to the "natural" epic. Mention should also be made of the Hymns to the Gods by Callimachus (260 B. C.), and the famous *Hymn to Zeus* by Cleanthes.

As a direct result of the conditions above outlined, Alexandrine poetry tended to be highly artificial and affected. Lyric poetry flourished mainly in the form of the elegy and the epigram. As the artistic taste of the time showed a predilection for cut gems, so the elegant epigram of from four to eight verses found especial favor. A very large number of the poems of the Anthology go back to this period. The epigram was diverted from its original use for commemorative or dedicatory inscriptions, and was largely employed as a vehicle for conceits on any topic of interest to the literary circles. The elegy was closely related to the epigram, but permitted of the more extended, ballad-like narrative of love-adventures, tales from

mythology, and complimentary descriptions of court favorites. The *Lock of Berenice*, by Callimachus, preserved in the translation of Catullus, illustrates the character of much of the poetry of the period. The poet relates how some tresses of hair which Berenice, queen of Ptolemy III, had laid upon an altar, had been taken by the gods and placed among the constellations of the heavens. The Alexandrine elegiac poets exercised a strong influence upon the Roman poets of the Augustan age.

It was an age also of science and erudition. The first Ptolemy had founded at Alexandria the Museum, where men of learning came together for study and instruction and were maintained at the expense of the king. A great library was founded in connection with this 'Temple of the Muses,' and another elsewhere in the city, the two containing over five hundred thousand rolls. The great library at Pergamum contained over two hundred thousand rolls when its treasures were presented to Cleopatra by Antony and incorporated with the libraries at Alexandria. Famous scholars were placed at the head of these libraries. They took up the lines of work which Aristotle had inaugurated at Athens, and gathered about themselves men of encyclopædic learning. Great attention was given to literary history and criticism, biography, mythology, chronology, philology, astronomy, mathematics, and the other sciences. From these hothouses of learning sprang up a multitude of books on every conceivable subject, works which laid the foundations of modern knowledge in many branches—as, for example, the famous *Elements* of Euclid. It was at Alexandria, under the patronage of the Ptolemies, that the

Septuagint translation of the Old Testament was made.

It was during the first half-century of the Alexandrine period, a time so unfavorable to original creations in pure literature, that the last flower of true Greek poesy came to bloom. The bucolic or pastoral poetry of Theocritus represented a natural reaction from the conventionalities of the over-refined life of the Egyptian court, with its luxuries, flatteries, and artificial standards of taste. It was a revolt from art to nature. Sicily was the birthplace of this branch of poetry, which was, in the main, the natural outgrowth of the conditions of peasant life in Sicily. We have already had occasion to note, in connection with the comedies of Epicharmus, the innate gift of mimicry and dramatic impersonation possessed by the Sicilians, in common with the southern Italians. Sophron (about 440 B. C.) developed one species of mimic poetry, the mime or farce, in which detached situations were represented, but without a real plot. Again, there was current among the Sicilian peasantry a romantic legend of the shepherd Daphnis, who pined away and died for love. Stesichorus seems to have been the first to introduce Daphnis into literature. And finally the shepherds had the custom of contending in song for a prize, singing alternate strains to the accompaniment of the shepherd's pipe. These three elements all entered into the type of bucolic poetry brought to perfection by Theocritus.

The bucolic poets employed the hexameter verse. But the shepherd's song approaches lyric poetry somewhat in form, in that, as a rule, several verses are bound together into groups or stanzas, either by the

thought or by recurring verses, which constitute a refrain. The term "bucolic," which strictly implies only the neatherd, is freely used to include the shepherd, goatherd, swineherd, or representatives of other rural occupations. The simple poem is called an "idyll," or "little picture," which is really a broader term than bucolic, for it includes also the poems of a dramatic or descriptive nature which are not pastoral.

