Alcestis

by Euripides

Free public domain classic — Noveliopdf

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Alcestis

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Alcestis

Author: Euripides

Translator: Gilbert Murray

Release date: December 1, 2003 [eBook #10523] Most recently updated: October 28, 2024

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/10523

Credits: Produced by Ted Garvin, Charles M. Bidwell and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ALCESTIS ***

THE ALCESTIS

OF

EURIPIDES

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH RHYMING VERSE

WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES BY GILBERT MURRAY, LL D, D LITT, FBA
REGIUS PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

1915

INTRODUCTION

The Alcestis would hardly confirm its author's right to be acclaimed "the most tragic of the poets." It is doubtful whether one can call it a tragedy at all. Yet it remains one of the most characteristic and delightful of Euripidean dramas, as well as, by modern standards, the most easily actable. And I notice that many judges who display nothing but a fierce satisfaction in sending other plays of that author to the block or the treadmill, show a certain human weakness in sentencing the gentle daughter of Pelias.

The play has been interpreted in many different ways. There is the old unsophisticated view, well set forth in Paley's preface of 1872. He regards the Alcestis simply as a triumph of pathos, especially of "that peculiar sort of pathos which comes most home to us, with our views and partialities for domestic life…. As for the characters, that of Alcestis must be acknowledged to be pre-eminently beautiful. One could almost imagine that Euripides had not yet conceived that bad opinion of the sex which so many of the subsequent dramas exhibit…. But the rest are hardly well-drawn, or, at least, pleasingly portrayed." "The poet might perhaps, had he pleased, have exhibited Admetus in a more amiable point of view."

This criticism is not very trenchant, but its weakness is due, I think, more to timidity of statement than to lack of perception. Paley does see that a character may be "well-drawn" without necessarily being "pleasing"; and even that he may be eminently pleasing as a part of the play while very displeasing in himself. He sees that Euripides may have had his own reasons for not making Admetus an ideal

husband. It seems odd that such points should need mentioning; but Greek drama has always suffered from a school of critics who approach a play with a greater equipment of aesthetic theory than of dramatic perception. This is the characteristic defect of classicism. One mark of the school is to demand from dramatists heroes and heroines which shall satisfy its own ideals; and, though there was in the New Comedy a mask known to Pollux as "The Entirely-good Young Man" ([Greek: panchraestos neaniskos]), such a character is fortunately unknown to classical Greek drama.

The influence of this "classicist" tradition has led to a timid and unsatisfying treatment of the Alcestis, in which many of the most striking and unconventional features of the whole composition were either ignored or smoothed away. As a natural result, various lively-minded readers proceeded to overemphasize these particular features, and were carried into eccentricity or paradox. Alfred Schöne, for instance, fixing his attention on just those points which the conventional critic passed over, decides simply that the Alcestis is a parody, and finds it very funny. (Die Alkestis von Euripides, Kiel, 1895.)

I will not dwell on other criticisms of this type. There are those who have taken the play for a criticism of contemporary politics or the current law of inheritance. Above all there is the late Dr. Verrall's famous essay in Euripides the Rationalist, explaining it as a psychological criticism of a supposed Delphic miracle, and arguing that Alcestis in the play does not rise from the dead at all. She had never really died; she only had a sort of nervous catalepsy induced by all the "suggestion" of death by which she was surrounded. Now Dr. Verrall's work, as always, stands apart. Even if wrong, it has its own excellence, its special insight and its extraordinary awakening power. But in general the effect of reading many criticisms on the Alcestis is to make a scholar realize that, for all the seeming simplicity of the play, competent Grecians have been strangely bewildered by it, and that after all there is no great reason to suppose that he himself is more sensible than his

neighbours.

This is depressing. None the less I cannot really believe that, if we make patient use of our available knowledge, the Alcestis presents any startling enigma. In the first place, it has long been known from the remnants of the ancient Didascalia, or official notice of production, that the Alcestis was produced as the fourth play of a series; that is, it took the place of a Satyr-play. It is what we may call Pro-satyric. (See the present writer's introduction to the Rhesus.) And we should note for what it is worth the observation in the ancient Greek argument: "The play is somewhat satyr-like ([Greek: saturiphkoteron]). It ends in rejoicing and gladness against the tragic convention."

Now we are of late years beginning to understand much better what a Satyr-play was. Satyrs have, of course, nothing to do with satire, either etymologically or otherwise. Satyrs are the attendant daemons who form the Kômos, or revel rout, of Dionysus. They are represented in divers fantastic forms, the human or divine being mixed with that of some animal, especially the horse or wild goat. Like Dionysus himself, they are connected in ancient religion with the Renewal of the Earth in spring and the resurrection of the dead, a point which students of the Alcestis may well remember. But in general they represent mere joyous creatures of nature, unthwarted by law and unchecked by self-control. Two notes are especially struck by them: the passions and the absurdity of half-drunken revellers, and the joy and mystery of the wild things in the forest.

The rule was that after three tragedies proper there came a play, still in tragic diction, with a traditional saga plot and heroic characters, in which the Chorus was formed by these Satyrs. There was a deliberate clash, an effect of burlesque; but of course the clash must not be too brutal. Certain characters of the heroic saga are, so to speak, at home with Satyrs and others are not. To take our extant specimens of Satyr-plays, for instance: in the Cyclops we have Odysseus, the heroic trickster; in

the fragmentary Ichneutae of Sophocles we have the Nymph Cyllene, hiding the baby Hermes from the chorus by the most barefaced and pleasant lying; later no doubt there was an entrance of the infant thief himself. Autolycus, Sisyphus, Thersites are all Satyr-play heroes and congenial to the Satyr atmosphere; but the most congenial of all, the one hero who existed always in an atmosphere of Satyrs and the Kômos until Euripides made him the central figure of a tragedy, was Heracles. [Footnote: The character of Heracles in connexion with the Kômos, already indicated by Wilamowitz and Dieterich (Herakles, pp. 98, ff.; Pulcinella, pp. 63, ff.), has been illuminatingly developed in an unpublished monograph by Mr. J.A.K. Thomson, of Aberdeen.]

The complete Satyr-play had a hero of this type and a Chorus of Satyrs. But the complete type was refined away during the fifth century; and one stage in the process produced a play with a normal chorus but with one figure of the Satyric or "revelling" type. One might almost say the "comic" type if, for the moment, we may remember that that word is directly derived from 'Kômos.'

The Alcestis is a very clear instance of this Pro-satyric class of play. It has the regular tragic diction, marked here and there (393, 756, 780, etc.) by slight extravagances and forms of words which are sometimes epic and sometimes over-colloquial; it has a regular saga plot, which had already been treated by the old poet Phrynichus in his Alcestis, a play which is now lost but seems to have been Satyric; and it has one character straight from the Satyr world, the heroic reveller, Heracles. It is all in keeping that he should arrive tired, should feast and drink and sing; should be suddenly sobered and should go forth to battle with Death. It is also in keeping that the contest should have a half-grotesque and half-ghastly touch, the grapple amid the graves and the cracking ribs.

* * * * *

So much for the traditional form. As for the subject, Euripides received it from

Phrynichus, and doubtless from other sources. We cannot be sure of the exact form of the story in Phrynichus. But apparently it told how Admetus, King of Pherae in Thessaly, received from Apollo a special privilege which the God had obtained, in true Satyric style, by making the Three Fates drunk and cajoling them. This was that, when his appointed time for death came, he might escape if he could find some volunteer to die for him. His father and mother, from whom the service might have been expected, refused to perform it. His wife, Alcestis, though no blood relation, handsomely undertook it and died. But it so happened that Admetus had entertained in his house the demi-god, Heracles; and when Heracles heard what had happened, he went out and wrestled with Death, conquered him, and brought Alcestis home.

Given this form and this story, the next question is: What did Euripides make of them? The general answer is clear: he has applied his usual method. He accepts the story as given in the tradition, and then represents it in his own way. When the tradition in question is really heroic, we know what his way is. He preserves, and even emphasizes, the stateliness and formality of the Attic stage conventions; but, in the meantime, he has subjected the story and its characters to a keener study and a more sensitive psychological judgment than the simple things were originally meant to bear. So that many characters which passed as heroic, or at least presentable, in the kindly remoteness of legend, reveal some strange weakness when brought suddenly into the light. When the tradition is Satyric, as here, the same process produces almost an opposite effect. It is somewhat as though the main plot of a gross and jolly farce were pondered over and made more true to human character till it emerged as a refined and rather pathetic comedy. The making drunk of the Three Grey Sisters disappears; one can only just see the trace of its having once been present. The revelling of Heracles is touched in with the lightest of hands; it is little more than symbolic. And all the figures in the story, instead of being left broadly comic or having their psychology neglected, are treated delicately, sympathetically, with just that faint touch of satire, or at least of amusement, which is almost

inseparable from a close interest in character.

What was Admetus really like, this gallant prince who had won the affection of such great guests as Apollo and Heracles, and yet went round asking other people to die for him; who, in particular, accepted his wife's monstrous sacrifice with satisfaction and gratitude? The play portrays him well. Generous, innocent, artistic, affectionate, eloquent, impulsive, a good deal spoilt, unconsciously insincere, and no doubt fundamentally selfish, he hates the thought of dying and he hates losing his wife almost as much. Why need she die? Why could it not have been some one less important to him? He feels with emotion what a beautiful act it would have been for his old father. "My boy, you have a long and happy life before you, and for me the sands are well-nigh run out. Do not seek to dissuade me. I will die for you." Admetus could compose the speech for him. A touching scene, a noble farewell, and all the dreadful trouble solved—so conveniently solved! And the miserable self-blinded old man could not see it!

Euripides seems to have taken positive pleasure in Admetus, much as Meredith did in his famous Egoist; but Euripides all through is kinder to his victim than Meredith is. True, Admetus is put to obvious shame, publicly and helplessly. The Chorus make discreet comments upon him. The Handmaid is outspoken about him. One feels that Alcestis herself, for all her tender kindness, has seen through him. Finally, to make things quite clear, his old father fights him openly, tells him home-truth upon home-truth, tears away all his protective screens, and leaves him with his self-respect in tatters. It is a fearful ordeal for Admetus, and, after his first fury, he takes it well. He comes back from his wife's burial a changed man. He says not much, but enough. "I have done wrong. I have only now learnt my lesson. I imagined I could save my happy life by forfeiting my honour; and the result is that I have lost both." I think that a careful reading of the play will show an almost continuous process of self-discovery and self-judgment in the mind of Admetus. He was a man who blinded himself with words and beautiful sentiments; but he was not

thick-skinned or thick-witted. He was not a brute or a cynic. And I think he did learn his lesson … not completely and for ever, but as well as most of us learn such lessons.