Theocritus (about 270 B. C.), the greatest of the pastoral poets, was born either in Syracuse or on the island of Cos. He probably spent a large part of his life at Syracuse, where he enjoyed the patronage of Hiero II. He also was connected with the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus at Alexandria. His poems addressed to these monarchs show that he was not unskilled in the servile flattery with which the satellites of the court addressed their royal patrons. He was a member of the literary group which centred in Cos, to which the poet Aratus, whom St. Paul quotes (Acts xvii, 28), also belonged. He wrote mainly in the Dorian dialect of Sicily. Thirty-one poems and some epigrams are handed down under his name, some of which, however, are later imitations. About half of these poems, most of which may properly be called idylls, are bucolic in their character. Others are mimes, scenes from mythology, and occasional poems.

Theocritus does not escape entirely from the artificiality of his age. Under the mask of shepherds' names he often introduces himself and his literary friends. Nor do his shepherds always employ language perfectly in keeping with their character. The erotic strain that is present in most of the idylls is also a mark of the Alexandrine age. But in spite of these

limitations, which are equally true of all pastoral poetry, from Vergil's *Eclogues* to Milton's *Lycidas* and Shelley's *Adonais*, Theocritus reveals everywhere a true feeling for nature and a genuine sympathy for the experiences of rural life.

Of the two other pastoral poets of Greece, Bion and Moschus, we know little more than that the former was a younger contemporary of Theocritus and that Moschus was a pupil of Bion. Bion's *Lament for Adonis*, a rather extravagant and turgid poem, has been imitated by Shelley. The *Lament for Bion*, by Moschus, has been much admired, and contains some exquisite passages. The works of these poets, and of Theocritus, as well as some imitations of unknown authorship, are preserved in a collection made in the time of Augustus. At the head of the collection was placed the following bucolic idyll of Theocritus, evidently because it was considered by antiquity, as it still is to-day, the most perfect and charming poem of its kind. I quote it entire:

### THE DEATH OF DAPHNIS

#### THYRSIS AND A GOATHERD

- TH. Sweet are the whispers of yon pine that makes  
 Low music o'er the spring, and, Goatherd, sweet  
 Thy piping ; second thou to Pan alone.  
 Is his the hornèd ram ? then thine the goat.  
 Is his the goat ? to thee shall fall the kid ;  
 And tooth-ome is the flesh of unmilked kids.
- GO. Shepherd, thy lay is as the noise of streams  
 Falling and falling aye from yon tall crag.  
 If for their meed the Muses claim the ewe,  
 Be thine the stall-fed lamb ; or if they choose  
 The lamb, take thou the scarce less-valued ewe.

- TH. Pray, by the nymphs, pray, Goatherd, seat thee here  
 Against this hill-slope in the tamarisk shade,  
 And pipe me somewhat, while I guard thy goats.
- GO. I durst not, Shepherd. O, I durst not pipe  
 At noontide ; fearing Pan, who at that hour  
 Rests from the toil of hunting. Harsh is he ;  
 Wrath at his nostrils aye sits sentinel.  
 But, Thrysis, thou canst sing of Daphnis' woes ;  
 High is thy name for woodland minstrelsy :  
 Then rest we in the shadow of the elm  
 Fronting Priapus and the Fountain-nymphs.  
 There, where the oaks are and the Shepherd's seat,  
 Sing as thou sang'st erewhile, when matched with him  
 Of Libya, Chromis ; and I'll give thee, first,  
 To milk, ay thrice, a goat—she suckles twins,  
 Yet ne'ertheless can fill two milk-pails full ;—  
 Next, a deep drinking-cup, with sweet wax scoured,  
 Two-handled, newly carven, smacking yet  
 O' the chisel. Ivy reaches up and climbs  
 About its lip, gilt here and there with sprays  
 Of woodbine, that enwreathed about it flaunts  
 Her saffron fruitage. Framed therein appears  
 A damsel ('tis a miracle of art)  
 In robe and snood : and suitors at her side,  
 With locks fair-flowing, on her right and left,  
 Battle with words, that fail to reach her heart.  
 She, laughing, glances now on this, flings now  
 Her chance regards on that : they, all for love  
 Wearied and eye-swoln, find their labour lost.  
 Carven elsewhere an ancient fisher stands  
 On the rough rocks ; thereto the old man with pains  
 Drags his great casting-net, as one that toils  
 Full stoutly : every fibre of his frame  
 Seems fishing ; so about the gray-beard's neck  
 (In might a youngster yet) the sinews swell.  
 Hard by that wave-beat sire a vineyard bends  
 Beneath its graceful load of burnished grapes ;  
 A boy sits on the rude fence watching them.  
 Near him two foxes ; down the rows of grapes

One ranging steals the ripest ; one assails  
 With wiles the poor lad's scrip, to leave him soon  
 Stranded and supperless. He plaits meanwhile  
 With ears of corn a right fine cricket-trap,  
 And fits it on a rush : for vines, for scrip,  
 Little he cares, enamoured of his toy.

The cup is hung all round with lissom briar,  
 Triumph of Æolian art, a wondrous sight.  
 It was a ferryman's of Calydon :  
 A goat it cost me, and a great white cheese.  
 Ne'er yet my lips came near it, virgin still  
 It stands. And welcome to such boon art thou,  
 If for my sake thou'lt sing that lay of lays.  
 I jest not : up, lad, sing : no songs thou'lt own  
 In the dim land where all things are forgot.

#### THE SONG OF THYRSIS

*Begin, sweet maids, begin the woodland song.*

The voice of Thyrsis, Ætna's Thyrsis I.  
 Where were ye, Nymphs, oh where, while Daphnis pined?  
 In fair Peneüs or in Pindus' glens ?  
 For great Anapus' stream was not your haunt,  
 Nor Ætna's cliff, nor Acis' sacred rill.

*Begin, sweet maids, begin the woodland song.*

O'er him the wolves, the jackals howled o'er him ;  
 The lion in the oak-copse mourned his death.

*Begin, sweet maids, begin the woodland song.*

The kine and oxen stood around his feet,  
 The heifers and the calves wailed all for him.

*Begin, sweet maids, begin the woodland song.*

First from the mountain Hermes came, and said,  
 " Daphnis, who frets thee ? Lad, whom lov'st thou so ? "

*Begin, sweet maids, begin the woodland song.*

Came herdsmen, shepherds came, and goatherds came ;  
 All asked what ailed the lad. Priapus came  
 And said, " Why pine, poor Daphnis, while the maid  
 Foots it round every pool and every grove, "

*Begin, sweet maids, begin the woodland song.*

" O lack-love and perverse, in quest of thee ;

Herdsman in name, but goatherd rightlier called.  
With eyes that yearn the goatherd marks his kids  
Run riot, for he fain would frisk as they :

*Begin, sweet maids, begin the woodland song.*

“With eyes that yearn dost thou too mark the laugh  
Of maidens, for thou may'st not share their glee.”  
Still naught the herdsman said : he drained alone  
His bitter portion, till the fatal end.

*Begin, sweet maids, begin the woodland song.*

Came Aphroditè, smiles on her sweet face,  
False smiles, for heavy was her heart, and spake :  
“So, Daphnis, thou must try a fall with Love !  
But stalwart Love hath won the fall of thee.”

*Begin, sweet maids, begin the woodland song.*

Then “Ruthless Aphroditè,” Daphnis said,  
“Accursèd Aphroditè, foe to man !  
Say'st thou mine hour has come, my sun hath set ?  
Dead or alive, shall Daphnis work Love woe.”

*Begin, sweet maids, begin the woodland song.*

“Fly to Mount Ida, where the swain (men say)  
And Aphroditè—to Anchises fly;  
There are oak forests, here but galingale,  
And bees that make a music round the hives.”

*Begin, sweet maids, begin the woodland song.*

“Adonis owed his bloom to tending flocks  
And smiting hares, and bringing wild beasts down.”

*Begin, sweet maids, begin the woodland song.*

“Face once more Diomed : tell him, ‘I have slain  
The herdsman Daphnis ; now I challenge thee.’

*Begin, sweet maids, begin the woodland song.*

“Farewell, wolf, jackal, mountain-prisoned bear !  
Ye 'll see no more by grove or glade or glen  
Your herdsman Daphnis ! Arethuse, farewell,  
And the bright streams that flow down Thymbris' side.”