The beauty of Alcestis is quite untouched by the dramatist's keener analysis. The strong light only increases its effect. Yet she is not by any means a mere blameless ideal heroine; and the character which Euripides gives her makes an admirable foil to that of Admetus. Where he is passionate and romantic, she is simple and homely. While he is still refusing to admit the facts and beseeching her not to "desert" him, she in a gentle but businesslike way makes him promise to take care of the children and, above all things, not to marry again. She could not possibly trust Admetus's choice. She is sure that the step-mother would be unkind to the children. She might be a horror and beat them (l. 307). And when Admetus has made a thrilling answer about eternal sorrow, and the silencing of lyre and lute, and the statue who shall be his only bride, Alcestis earnestly calls the attention of witnesses to the fact that he has sworn not to marry again. She is not an artist like Admetus. There is poetry in her, because poetry comes unconsciously out of deep feeling, but there is no artistic eloquence. Her love, too, is quite different from his. To him, his love for his wife and children is a beautiful thing, a subject to speak and sing about as well as an emotion to feel. But her love is hardly conscious. She does not talk about it at all. She is merely wrapped up in the welfare of certain people, first her husband and then he children. To a modern romantic reader her insistence that her husband shall not marry again seems hardly delicate. But she does not think about romance or delicacy. To her any neglect to ensure due protection for the children would be as unnatural as to refuse to die for her husband. Indeed, Professor J.L. Myres has suggested that care for the children's future is the guiding motive of her whole conduct. There was first the danger of their being left fatherless, a dire calamity in the heroic age. She could meet that danger by dying herself. Then followed the danger of a stepmother. She meets that by making Admetus swear never to marry. In

the long run, I fancy, the effect of gracious loveliness which Alcestis certainly makes is not so much due to any words of her own as to what the Handmaid and the Serving Man say about her. In the final scene she is silent; necessarily and rightly silent, for all tradition knows that those new-risen from the dead must not speak. It will need a long rite de passage before she can freely commune with this world again. It is a strange and daring scene between the three of them; the humbled and broken-hearted husband; the triumphant Heracles, kindly and wise, yet still touched by the mocking and blustrous atmosphere from which he sprang; and the silent woman who has seen the other side of the grave. It was always her way to know things but not to speak of them.

The other characters fall easily into their niches. We have only to remember the old Satyric tradition and to look at them in the light of their historical development. Heracles indeed, half-way on his road from the roaring reveller of the Satyr-play to the suffering and erring deliverer of tragedy, is a little foreign to our notions, but quite intelligible and strangely attractive. The same historical method seems to me to solve most of the difficulties which have been felt about Admetus's hospitality. Heracles arrives at the castle just at the moment when Alcestis is lying dead in her room; Admetus conceals the death from him and insists on his coming in and enjoying himself. What are we to think of this behaviour? Is it magnificent hospitality, or is it gross want of tact? The answer, I think, is indicated above.

In the uncritical and boisterous atmosphere of the Satyr-play it was natural hospitality, not especially laudable or surprising. From the analogy of similar stories I suspect that Admetus originally did not know his guest, and received not so much the reward of exceptional virtue as the blessing naturally due to those who entertain angels unawares. If we insist on asking whether Euripides himself, in real life or in a play of his own free invention, would have considered Admetus's conduct to Heracles entirely praiseworthy, the answer will certainly be No, but it will have little bearing on the play. In the Alcestis, as it stands, the famous act of hospitality is a

datum of the story. Its claims are admitted on the strength of the tradition. It was the act for which Admetus was specially and marvellously rewarded; therefore, obviously, it was an act of exceptional merit and piety. Yet the admission is made with a smile, and more than one suggestion is allowed to float across the scene that in real life such conduct would be hardly wise.

Heracles, who rose to tragic rank from a very homely cycle of myth, was apt to bring other homely characters with him. He was a great killer not only of malefactors but of "kêres" or bogeys, such as "Old Age" and "Ague" and the sort of "Death" that we find in this play. Thanatos is not a god, not at all a King of Terrors. One may compare him with the dancing skeleton who is called Death in mediaeval writings. When such a figure appears on the tragic stage one asks at once what relation he bears to Hades, the great Olympian king of the unseen. The answer is obvious. Thanatos is the servant of Hades, a "priest" or sacrificer, who is sent to fetch the appointed victims.

The other characters speak for themselves. Certainly Pheres can be trusted to do so, though we must remember that we see him at an unfortunate moment. The aged monarch is not at his best, except perhaps in mere fighting power. I doubt if he was really as cynical as he here professes to be.

* * * * *

In the above criticisms I feel that I may have done what critics are so apt to do. I have dwelt on questions of intellectual interest and perhaps thereby diverted attention from that quality in the play which is the most important as well as by far the hardest to convey; I mean the sheer beauty and delightfulness of the writing. It is the earliest dated play of Euripides which has come down to us. True, he was over forty when he produced it, but it is noticeably different from the works of his old age. The numbers are smoother, the thought less deeply scarred, the language more charming and less passionate. If it be true that poetry is bred out of joy and sorrow,

one feels as if more enjoyment and less suffering had gone to the making of the Alcestis than to that of the later plays.

ALCESTIS

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

ADMÊTUS, King of Pherae in Thessaly. ALCESTIS, daughter of Pelias, his wife. PHERÊS, his father, formerly King but now in retirement. TWO CHILDREN, his son and daughter. A MANSERVANT in his house. A HANDMAID.

The Hero HERACLES. The God APOLLO. THANÁTOS or DEATH. CHORUS, consisting of Elders of Pherae.

"The play was first performed when Glaukînos was Archon, in the 2nd year of the 85th Olympiad (438 B.C.). Sophocles was first, Euripides second with the Cretan Women, Alcmaeon in Psophis, Telephus and Alcestis…. The play is somewhat Satyric in character."

ALCESTIS

The scene represents the ancient Castle of ADMETUS near Pherae in Thessaly. It is the dusk before dawn; APOLLO, radiant in the darkness, looks at the Castle.

APOLLO. Admetus' House! 'Twas here I bowed my head Of old, and chafed not at the bondman's bread, Though born in heaven. Aye, Zeus to death had hurled My son, Asclepios, Healer of the World, Piercing with fire his heart; and in mine ire I slew his Cyclop churls, who forged the fire. Whereat Zeus cast me forth to bear the yoke Of service to a mortal. To this folk I came, and watched a stranger's herd for pay, And all his house I have prospered to this day. For innocent was the Lord I chanced upon And clean as mine own heart, King Pheres' son, Admetus. Him I rescued from the grave, Beguiling the Grey Sisters till they gave A great oath that

Admetus should go free, Would he but pay to Them Below in fee Another living soul. Long did he prove All that were his, and all that owed him love, But never a soul he found would yield up life And leave the sunlight for him, save his wife: Who, even now, down the long galleries Is borne, death-wounded; for this day it is She needs must pass out of the light and die. And, seeing the stain of death must not come nigh My radiance, I must leave this house I love. But ha! The Headsman of the Pit, above Earth's floor, to ravish her! Aye, long and late He hath watched, and cometh at the fall of fate.

Enter from the other side THANATOS; a crouching black-haired and winged figure, carrying a drawn sword. He starts in revulsion on seeing APOLLO.

THANATOS. Aha! Why here? What mak'st thou at the gate, Thou Thing of Light? Wilt overtread The eternal judgment, and abate And spoil the portions of the dead? 'Tis not enough for thee to have blocked In other days Admetus' doom With craft of magic wine, which mocked The three grey Sisters of the Tomb; But now once more I see thee stand at watch, and shake That arrow-armèd hand to make This woman thine, who swore, who swore, To die now for her husband's sake.

APOLLO. Fear not. I bring fair words and seek but what is just.

THANATOS (sneering) And if words help thee not, an arrow must?

APOLLO. 'Tis ever my delight to bear this bow.

THANATOS. And aid this house unjustly? Aye, 'tis so.

APOLLO. I love this man, and grieve for his dismay.

THANATOS. And now wilt rob me of my second prey!

APOLLO. I never robbed thee, neither then nor now.

THANATOS. Why is Admetus here then, not below?

APOLLO. He gave for ransom his own wife, for whom …

THANATOS (interrupting). I am come; and straight will bear her to the tomb.

APOLLO. Go, take her.—I can never move thine heart.

THANATOS (mocking). To slay the doomed?—Nay; I will do my part.

APOLLO. No. To keep death for them that linger late.

THANATOS (still mocking). 'Twould please thee, so?… I owe thee homage great.

APOLLO. Ah, then she may yet … she may yet grow old?

THANATOS (with a laugh). No!… I too have my rights, and them I hold.

APOLLO. 'Tis but one life thou gainest either-wise.

THANATOS. When young souls die, the richer is my prize.

APOLLO. Old, with great riches they will bury her.

THANATOS. Fie on thee, fie! Thou rich-man's lawgiver!

APOLLO. How? Is there wit in Death, who seemed so blind?

THANATOS. The rich would buy long life for all their kind.

APOLLO. Thou will not grant me, then, this boon? 'Tis so?

THANATOS. Thou knowest me, what I am: I tell thee, no!

APOLLO. I know gods sicken at thee and men pine.

THANATOS. Begone! Too many things not meant for thine Thy greed hath conquered; but not all, not all!

APOLLO. I swear, for all thy bitter pride, a fall Awaits thee. One even now comes conquering Towards this house, sent by a southland king To fetch him four wild coursers, of the race Which rend men's bodies in the winds of Thrace. This house shall give him welcome good, and he Shall wrest this woman from thy worms and thee. So thou shalt give me all, and thereby win But hatred, not the grace that might have been. [Exit APOLLO.]

THANATOS. Talk on, talk on! Thy threats shall win no bride From me.—This woman, whatsoe'er betide, Shall lie in Hades' house. Even at the word I go to lay

upon her hair my sword. For all whose head this grey sword visiteth To death are hallowed and the Lords of death.

[THANATOS goes into the house. Presently, as the day grows lighter, the CHORUS enters: it consists of Citizens of Pherae, who speak severally.]

CHORUS.

LEADER. Quiet, quiet, above, beneath!

SECOND ELDER. The house of Admetus holds its breath.