*Begin, sweet maids, begin the woodland song.*

“I am that Daphnis who lead here my kine,  
Bring here to drink my oxen and my calves.”

*Begin, sweet maids, begin the woodland song.*

“Pan, Pan, oh, whether great Lyceum's crags



Thou haunt'st to-day, or mightier Mænalus,  
Come to the Sicel isle! Abandon now  
Rhium and Helicè, and the mountain-cairn  
(That e'en gods cherish) of Lycaon's son!"

*Forget, sweet maids, forget your woodland song.*

"Come, king of song, o'er this my pipe, compact  
With wax and honey-breathing, arch thy lip:  
For surely I am torn from life by Love."

*Forget, sweet maids, forget your woodland song.*

"From thicket now and thorn let violets spring,  
Now let white lilies drape the juniper,  
And pines grow figs, and nature all go wrong;  
For Daphnis dies. Let deer pursue the hounds,  
And mountain-owls out-sing the nightingale."

*Forget, sweet maids, forget your woodland song.*

So spake he, and he never spake again.  
Fain Aphroditè would have raised his head;  
But all his thread was spun. So down the stream  
Went Daphnis: closed the waters o'er a head  
Dear to the Nine, of Nymphs not unbeloved.

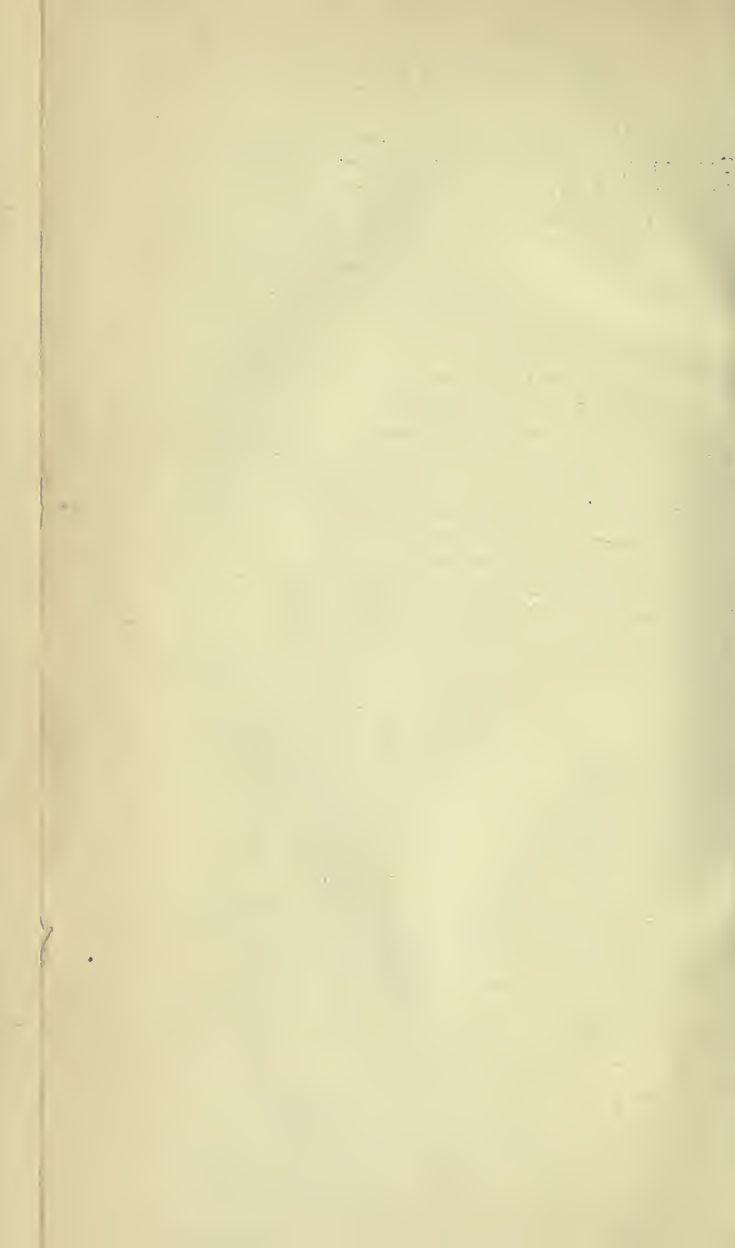
*Forget, sweet maids, forget your woodland song.*