THIRD ELDER. And never a King's friend near, To tell us either of tears to shed For Pelias' daughter, crowned and dead; Or joy, that her eyes are clear. Bravest, truest of wives is she That I have seen or the world shall see.

DIVERS CITIZENS, conversing. (The dash — indicates a new speaker.)

—Hear ye no sob, or noise of hands Beating the breast? No mourners' cries For one they cannot save? —Nothing: and at the door there stands No handmaid.—Help, O Paian; rise, O star beyond the wave!

—Dead, and this quiet? No, it cannot be. —Dead, dead!—Not gone to burial secretly!

—Why? I still fear: what makes your speech so brave? —Admetus cast that dear wife to the grave Alone, with none to see?

—I see no bowl of clear spring water. It ever stands before the dread Door where a dead man rests. —No lock of shorn hair! Every daughter Of woman shears it for the dead. No sound of bruisèd breasts!

—Yet 'tis this very day …—This very day? —The Queen should pass and lie beneath the clay. —It hurts my life, my heart!—All honest hearts Must sorrow for a brightness that departs, A good life worn away.

LEADER. To wander o'er leagues of land, To search over wastes of sea, Where the Prophets of Lycia stand, Or where Ammon's daughters three Make runes in the

rainless sand, For magic to make her free— Ah, vain! for the end is here; Sudden it comes and sheer. What lamb on the altar-strand Stricken shall comfort me?

SECOND ELDER. Only, only one, I know: Apollo's son was he, Who healed men long ago. Were he but on earth to see, She would rise from the dark below And the gates of eternity. For men whom the Gods had slain He pitied and raised again; Till God's fire laid him low, And now, what help have we?

OTHERS. All's done that can be. Every vow Full paid; and every altar's brow Full crowned with spice of sacrifice. No help remains nor respite now.

Enter from the Castle a HANDMAID, almost in tears.

LEADER. But see, a handmaid cometh, and the tear Wet on her cheek! What tiding shall we hear?… Thy grief is natural, daughter, if some ill Hath fallen to-day. Say, is she living still Or dead, your mistress? Speak, if speak you may.

MAID. Alive. No, dead…. Oh, read it either way.

LEADER. Nay, daughter, can the same soul live and die?

MAID. Her life is broken; death is in her eye.

LEADER. Poor King, to think what she was, and what thou!

MAID. He never knew her worth…. He will know it now.

LEADER. There is no hope, methinks, to save her still?

MAID. The hour is come, and breaks all human will.

LEADER. She hath such tendance as the dying crave?

MAID. For sure: and rich robes ready for her grave.

LEADER. 'Fore God, she dies high-hearted, aye, and far In honour raised above all wives that are!

MAID. Far above all! How other? What must she, Who seeketh to surpass this woman, be? Or how could any wife more shining make Her lord's love, than by

dying for his sake? But thus much all the city knows. 'Tis here, In her own rooms, the tale will touch thine ear With strangeness. When she knew the day was come, She rose and washed her body, white as foam, With running water; then the cedarn press She opened, and took forth her funeral dress And rich adornment. So she stood arrayed Before the Hearth-Fire of her home, and prayed: "Mother, since I must vanish from the day, This last, last time I kneel to thee and pray; Be mother to my two children! Find some dear Helpmate for him, some gentle lord for her. And let not them, like me, before their hour Die; let them live in happiness, in our Old home, till life be full and age content." To every household altar then she went And made for each his garland of the green Boughs of the wind-blown myrtle, and was seen Praying, without a sob, without a tear. She knew the dread thing coming, but her clear Cheek never changed: till suddenly she fled Back to her own chamber and bridal bed: Then came the tears and she spoke all her thought. "O bed, whereon my laughing girlhood's knot Was severed by this man, for whom I die, Farewell! 'Tis thou … I speak not bitterly…. 'Tis thou hast slain me. All alone I go Lest I be false to him or thee. And lo, Some woman shall lie here instead of me— Happier perhaps; more true she cannot be." She kissed the pillow as she knelt, and wet With flooding tears was that fair coverlet. At last she had had her fill of weeping; then She tore herself away, and rose again, Walking with downcast eyes; yet turned before She had left the room, and cast her down once more Kneeling beside the bed. Then to her side The children came, and clung to her and cried, And her arms hugged them, and a long good-bye She gave to each, like one who goes to die. The whole house then was weeping, every slave In sorrow for his mistress. And she gave Her hand to all; aye, none so base was there She gave him not good words and he to her. So on Admetus falls from either side Sorrow. 'Twere bitter grief to him to have died Himself; and being escaped, how sore a woe He hath earned instead—Ah, some day he shall know!

LEADER. Surely Admetus suffers, even to-day, For this true-hearted love he hath

cast away?

MAID. He weeps; begs her not leave him desolate, And holds her to his heart—too late, too late! She is sinking now, and there, beneath his eye Fading, the poor cold hand falls languidly, And faint is all her breath. Yet still she fain Would look once on the sunlight—once again And never more. I will go in and tell Thy presence. Few there be, will serve so well My master and stand by him to the end. But thou hast been from olden days our friend. [The MAID goes in.]

CHORUS.

THIRD ELDER. O Zeus, What escape and where From the evil thing? How break the snare That is round our King?

SECOND ELDER. Ah list! One cometh?… No. Let us no more wait; Make dark our raiment And shear this hair.

LEADER. Aye, friends! 'Tis so, even so. Yet the gods are great And may send allayment. To prayer, to prayer!

ALL (praying). O Paian wise! Some healing of this home devise, devise! Find, find…. Oh, long ago when we were blind Thine eyes saw mercy … find some healing breath! Again, O Paian, break the chains that bind; Stay the red hand of Death!

LEADER. Alas! What shame, what dread, Thou Pheres' son, Shalt be harvested When thy wife is gone!

SECOND ELDER. Ah me; For a deed less drear Than this thou ruest Men have died for sorrow; Aye, hearts have bled.

THIRD ELDER. 'Tis she; Not as men say dear, But the dearest, truest, Shall lie ere morrow Before thee dead!

ALL. But lo! Once more! She and her husband moving to the door! Cry, cry! And thou, O land of Pherae, hearken! The bravest of women sinketh, perisheth, Under

the green earth, down where the shadows darken, Down to the House of Death!

[During the last words ADMETUS and ALCESTIS have entered. ALCESTIS is supported by her Handmaids and followed by her two children.]

LEADER. And who hath said that Love shall bring More joy to man than fear and strife? I knew his perils from of old, I know them now, when I behold The bitter faring of my King, Whose love is taken, and his life Left evermore an empty thing.

ALCESTIS. O Sun, O light of the day that falls! O running cloud that races along the sky!

ADMETUS. They look on thee and me, a stricken twain, Who have wrought no sin that God should have thee slain.

ALCESTIS. Dear Earth, and House of sheltering walls, And wedded homes of the land where my fathers lie!

ADMETUS. Fail not, my hapless one. Be strong, and pray The o'er-mastering Gods to hate us not alway.

ALCESTIS (faintly, her mind wandering). A boat two-oared, upon water; I see, I see. And the Ferryman of the Dead, His hand that hangs on the pole, his voice that cries; "Thou lingerest; come. Come quickly, we wait for thee." He is angry that I am slow; he shakes his head.

ADMETUS. Alas, a bitter boat-faring for me, My bride ill-starred.—Oh, this is misery!

ALCESTIS (as before). Drawing, drawing! 'Tis some one that draweth me … To the Palaces of the Dead. So dark. The wings, the eyebrows and ah, the eyes!… Go back! God's mercy! What seekest thou? Let me be!… (Recovering) Where am I? Ah, and what paths are these I tread?

ADMETUS. Grievous for all who love thee, but for me And my two babes most hard, most solitary.

ALCESTIS. Hold me not; let me lie.— I am too weak to stand; and Death is near, And a slow darkness stealing on my sight. My little ones, good-bye. Soon, soon, and mother will be no more here…. Good-bye, two happy children in the light.

ADMETUS. Oh, word of pain, oh, sharper ache Than any death of mine had brought! For the Gods' sake, desert me not, For thine own desolate children's sake. Nay, up! Be brave. For if they rend Thee from me, I can draw no breath; In thy hand are my life and death, Thine, my belovèd and my friend!

ALCESTIS. Admetus, seeing what way my fortunes lie, I fain would speak with thee before I die. I have set thee before all things; yea, mine own Life beside thine was naught. For this alone I die…. Dear Lord, I never need have died. I might have lived to wed some prince of pride, Dwell in a king's house…. Nay, how could I, torn From thee, live on, I and my babes forlorn? I have given to thee my youth—not more nor less, But all—though I was full of happiness. Thy father and mother both—'tis strange to tell— Had failed thee, though for them the deed was well, The years were ripe, to die and save their son, The one child of the house: for hope was none, If thou shouldst pass away, of other heirs. So thou and I had lived through the long years, Both. Thou hadst not lain sobbing here alone For a dead wife and orphan babes…. 'Tis done Now, and some God hath wrought out all his will. Howbeit I now will ask thee to fulfill One great return-gift—not so great withal As I have given, for life is more than all; But just and due, as thine own heart will tell. For thou hast loved our little ones as well As I have…. Keep them to be masters here In my old house; and bring no stepmother Upon them. She might hate them. She might be Some baser woman, not a queen like me, And strike them with her hand. For mercy, spare Our little ones that wrong. It is my prayer…. They come into a house: they are all strife And hate to any child of the dead wife…. Better a serpent than a stepmother! A boy is safe. He has his father there To guard him. But a little girl! (Taking the LITTLE GIRL to her) What good And gentle care will guide thy maidenhood? What woman wilt thou find at father's side? One evil word from her,

just when the tide Of youth is full, would wreck thy hope of love. And no more mother near, to stand above Thy marriage-bed, nor comfort thee pain-tossed In travail, when one needs a mother most! Seeing I must die…. 'Tis here, across my way, Not for the morrow, not for the third day, But now—Death, and to lie with things that were. Farewell. God keep you happy.—Husband dear, Remember that I failed thee not; and you, My children, that your mother loved you true.

LEADER. Take comfort. Ere thy lord can speak, I swear, If truth is in him, he will grant thy prayer.

ADMETUS. He will, he will! Oh, never fear for me. Mine hast thou been, and mine shalt ever be, Living and dead, thou only. None in wide Hellas but thou shalt be Admetus' bride. No race so high, no face so magic-sweet Shall ever from this purpose turn my feet. And children … if God grant me joy of these, 'Tis all I ask; of thee no joy nor ease He gave me. And thy mourning I will bear Not one year of my life but every year, While life shall last…. My mother I will know No more. My father shall be held my foe. They brought the words of love but not the deed, While thou hast given thine all, and in my need Saved me. What can I do but weep alone, Alone alway, when such a wife is gone?… An end shall be of revel, and an end Of crowns and song and mirth of friend with friend, Wherewith my house was glad. I ne'er again Will touch the lute nor ease my heart from pain With pipes of Afric. All the joys I knew, And joys were many, thou hast broken in two. Oh, I will find some artist wondrous wise Shall mould for me thy shape, thine hair, thine eyes, And lay it in thy bed; and I will lie Close, and reach out mine arms to thee, and cry Thy name into the night, and wait and hear My own heart breathe: "Thy love, thy love is near." A cold delight; yet it might ease the sum Of sorrow…. And good dreams of thee will come Like balm. 'Tis sweet, even in a dream, to gaze On a dear face, the moment that it stays. O God, if Orpheus' voice were mine, to sing To Death's high Virgin and the Virgin's King, Till their hearts failed them, down would I my path Cleave, and naught stay me, not the Hound of Wrath, Not the grey oarsman of the ghostly tide,

Till back to sunlight I had borne my bride. But now, wife, wait for me till I shall come Where thou art, and prepare our second home. These ministers in that same cedar sweet Where thou art laid will lay me, feet to feet, And head to head, oh, not in death from thee Divided, who alone art true to me!

LEADER. This life-long sorrow thou hast sworn, I too, Thy friend, will bear with thee. It is her due.

ALCESTIS. Children, ye heard his promise? He will wed No other woman nor forget the dead.

ADMETUS. Again I promise. So it shall be done.

ALCESTIS (giving the children into his arms one after the other). On that oath take my daughter: and my son.

ADMETUS. Dear hand that gives, I accept both gift and vow.

ALCESTIS. Thou, in my place, must be their mother now.

ADMETUS. Else were they motherless—I needs must try.

ALCESTIS. My babes, I ought to live, and lo, I die.

ADMETUS. And how can I, forlorn of thee, live on?

ALCESTIS. Time healeth; and the dead are dead and gone.

ADMETUS. Oh, take me with thee to the dark below, Me also!

ALCESTIS. 'Tis enough that one should go.

ADMETUS. O Fate, to have cheated me of one so true!

ALCESTIS (her strength failing). There comes a darkness: a great burden, too.

ADMETUS. I am lost if thou wilt leave me…. Wife! Mine own!

ALCESTIS. I am not thy wife; I am nothing. All is gone.

ADMETUS. Thy babes! Thou wilt not leave them.—Raise thine eye.

ALCESTIS. I am sorry…. But good-bye, children; good-bye.

ADMETUS. Look at them! Wake and look at them!

ALCESTIS. I must go.

ADMETUS. What? Dying!

ALCESTIS. Farewell, husband! [She dies.]

ADMETUS (with a cry). Ah!… Woe, woe!

LEADER. Admetus' Queen is dead!

[While ADMETUS is weeping silently, and the CHORUS veil their faces, the LITTLE BOY runs up to his dead Mother.]

LITTLE BOY. Oh, what has happened? Mummy has gone away, And left me and will not come back any more! Father, I shall be lonely all the day…. Look! Look! Her eyes … and her arms not like before, How they lie … Mother! Oh, speak a word! Answer me, answer me, Mother! It is I. I am touching your face. It is I, your little bird.

ADMETUS (recovering himself and going to the Child). She hears us not, she sees us not. We lie Under a heavy grief, child, thou and I.

LITTLE BOY. I am so little, Father, and lonely and cold Here without Mother. It is too hard…. And you, Poor little sister, too. Oh, Father! Such a little time we had her. She might have stayed On till we all were old…. Everything is spoiled when Mother is dead.

[The LITTLE BOY is taken away, with his Sister, sobbing.]

LEADER. My King, thou needs must gird thee to the worst. Thou shalt not be the last, nor yet the first, To lose a noble wife. Be brave, and know To die is but a debt that all men owe.

ADMETUS. I know. It came not without doubts and fears, This thing. The thought hath poisoned all my years. Howbeit, I now will make the burial due To this dead Queen. Be assembled, all of you; And, after, raise your triumph-song to greet This

pitiless Power that yawns beneath our feet. Meantime let all in Thessaly who dread My sceptre join in mourning for the dead With temples sorrow-shorn and sable weed. Ye chariot-lords, ye spurrers of the steed, Shear close your horses' manes! Let there be found Through all my realm no lute, nor lyre, nor sound Of piping, till twelve moons are at an end. For never shall I lose a closer friend, Nor braver in my need. And worthy is she Of honour, who alone hath died for me.

[The body of ALCESTIS is carried into the house by mourners; ADMETUS follows it.]

CHORUS. Daughter of Pelias, fare thee well, May joy be thine in the Sunless Houses! For thine is a deed which the Dead shall tell Where a King black-browed in the gloom carouses; And the cold grey hand at the helm and oar Which guideth shadows from shore to shore, Shall bear this day o'er the Tears that Well, A Queen of women, a spouse of spouses.

Minstrels many shall praise thy name With lyre full-strung and with voices lyreless, When Mid-Moon riseth, an orbèd flame, And from dusk to dawning the dance is tireless; And Carnos cometh to Sparta's call, And Athens shineth in festival; For thy death is a song, and a fullness of fame, Till the heart of the singer is left desireless.

LEADER. Would I could reach thee, oh, Reach thee and save, my daughter, Starward from gulfs of Hell, Past gates, past tears that swell, Where the weak oar climbs thro' The night and the water!

SECOND ELDER. Belovèd and lonely one, Who feared not dying: Gone in another's stead Alone to the hungry dead: Light be the carven stone Above thee lying!

THIRD ELDER. Oh, he who should seek again A new bride after thee, Were loathed of thy children twain, And loathed of me.

LEADER. Word to his mother sped, Praying to her who bore him; Word to his father, old, Heavy with years and cold; "Quick, ere your son be dead! What dare ye

for him?"

SECOND ELDER. Old, and they dared not; grey, And they helped him never! 'Twas she, in her youth and pride, Rose up for her lord and died. Oh, love of two hearts that stay One-knit for ever….

THIRD ELDER. 'Tis rare in the world! God send Such bride in my house to be; She should live life to the end, Not fail through me.

[As the song ceases there enters a stranger, walking strongly, but travel-stained, dusty, and tired. His lion-skin and club show him to be HERACLES.]

HERACLES. Ho, countrymen! To Pherae am I come By now? And is Admetus in his home?

LEADER. Our King is in his house, Lord Heracles.— But say, what need brings thee in days like these To Thessaly and Pherae's wallèd ring?

HERACLES. A quest I follow for the Argive King.

LEADER. What prize doth call thee, and to what far place?

HERACLES. The horses of one Diomede, in Thrace.

LEADER. But how…? Thou know'st not? Is he strange to thee?

HERACLES. Quite strange. I ne'er set foot in Bistony.

LEADER. Not without battle shalt thou win those steeds.

HERACLES. So be it! I cannot fail my master's needs.

LEADER. 'Tis slay or die, win or return no more.

HERACLES. Well, I have looked on peril's face before.

LEADER. What profit hast thou in such manslaying?

HERACLES. I shall bring back the horses to my King.

LEADER. 'Twere none such easy work to bridle them.

HERACLES. Not easy? Have they nostrils breathing flame?

LEADER. They tear men's flesh; their jaws are swift with blood.

HERACLES. Men's flesh! 'Tis mountain wolves', not horses' food!

LEADER. Thou wilt see their mangers clogged with blood, like mire.

HERACLES. And he who feeds such beasts, who was his sire?

LEADER. Ares, the war-lord of the Golden Targe.

HERACLES. Enough!—This labour fitteth well my large Fortune, still upward, still against the wind. How often with these kings of Ares' kind Must I do battle? First the dark wolf-man, Lycaon; then 'twas he men called The Swan; And now this man of steeds!… Well, none shall see Alcmena's son turn from his enemy.

LEADER. Lo, as we speak, this land's high governor, Admetus, cometh from his castle door.

Enter ADMETUS from the Castle.

ADMETUS. Zeus-born of Perseid line, all joy to thee!

HERACLES. Joy to Admetus, Lord of Thessaly!

ADMETUS. Right welcome were she!—But thy love I know.

HERACLES. But why this mourning hair, this garb of woe?

ADMETUS (in a comparatively light tone). There is a burial I must make to-day.

HERACLES. God keep all evil from thy children!

ADMETUS. Nay, My children live.

HERACLES. Thy father, if 'tis he, Is ripe in years.

ADMETUS. He liveth, friend, and she Who bore me.

HERACLES. Surely not thy wife? 'Tis not Alcestis?

ADMETUS (his composure a little shaken). Ah; two answers share my thought, Questioned of her.

HERACLES. Is she alive or dead?

ADMETUS. She is, and is not; and my heart hath bled Long years for her.

HERACLES. I understand no more. Thy words are riddles.

ADMETUS. Heard'st thou not of yore The doom that she must meet?

HERACLES. I know thy wife Has sworn to die for thee.

ADMETUS. And is it life, To live with such an oath hung o'er her head?

HERACLES (relieved). Ah, Weep not too soon, friend. Wait till she be dead.

ADMETUS. He dies who is doomed to die; he is dead who dies.

HERACLES. The two are different things in most men's eyes.

ADMETUS. Decide thy way, lord, and let me decide The other way.

HERACLES. Who is it that has died? Thou weepest.

ADMETUS. 'Tis a woman. It doth take My memory back to her of whom we spake.

HERACLES. A stranger, or of kin to thee?

ADMETUS. Not kin, But much beloved.

HERACLES. How came she to be in Thy house to die?

ADMETUS. Her father died, and so She came to us, an orphan, long ago.

HERACLES (as though about to depart). 'Tis sad. I would I had found thee on a happier day.

ADMETUS. Thy words have some intent: what wouldst thou say?

HERACLES. I must find harbour with some other friend.

ADMETUS. My prince, it may not be! God never send Such evil!

HERACLES. 'Tis great turmoil, when a guest Comes to a mourning house.

ADMETUS. Come in and rest. Let the dead die!

HERACLES. I cannot, for mere shame, Feast beside men whose eyes have tears in them.