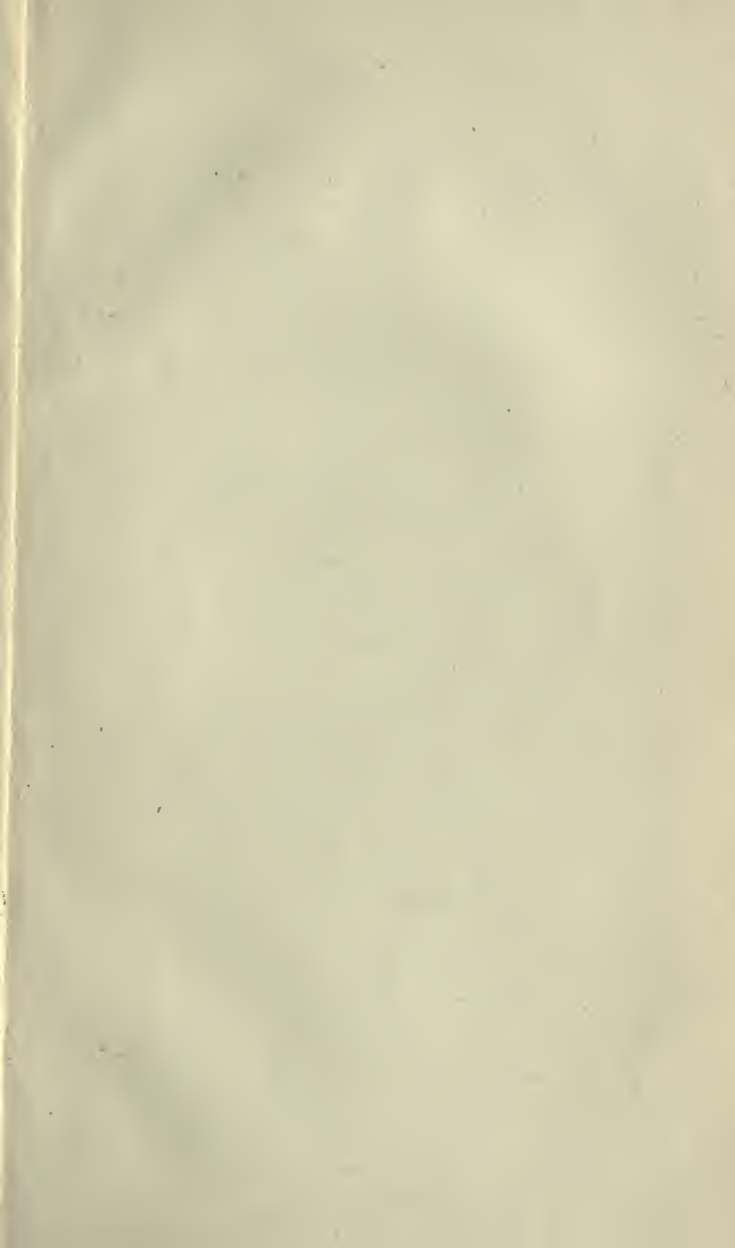
Now give me goat and cup; that I may milk  
The one and pour the other to the Muse.  
Fare ye well, Muses, o'er and o'er farewell!  
I'll sing strains lovelier yet in days to be.

Go. Thyrsis, let honey and the honey-comb  
Fill thy sweet mouth, and figs of Ægilus;  
For ne'er cicala trilled so sweet a song.  
Here is the cup: mark, friend, how sweet it smells;  
The Hours, thou'lt say, have washed it in their well.  
Hither, Cissætha! Thou, go milk her! Kids,  
Be steady, or your pranks will rouse the ram.

Calverley.











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