ADMETUS. The guest-rooms are apart where thou shalt be.

HERACLES. Friend, let me go. I shall go gratefully.

ADMETUS. Thou shalt not enter any door but mine. (To an Attendant) Lead in our guest. Unlock the furthest line Of guest-chambers; and bid the stewards there Make ready a full feast; then close with care The midway doors. 'Tis unmeet, if he hears Our turmoil or is burdened with our tears.

[The Attendant leads HERACLES into the house.]

LEADER. How, master? When within a thing so sad Lies, thou wilt house a stranger? Art thou mad?

ADMETUS. And had I turned the stranger from my door, Who sought my shelter, hadst thou praised me more? I trow not, if my sorrow were thereby No whit less, only the more friendless I. And more, when bards tell tales, were it not worse My house should lie beneath the stranger's curse? Now he is my sure friend, if e'er I stand Lonely in Argos, in a thirsty land.

LEADER. Thou callest him thy friend; how didst thou dare Keep hid from him the burden of thy care?

ADMETUS. He never would have entered, had he known My grief.—Aye, men may mock what I have done, And call me fool. My house hath never learned To fail its friend, nor seen the stranger spurned.

[ADMETUS goes into the house]

CHORUS. Oh, a House that loves the stranger, And a House for ever free! And Apollo, the Song-changer, Was a herdsman in thy fee; Yea, a-piping he was found, Where the upward valleys wound, To the kine from out the manger And the sheep from off the lea, And love was upon Othrys at the sound.

And from deep glens unbeholden Of the forest to his song There came lynxes streaky-golden, There came lions in a throng, Tawny-coated, ruddy-eyed, To that

piper in his pride; And shy fawns he would embolden, Dappled dancers, out along The shadow by the pine-tree's side.

And those magic pipes a-blowing Have fulfilled thee in thy reign By thy Lake with honey flowing, By thy sheepfolds and thy grain; Where the Sun turns his steeds To the twilight, all the meads Of Molossus know thy sowing And thy ploughs upon the plain. Yea, and eastward thou art free To the portals of the sea, And Pelion, the unharboured, is but minister to thee.

He hath opened wide his dwelling To the stranger, though his ruth For the dead was fresh and welling, For the loved one of his youth. 'Tis the brave heart's cry: "I will fail not, though I die!" Doth it win, with no man's telling, Some high vision of the truth? We may marvel. Yet I trust, When man seeketh to be just And to pity them that wander, God will raise him from the dust.

[As the song ceases the doors are thrown open and ADMETUS comes before them: a great funeral procession is seen moving out.]

ADMETUS. Most gentle citizens, our dead is here Made ready; and these youths to bear the bier Uplifted to the grave-mound and the urn. Now, seeing she goes forth never to return, Bid her your last farewell, as mourners may.

[The procession moves forward, past him.]

LEADER. Nay, lord; thy father, walking old and grey; And followers bearing burial gifts and brave Gauds, which men call the comfort of the grave.

Enter PHERES with followers bearing robes and gifts.

PHERES. I come in sorrow for thy sorrow, son. A faithful wife indeed thou hast lost, and one Who ruled her heart. But, howso hard they be, We needs must bear these griefs.—Some gifts for thee Are here…. Yes; take them. Let them go beneath The sod. We both must honour her in death, Seeing she hath died, my son, that thou mayst live Nor I be childless. Aye, she would not give My soul to a sad old age, mourning for thee. Methinks she hath made all women's life to be A nobler thing, by

one great woman's deed. Thou saviour of my son, thou staff in need To our wrecked age, farewell! May some good life Be thine still in the grave.—Oh, 'tis a wife Like this man needs; else let him stay unwed!

[The old man has not noticed ADMETUS'S gathering indignation.]

ADMETUS. I called not thee to burial of my dead, Nor count thy presence here a welcome thing. My wife shall wear no robe that thou canst bring, Nor needs thy help in aught. There was a day We craved thy love, when I was on my way Deathward—thy love, which bade thee stand aside And watch, grey-bearded, while a young man died! And now wilt mourn for her? Thy fatherhood! Thou wast no true begetter of my blood, Nor she my mother who dares call me child. Oh, she was barren ever; she beguiled Thy folly with some bastard of a thrall. Here is thy proof! This hour hath shown me all Thou art; and now I am no more thy son. 'Fore God, among all cowards can scarce be one Like thee. So grey, so near the boundary Of mortal life, thou wouldst not, durst not, die To save thy son! Thou hast suffered her to do Thine office, her, no kin to me nor you, Yet more than kin! Henceforth she hath all the part Of mother, yea, and father in my heart. And what a glory had been thine that day, Dying to save thy son—when, either way, Thy time must needs be brief. Thy life has had Abundance of the things that make men glad; A crown that came to thee in youth; a son To do thee worship and maintain thy throne— Not like a childless king, whose folk and lands Lie helpless, to be torn by strangers' hands. Wilt say I failed in duty to thine age; For that thou hast let me die? Not so; most sage, Most pious I was, to mother and to thee; And thus ye have paid me! Well, I counsel ye. Lose no more time. Get quick another son To foster thy last years, to lay thee on Thy bier, when dead, and wrap thee in thy pall. I will not bury thee. I am, for all The care thou hast shown me, dead. If I have found Another, true to save me at the bound Of life and death, that other's child am I, That other's fostering friend, until I die. How falsely do these old men pray for death, Cursing their weight of years, their weary breath! When Death comes close, there is not one that dares To

die; age is forgot and all its cares.

LEADER. Oh, peace! Enough of sorrow in our path Is strewn. Thou son, stir not thy father's wrath.

PHERES. My son, whom seekest thou … some Lydian thrall, Or Phrygian, bought with cash?… to affright withal By cursing? I am a Thessalian, free, My father a born chief of Thessaly; And thou most insolent. Yet think not so To fling thy loud lewd words at me and go. I got thee to succeed me in my hall, I have fed thee, clad thee. But I have no call To die for thee. Not in our family, Not in all Greece, doth law bid fathers die To save their sons. Thy road of life is thine None other's, to rejoice at or repine. All that was owed to thee by us is paid. My throne is thine. My broad lands shall be made Thine, as I had them from my father…. Say, How have I wronged thee? What have I kept away? "Not died for thee?"… I ask not thee to die. Thou lovest this light: shall I not love it, I?… 'Tis age on age there, in the dark; and here My sunlit time is short, but dear; but dear. Thou hast fought hard enough. Thou drawest breath Even now, long past thy portioned hour of death, By murdering her … and blamest my faint heart, Coward, who hast let a woman play thy part And die to save her pretty soldier! Aye, A good plan, surely! Thou needst never die; Thou canst find alway somewhere some fond wife To die for thee. But, prithee, make not strife With other friends, who will not save thee so. Be silent, loving thine own life, and know All men love theirs!… Taunt others, and thou too Shalt hear much that is bitter, and is true.

LEADER. Too much of wrath before, too much hath run After. Old man, cease to revile thy son.

ADMETUS. Speak on. I have spoken…. If my truth of tongue Gives pain to thee, why didst thou do me wrong?

PHERES. Wrong? To have died for thee were far more wrong.

ADMETUS. How can an old life weigh against a young?

PHERES. Man hath but one, not two lives, to his use.

ADMETUS. Oh, live on; live, and grow more old than Zeus!

PHERES. Because none wrongs thee, thou must curse thy sire?

ADMETUS. I blest him. Is not life his one desire?

PHERES. This dead, methinks, is lying in thy place.

ADMETUS. A proof, old traitor, of thy cowardliness!

PHERES. Died she through me?… That thou wilt hardly say.

ADMETUS (almost breaking down). O God! Mayst thou but feel the need of me some day!

PHERES. Go forward; woo more wives that more may die.

ADMETUS. As thou wouldst not! Thine is the infamy.

PHERES. This light of heaven is sweet, and sweet again.

ADMETUS. Thy heart is foul. A thing unmeet for men.

PHERES. Thou laugh'st not yet across the old man's tomb.

ADMETUS. Dishonoured thou shalt die when death shall come.

PHERES. Once dead, I shall not care what tales are told.

ADMETUS. Great Gods, so lost to honour and so old!

PHERES. She was not lost to honour: she was blind.

ADMETUS. Go! Leave me with my dead…. Out from my mind!

PHERES. I go. Bury the woman thou hast slain…. Her kinsmen yet may come to thee with plain Question. Acastus hath small place in good Men, if he care not for his sister's blood.

[PHERES goes off, with his Attendants. ADMETUS calls after him as he goes.]

ADMETUS. Begone, begone, thou and thy bitter mate! Be old and childless—ye have earned your fate— While your son lives! For never shall ye be From

henceforth under the same roof with me…. Must I send heralds and a trumpet's call To abjure thy blood? Fear not, I will send them all….

[PHERES is now out of sight; ADMETUS drops his defiance and seems like a broken man.]

But we—our sorrow is upon us; come With me, and let us bear her to the tomb.

CHORUS. Ah me! Farewell, unfalteringly brave! Farewell, thou generous heart and true! May Pluto give thee welcome due, And Hermes love thee in the grave. Whate'er of blessèd life there be For high souls to the darkness flown, Be thine for ever, and a throne Beside the crowned Persephonê.

[The funeral procession has formed and moves slowly out, followed by ADMETUS and the CHORUS. The stage is left empty, till a side door of the Castle opens and there comes out a SERVANT, angry and almost in tears.]

SERVANT. Full many a stranger and from many a land Hath lodged in this old castle, and my hand Served them; but never has there passed this way A scurvier ruffian than our guest to-day. He saw my master's grief, but all the more In he must come, and shoulders through the door. And after, think you he would mannerly Take what was set before him? No, not he! If, on this day of trouble, we left out Some small thing, he must have it with a shout. Up, in both hands, our vat of ivy-wood He raised, and drank the dark grape's burning blood, Strong and untempered, till the fire was red Within him; then put myrtle round his head And roared some noisy song. So had we there Discordant music. He, without a care For all the affliction of Admetus' halls, Sang on; and, listening, one could hear the thralls In the long gallery weeping for the dead. We let him see no tears. Our master made That order, that the stranger must not know. So here I wait in her own house, and do Service to some black thief, some man of prey; And she has gone, has gone for ever away. I never followed her, nor lifted high My hand to bless her; never said good-bye…. I loved her like my mother. So did all The slaves. She never let his anger fall Too hard. She saved us

alway…. And this wild beast Comes in our sorrow when we need him least!

[During the last few lines HERACLES has entered, unperceived by the SERVANT. He has evidently bathed and changed his garments and drunk his fill, and is now revelling, a garland of flowers on his head. He frightens the SERVANT a little from time to time during the following speech.]

HERACLES. Friend, why so solemn and so cranky-eyed? 'Tis not a henchman's office, to show pride To his betters. He should smile and make good cheer. There comes a guest, thy lord's old comrade, here; And thou art all knitted eyebrows, scowls and head Bent, because somebody, forsooth, is dead! Come close! I mean to make thee wiser.

[The SERVANT reluctantly comes close.]

So. Dost comprehend things mortal, how they grow?… (To himself) I suppose not. How could he?… Look this way! Death is a debt all mortal men must pay; Aye, there is no man living who can say If life will last him yet a single day. On, to the dark, drives Fortune; and no force Can wrest her secret nor put back her course…. I have told thee now. I have taught thee. After this Eat, drink, make thyself merry. Count the bliss Of the one passing hour thine own; the rest Is Fortune's. And give honour chiefliest To our lady Cypris, giver of all joys To man. 'Tis a sweet goddess. Otherwise, Let all these questions sleep and just obey My counsel…. Thou believest all I say? I hope so…. Let this stupid grieving be; Rise up above thy troubles, and with me Drink in a cloud of blossoms. By my soul, I vow the sweet plash-music of the bowl Will break thy glumness, loose thee from the frown Within. Let mortal man keep to his own Mortality, and not expect too much. To all your solemn dogs and other such Scowlers—I tell thee truth, no more nor less— Life is not life, but just unhappiness.

[He offers the wine-bowl to the SERVANT, who avoids it.]

SERVANT. We know all this. But now our fortunes be Not such as ask for mirth or

revelry.

HERACLES. A woman dead, of no one's kin; why grieve So much? Thy master and thy mistress live.

SERVANT. Live? Man, hast thou heard nothing of our woe?

HERACLES. Yes, thy lord told me all I need to know.

SERVANT. He is too kind to his guests, more kind than wise.

HERACLES. Must I go starved because some stranger dies?

SERVANT. Some stranger?—Yes, a stranger verily!

HERACLES (his manner beginning to change). Is this some real grief he hath hid from me?

SERVANT. Go, drink, man! Leave to us our master's woes.

HERACLES. It sounds not like a stranger. Yet, God knows…

SERVANT. How should thy revelling hurt, if that were all?

HERACLES. Hath mine own friend so wronged me in his hall?

SERVANT. Thou camest at an hour when none was free To accept thee. We were mourning. Thou canst see Our hair, black robes…

HERACLES (suddenly, in a voice of thunder). Who is it that is dead?

SERVANT. Alcestis, the King's wife.

HERACLES (overcome). What hast thou said? Alcestis?… And ye feasted me withal!

SERVANT. He held it shame to turn thee from his hall.

HERACLES. Shame! And when such a wondrous wife was gone!

SERVANT (breaking into tears). Oh, all is gone, all lost, not she alone!

HERACLES. I knew, I felt it, when I saw his tears, And face, and shorn hair. But he won mine ears With talk of the strange woman and her rite Of burial. So in mine

own heart's despite I crossed his threshold and sat drinking—he And I old friends!—in his calamity. Drank, and sang songs, and revelled, my head hot With wine and flowers!… And thou to tell me not, When all the house lay filled with sorrow, thou! (A pause; then suddenly) Where lies the tomb?—Where shall I find her now?

SERVANT (frightened). Close by the straight Larissa road. The tall White marble showeth from the castle wall.

HERACLES. O heart, O hand, great doings have ye done Of old: up now, and show them what a son Took life that hour, when she of Tiryns' sod, Electryon's daughter, mingled with her God! I needs must save this woman from the shore Of death and set her in her house once more, Repaying Admetus' love…. This Death, this black And wingèd Lord of corpses, I will track Home. I shall surely find him by the grave A-hungered, lapping the hot blood they gave In sacrifice. An ambush: then, one spring, One grip! These arms shall be a brazen ring, With no escape, no rest, howe'er he whine And curse his mauled ribs, till the Queen is mine! Or if he escape me, if he come not there To seek the blood of offering, I will fare Down to the Houses without Light, and bring To Her we name not and her nameless King Strong prayers, until they yield to me and send Alcestis home, to life and to my friend: Who gave me shelter, drove me not away In his great grief, but hid his evil day Like a brave man, because he loved me well. Is one in all this land more hospitable, One in all Greece? I swear no man shall say He hath cast his love upon a churl away!

[He goes forth, just as he is, in the direction of the grave. The SERVANT watches a moment and goes back into the hall.]

[The stage is empty; then ADMETUS and the CHORUS return.]

ADMETUS. Alas! Bitter the homeward way, Bitter to seek A widowed house; ah me, Where should I fly or stay, Be dumb or speak? Would I could cease to be!

Despair, despair! My mother bore me under an evil star. I envy them that are

perished; my heart is there. It dwells in the Sunless Houses, afar, afar.

I take no joy in looking upon the light; No joy in the feel of the earth beneath my tread. The Slayer hath taken his hostage; the Lord of the Dead Holdeth me sworn to taste no more delight.

[He throws himself on the ground in despair.]

CHORUS. [Each member of the CHORUS speaks his line severally, as he passes ADMETUS, who is heard sobbing at the end of each line.]

—Advance, advance; Till the house shall give thee cover. —Thou hast borne heavy things And meet for lamentation. —Thou hast passed, hast passed, Thro' the deepest of the River. —Yet no help comes To the sad and silent nation. —And the face of thy belovèd, it shall meet thee never, never!

ADMETUS. Ye wrench my wounds asunder. Where Is grief like mine, whose wife is dead? My wife, whom would I ne'er had wed, Nor loved, nor held my house with her….

Blessed are they who dare to dwell Unloved of woman! 'Tis but one Heart that they bleed with, and alone Can bear their one life's burden well.

No young shall wither at their side, No bridal room be swept by death…. Aye, better man should draw his breath For ever without child or bride.

CHORUS (as before). —'Tis Fate, 'tis Fate: She is strong and none shall break her. —No end, no end, Wilt thou lay to lamentations? —Endure and be still: Thy lamenting will not wake her. —There be many before thee, Who have suffered and had patience. —Though the face of Sorrow changeth, yet her hand is on all nations.

ADMETUS. The garb of tears, the mourner's cry: Then the long ache when tears are past!… Oh, why didst hinder me to cast This body to the dust and die With her, the faithful and the brave? Then not one lonely soul had fled, But two great lovers, proudly dead, Through the deep waters of the grave.

LEADER. A friend I knew, In whose house died a son, Worthy of bitter rue, His only one. His head sank, yet he bare Stilly his weight of care, Though grey was in his hair And life nigh done.

ADMETUS. Ye shapes that front me, wall and gate, How shall I enter in and dwell Among ye, with all Fortune's spell Dischanted? Aye, the change is great.

That day I strode with bridal song Through lifted brands of Pelian pine; A hand belovèd lay in mine; And loud behind a revelling throng

Exalted me and her, the dead. They called us young, high-hearted; told How princes were our sires of old, And how we loved and we must wed….

For those high songs, lo, men that moan, And raiment black where once was white; Who guide me homeward in the night, On that waste bed to lie alone.

SECOND ELDER. It breaks, like strife, Thy long peace, where no pain Had entered; yet is life, Sweet life, not slain. A wife dead; a dear chair Empty: is that so rare? Men live without despair Whose loves are ta'en.

ADMETUS (erect and facing them). Behold, I count my wife's fate happier, Though all gainsay me, than mine own. To her Comes no more pain for ever; she hath rest And peace from all toil, and her name is blest. But I am one who hath no right to stay Alive on earth; one that hath lost his way In fate, and strays in dreams of life long past…. Friends, I have learned my lesson at the last. I have my life. Here stands my house. But now How dare I enter in? Or, entered, how Go forth again? Go forth, when none is there To give me a parting word, and I to her?… Where shall I turn for refuge? There within, The desert that remains where she hath been Will drive me forth, the bed, the empty seat She sat in; nay, the floor beneath my feet Unswept, the children crying at my knee For mother; and the very thralls will be In sobs for the dear mistress that is lost. That is my home! If I go forth, a host Of feasts and bridal dances, gatherings gay Of women, will be there to fright me away To loneliness. Mine eyes will never bear The sight. They were her friends; they played with her.

And always, always, men who hate my name Will murmur: "This is he who lives in shame Because he dared not die! He gave instead The woman whom he loved, and so is fled From death. He counts himself a man withal! And seeing his parents died not at his call He hates them, when himself he dared not die!" Such mocking beside all my pain shall I Endure…. What profit was it to live on, Friend, with my grief kept and mine honour gone?

CHORUS. I have sojourned in the Muse's land, Have wandered with the wandering star, Seeking for strength, and in my hand Held all philosophies that are; Yet nothing could I hear nor see Stronger than That Which Needs Must Be. No Orphic rune, no Thracian scroll, Hath magic to avert the morrow; No healing all those medicines brave Apollo to the Asclepiad gave; Pale herbs of comfort in the bowl Of man's wide sorrow. She hath no temple, she alone, Nor image where a man may kneel; No blood upon her altar-stone Crying shall make her hear nor feel. I know thy greatness; come not great Beyond my dreams, O Power of Fate! Aye, Zeus himself shall not unclose His purpose save by thy decerning. The chain of iron, the Scythian sword, It yields and shivers at thy word; Thy heart is as the rock, and knows No ruth, nor turning.

[They turn to ADMETUS.]

Her hand hath caught thee; yea, the keeping Of iron fingers grips thee round. Be still. Be still. Thy noise of weeping Shall raise no lost one from the ground. Nay, even the Sons of God are parted At last from joy, and pine in death…. Oh, dear on earth when all did love her, Oh, dearer lost beyond recover: Of women all the bravest-hearted Hath pressed thy lips and breathed thy breath.

Let not the earth that lies upon her Be deemed a grave-mound of the dead. Let honour, as the Gods have honour, Be hers, till men shall bow the head, And strangers, climbing from the city Her slanting path, shall muse and say: "This woman died to save her lover, And liveth blest, the stars above her: Hail, Holy One,

and grant thy pity!" So pass the wondering words away.

LEADER. But see, it is Alcmena's son once more, My lord King, cometh striding to thy door.

[Enter HERACLES; his dress is as in the last scene, but shows signs of a struggle. Behind come two Attendants, guiding between them a veiled Woman, who seems like one asleep or unconscious. The Woman remains in the background while HERACLES comes forward.]

HERACLES. Thou art my friend, Admetus; therefore bold And plain I tell my story, and withhold No secret hurt.—Was I not worthy, friend, To stand beside thee; yea, and to the end Be proven in sorrow if I was true to thee? And thou didst tell me not a word, while she Lay dead within; but bid me feast, as though Naught but the draping of some stranger's woe Was on thee. So I garlanded my brow And poured the gods drink-offering, and but now Filled thy death-stricken house with wine and song. Thou hast done me wrong, my brother; a great wrong Thou hast done me. But I will not add more pain In thine affliction. Why I am here again, Returning, thou must hear. I pray thee, take And keep yon woman for me till I make My homeward way from Thrace, when I have ta'en Those four steeds and their bloody master slain. And if—which heaven avert!—I ne'er should see Hellas again, I leave her here, to be An handmaid in thy house. No labour small Was it that brought her to my hand at all. I fell upon a contest certain Kings Had set for all mankind, sore buffetings And meet for strong men, where I staked my life And won this woman. For the easier strife Black steeds were prizes; herds of kine were cast For heavier issues, fists and wrestling; last, This woman…. Lest my work should all seem done For naught, I needs must keep what I have won; So prithee take her in. No theft, but true Toil, won her…. Some day thou mayst thank me, too.

ADMETUS. 'Twas in no scorn, no bitterness to thee, I hid my wife's death and my misery. Methought it was but added pain on pain If thou shouldst leave me, and

roam forth again Seeking another's roof. And, for mine own Sorrow, I was content to weep alone. But, for this damsel, if it may be so, I pray thee, Lord, let some man, not in woe Like mine, take her. Thou hast in Thessaly Abundant friends…. 'Twould wake sad thoughts in me. How could I have this damsel in my sight And keep mine eyes dry? Prince, why wilt thou smite The smitten? Griefs enough are on my head. Where in my castle could so young a maid Be lodged—her veil and raiment show her young: Here, in the men's hall? I should fear some wrong. 'Tis not so easy, Prince, to keep controlled My young men. And thy charge I fain would hold Sacred.—If not, wouldst have me keep her in The women's chambers … where my dead hath been? How could I lay this woman where my bride Once lay? It were dishonour double-dyed. These streets would curse the man who so betrayed The wife who saved him for some younger maid; The dead herself … I needs must worship her And keep her will.

[During the last few lines ADMETUS has been looking at the veiled Woman and, though he does not consciously recognize her, feels a strange emotion overmastering him. He draws back.]

Aye. I must walk with care…. O woman, whosoe'er thou art, thou hast The shape of my Alcestis; thou art cast In mould like hers…. Oh, take her from mine eyes! In God's name!

[HERACLES signs to the Attendants to take ALCESTIS away again. She stays veiled and unnoticing in the background.]

I was fallen, and in this wise Thou wilt make me deeper fall…. Meseems, meseems, There in her face the loved one of my dreams Looked forth.—My heart is made a turbid thing, Craving I know not what, and my tears spring Unbidden.—Grief I knew 'twould be; but how Fiery a grief I never knew till now.

LEADER. Thy fate I praise not. Yet, what gift soe'er God giveth, man must steel himself and bear.

HERACLES (drawing ADMETUS on). Would God, I had the power, 'mid all this might Of arm, to break the dungeons of the night, And free thy wife, and make thee glad again!

ADMETUS. Where is such power? I know thy heart were fain; But so 'tis writ. The dead shall never rise.

HERACLES. Chafe not the curb, then: suffer and be wise.

ADMETUS. Easier to give such counsel than to keep.

HERACLES. Who will be happier, shouldst thou always weep?

ADMETUS. Why, none. Yet some blind longing draws me on…

HERACLES. 'Tis natural. Thou didst love her that is gone.

ADMETUS. 'Tis that hath wrecked, oh more than wrecked, my life.

HERACLES. 'Tis certain: thou hast lost a faithful wife.

ADMETUS. Till life itself is dead and wearies me.

HERACLES. Thy pain is yet young. Time will soften thee,

[The veiled Woman begins dimly, as though in a dream, to hear the words spoken.]

ADMETUS. Time? Yes, if time be death.

HERACLES. Nay, wait; and some Woman, some new desire of love, will come.

ADMETUS (indignantly). Peace! How canst thou? Shame upon thee!

HERACLES. Thou wilt stay Unwed for ever, lonely night and day?

ADMETUS. No other bride in these void arms shall lie.

HERACLES. What profit will thy dead wife gain thereby?

ADMETUS. Honour; which finds her wheresoe'er she lies.

HERACLES. Most honourable in thee: but scarcely wise!

ADMETUS. God curse me, if I betray her in her tomb!

HERACLES. So be it!… And this good damsel, thou wilt take her home?

ADMETUS. No, in the name of Zeus, thy father! No!

HERACLES. I swear, 'tis not well to reject her so.

ADMETUS. 'Twould tear my heart to accept her.

HERACLES. Grant me, friend, This one boon! It may help thee in the end.

ADMETUS. Woe's me! Would God thou hadst never won those victories!

HERACLES. Thou sharest both the victory and the prize.

ADMETUS. Thou art generous…. But now let her go.

HERACLES. She shall, If go she must. Look first, and judge withal.

[He takes the veil off ALCESTIS.]

ADMETUS (steadily refusing to look). She must.—And thou, forgive me!

HERACLES. Friend, there is A secret reason why I pray for this.

ADMETUS (surprised, then reluctantly yielding). I grant thy boon then—though it likes me ill.

HERACLES. 'Twill like thee later. Now … but do my will.

ADMETUS (beckoning to an Attendant). Take her; find her some lodging in my hall.

HERACLES. I will not yield this maid to any thrall.

ADMETUS. Take her thyself and lead her in.

HERACLES. I stand Beside her; take her; lead her to thy hand.

[He brings the Woman close to ADMETUS, who looks determinedly away. She reaches out her arms.]

ADMETUS. I touch her not.—Let her go in!

HERACLES. I am loth To trust her save to thy pledged hand and oath.

[He lays his hand on ADMETUS'S shoulder.]

ADMETUS (desperately). Lord, this is violence … wrong …

HERACLES. Reach forth thine hand And touch this comer from a distant land.

ADMETUS (holding out his hand without looking). Like Perseus when he touched the Gorgon, there!

HERACLES. Thou hast touched her?

ADMETUS (at last taking her hand). Touched her?… Yes.

HERACLES (a hand on the shoulder of each). Then cling to her; And say if thou hast found a guest of grace In God's son, Heracles! Look in her face; Look; is she like…?

[ADMETUS looks and stands amazed.] Go, and forget in bliss Thy sorrow!

ADMETUS. O ye Gods! What meaneth this? A marvel beyond dreams! The face … 'tis she; Mine, verily mine! Or doth God mock at me And blast my vision with some mad surmise?

HERACLES. Not so. This is thy wife before thine eyes.

ADMETUS (who has recoiled in his amazement). Beware! The dead have phantoms that they send…

HERACLES. Nay; no ghost-raiser hast thou made thy friend.

ADMETUS. My wife … she whom I buried?

HERACLES. I deceive Thee not; nor wonder thou canst scarce believe.

ADMETUS. And dare I touch her, greet her, as mine own Wife living?

HERACLES. Greet her. Thy desire is won.

ADMETUS (approaching with awe), Beloved eyes; beloved form; O thou Gone beyond hope, I have thee, I hold thee now?

HERACLES. Thou hast her: may no god begrudge your joy.

ADMETUS (turning to HERACLES). O lordly conqueror, Child of Zeus on high, Be blessèd! And may He, thy sire above, Save thee, as thou alone hast saved my love!

[He kneels to HERACLES, who raises him.]

But how … how didst thou win her to the light?

HERACLES. I fought for life with Him I needs must fight.

ADMETUS. With Death thou hast fought! But where?

HERACLES. Among his dead I lay, and sprang and gripped him as he fled.

ADMETUS (in an awed whisper, looking towards ALCESTIS). Why standeth she so still? No sound, no word!

HERACLES. She hath dwelt with Death. Her voice may not be heard Ere to the Lords of Them Below she pay Due cleansing, and awake on the third day. (To the Attendants) So; guide her home.

[They lead ALCESTIS to the doorway.]

And thou, King, for the rest Of time, be true; be righteous to thy guest, As he would have thee be. But now farewell! My task yet lies before me, and the spell That binds me to my master; forth I fare.

ADMETUS. Stay with us this one day! Stay but to share The feast upon our hearth!

HERACLES. The feasting day Shall surely come; now I must needs away.

[HERACLES departs.]

ADMETUS. Farewell! All victory attend thy name And safe home-coming! Lo, I make proclaim To the Four Nations and all Thessaly; A wondrous happiness hath come to be: Therefore pray, dance, give offerings and make full Your altars with the life-blood of the Bull! For me … my heart is changed; my life shall mend Henceforth. For surely Fortune is a friend.

[He goes with ALCESTIS into the house.]

CHORUS. There be many shapes of mystery; And many things God brings to be, Past hope or fear. And the end men looked for cometh not, And a path is there where no man thought. So hath it fallen here.

NOTES

P. 3, Prologue. Asclêpios (Latin Aesculapius), son of Apollo, the hero-physician, by his miraculous skill healed the dead. This transgressed the divine law, so Zeus slew him. (The particular dead man raised by him was Hippolytus, who came to life in Italy under the name of Virbius, and was worshipped with Artemis at Aricia.) Apollo in revenge, not presuming to attack Zeus himself, killed the Cyclopes, and was punished by being exiled from heaven and made servant to a mortal. There are several such stories of gods made servants to human beings.

P. 3, l. 12, Beguiling.]—See Preface. In the original story he made them drunk with wine. (Aesch. Eumenides, 728.) As the allusion would doubtless be clear to the Greek audience, I have added a mention of wine which is not in the Greek. Libations to the Elder Gods, such as the Fates and Eumenides, had to be "wineless." Historically this probably means that the worship dates from a time before wine was used in Greece.

P. 4, l. 22, The stain of death must not come nigh My radiance.]—Compare Artemis in the last scene of the Hippolytus. The presence of a dead body would be a pollution to Apollo, though that of Thánatos (Death) himself seems not to be so. It is rather Thánatos who is dazzled and blinded by Apollo, like an owl or bat in the sunlight.

P. 5, l. 43, Rob me of my second prey.]—"You first cheated me of Admetus, and now you cheat me of his substitute."

P. 6, l. 59, The rich would buy, etc.]—Here and throughout this difficult little dialogue I follow the readings of my own text in the Bibliotheca Oxoniensis.

P. 7, l. 74, To lay upon her hair my sword.]—As the sacrificing priest cut off a lock of hair from the victim's head before the actual sacrifice.

P. 8, l. 77, Chorus.]—The Chorus consists of citizens, probably Elders, of the city of Pherae. Dr. Verrall has rightly pointed out that there is some general dissatisfaction in the town at Admetus's behaviour (l. 210 ff.). These citizens come to mourn with Admetus out of old friendship, though they do not altogether defend him.

The Chorus is very drastically broken up into so many separate persons conversing with one another; the treatment in the Rhesus is similar but even bolder. See Rhesus, pp. 28-31, 37-42. Cf. also the entrance-choruses of the Trojan Women (pp. 19-23) and the Medea (pp. 10-13); and ll. 872 ff., 889 ff., pp. 50, 51, below.

Instead of assigning the various lines definitely to First, Second, Third Citizen, and so on, I have put a "paragraphus" (—), the ancient Greek sign for indicating a new speaker.

P. 8, l. 82, Pelias' daughter.]—i.e. Alcestis.

P. 8, l. 92, Paian.]—The Healer. The word survives chiefly as a cry for help and as an epithet or title of Apollo or Asclepios. "Paian," Latin Paean, is also a cry of victory; but the relation of the two meanings is not quite made out. (Pronounce rather like "Pah-yan.") Cf. l. 220.

P. 9, l. 112, To wander o'er leagues of land.]—You could sometimes save a sick person by appealing to an oracle, such as that of Apollo in Lycia or of Zeus Ammon in the Libyan desert; but now no sacrifice will help. Only Asclepios, were he still on earth, might have helped us. (See on the Prologue.)

P. 12, l. 150, 'Fore God she dies high-hearted.]—What impresses the Elder is the calm and deliberate way in which Alcestis faces these preparations.

P. 12, l. 162, Before the Hearth-Fire.]—Hestia, the hearth-fire, was a goddess, the Latin Vesta, and is addressed as "Mother." It is characteristic in Alcestis to think chiefly about happy marriages for the children.

P. 12, l. 182, Happier perhaps, more true she cannot be.]—A famous line and open to parody. Cf. Aristophanes, Knights, 1251 ("Another wear this crown instead of me, Happier perhaps; worse thief he cannot be"). And see on l. 367 below.

P. 15, l. 228, Hearts have bled.]—People have committed suicide for less than this.

P. 16, l. 244, O Sun.]—Alcestis has come out to see the Sun and Sky for the last time and say good-bye to them. It is a rite or practice often mentioned in Greek poetry. Her beautiful wandering lines about Charon and his boat are the more natural because she is not dying from any disease but is being mysteriously drawn away by the Powers of Death.

P. 16, l. 252, A boat, two-oared.]—She sees Charon, the boatman who ferried the souls of the dead across the river Styx.

P. 17, l. 259, Drawing, drawing.]—The creature whom she sees drawing her to "the palaces of the dead" is certainly not Charon, who had no wings, but was like an old boatman in a peasant's cap and sleeveless tunic; nor can he be Hades, the throned King to whose presence she must eventually go. Apparently, therefore, he must be Thanatos, whom we have just seen on the stage. He was evidently supposed to be invisible to ordinary human eyes.

P. 18, l. 280, Alcestis's speech.]—Great simplicity and sincerity are the keynotes of this fine speech. Alcestis does not make light of her sacrifice: she enjoyed her life and values it; she wishes one of the old people had died instead; she is very earnest that Admetus shall not marry again, chiefly for the children's sake, but possibly also from some little shadow of jealousy. A modern dramatist would express all this, if at all, by a scene or a series of scenes of conversation; Euripides always uses the long self-revealing speech. Observe how little romantic love there is in Alcestis, though Admetus is full of it. See Preface, pp. xiii, xiv.

Pp. 19, 20, l. 328 ff., Admetus's speech.]—If the last speech made us know Alcestis, this makes us know Admetus fully as well. At one time the beauty and passion of it

almost make us forget its ultimate hollowness; at another this hollowness almost makes us lose patience with its beautiful language. In this state of balance the touch of satire in l. 338 f. ("My mother I will know no more," etc.), and the fact that he speaks immediately after the complete sincerity of Alcestis, conspire to weigh down the scale against Admetus. There can be no doubt that he means, and means passionately, all that he says. Only he could not quite manage to die when it was not strictly necessary.

P. 20, l. 355, If Orpheus' voice were mine.]—The bard and prophet, Orpheus, went down to the dead to win back his wife, Eurydice. Hades and Persephonê, spell-bound by his music, granted his prayer that Eurydicê should return to the light, on condition that he should go before her, harping, and should never look back to see if she was following. Just at the end of the journey he looked back, and she vanished. The story is told with overpowering beauty in Vergil's fourth Georgic.

P. 21, l. 367, Oh, not in death from thee Divided.]—Parodied in Aristophanes' Archarnians 894, where it is addressed to an eel, and the second line ends "in a beet-root fricassee." See on l. 182.

P. 23, l. 393 ff., The Little Boy's speech.]—Classical Greek sculpture and vase-painting tended to represent children not like children but like diminutive men; and something of the sort is true of Greek tragedy. The stately tragic convention has in the main to be maintained; the child must speak a language suited for heroes, or at least for high poetry. The quality of childishness has to be indicated by a word or so of child-language delicately admitted amid the stateliness. Here we have [Greek: maia], something like "mummy," at the beginning, and [Greek: neossos], "chicken" or "little bird," at the end. Otherwise most of the language is in the regular tragic diction, and some of it doubtless seems to us unsuitable for a child. If Milton had had to make a child speak in Paradise Lost, what sort of diction would he have given it?

The success or ill-success of such an attempt as this to combine the two styles, the heroic and the childlike, depends on questions of linguistic tact, and can hardly be judged with any confidence by foreigners. But I think we can see Euripides here, as in other places, reaching out at an effect which was really beyond the resources of his art, and attaining a result which, though clearly imperfect, is strangely moving. He gets great effects from the use of children in several tragedies, though he seldom lets them speak. They speak in the Medea, the Andromache, and Suppliants, and are mute figures in the Trojan Women, Hecuba, Heracles, and Iphigenia in Aulis. We may notice that where his children do speak, they speak only in lyrics, never in ordinary dialogue. This is very significant, and clearly right.

The breaking-down of the child seems to string Admetus to self-control again.

P. 25, l. 428, Ye chariot-lords.]—The plain of Thessaly was famous for its cavalry.

P. 25, l. 436 ff., Chorus.]—The "King black-browed" is, of course, Hades; the "grey hand at the helm and oar," Charon; the "Tears that Well," the more that spreads out from Acheron, the River of Achê or Sorrows.

P. 25, l. 445 ff. Alcestis shall be celebrated—and no doubt worshipped— at certain full-moon feasts in Athens and Sparta, especially at the Carneia, a great Spartan festival held at the full moon in the month Carneios (August-September). Who the ancient hero Carnos or Carneios was is not very clearly stated by the tradition; but at any rate he was killed, and the feast was meant to placate and perhaps to revive him. Resurrection is apt to be a feature of both moon-goddesses and vegetation spirits.

P. 27, l. 476, Entrance of Heracles.]—Generally, in the tragic convention, each character that enters either announces himself or is announced by some one on the stage; but the figure of Heracles with his club and lion-skin was so well known that his identity could be taken for granted. The Leader at once addresses him by name.

P. 27, l. 481, The Argive King.]—It was the doom of Heracles, from before his birth, to be the servant of a worser man. His master proved to be Eurystheus, King

of Tiryns or Argos, who was his kinsman, and older by a day. See Iliad T 95 ff. Note the heroic quality of Heracles's answer in l. 491. It does not occur to him to think of reward for himself.

P. 27, l. 483, Diomede of Thrace.]—This man, distinguished in legend from the Diomede of the Iliad, was a savage king who threw wayfarers to his man-eating horses. Such horses are not mere myths; horses have often been trained to fight with their teeth, like carnivora, for war purposes. Diomêdes was a son of Arês, the War-god or Slayer, as were the other wild tyrants mentioned just below, Lycâon, the Wolf-hero, and Cycnus, the Swan.

P. 30, l. 511, Right welcome were she: i.e. Joy.]—"Joy would be a strange visitor to me, but I know you mean kindly."

P. 30, l. 518 ff., Not thy wife? 'Tis not Alcestis?]—The rather elaborate misleading of Heracles, without any direct lie, depends partly on the fact that the Greek word [Greek: gynae]; means both "woman" and "wife."—The woman, not of kin with Admetus but much loved in the house, who has lived there since her father's death left her an orphan, is of course Alcestis, but Heracles, misled by Admetus's first answers, supposes it is some dependant to whom the King happens to be attached. He naturally proposes to go away, but, with much reluctance, allows himself to be over-persuaded by Admetus. He had other friends in Thessaly, but the next castle would probably be several miles off. The guest-chambers of the castle are apparently in a separate building with a connecting passage.

As to Admetus's motive, we must remember that the entertaining of Heracles is a datum of the story in its simplest form. See Preface, pp. xiv, xv. In Euripides, Admetus is perhaps actuated by a mixture of motives, real kindness, pride in his ancestral hospitality, and a little vanity. He likes having the great Son of Zeus for a friend, and he has never yet turned any one from his doors.

Euripides passes no distinct judgment on this act of Admetus. The Leader in the

dialogue blames him ("Art thou mad?") and so does Heracles hereafter, p. 56. But the Chorus glorifies his deed in a very delightful lyric. Perhaps this indicates the judgment we are meant to pass upon it. On the plane of common sense it was doubtless all wrong, but on that of imaginative poetry it was magnificent.

P. 35, 11. 569-605, Chorus.]—Apollo, worshipped as a shepherd god and a singer, harper, piper, etc. ("song-changer"), had been himself a stranger in this "House that loved the stranger": hence its great reward. Othrys is the end of the mountain range to the south of Pherae; Lake Boibeïs was just across the narrow end of the plain to the north-east, beyond it came Mt. Pelion and the steep harbourless coast. Up to the north-west the plain of Thessaly stretched far away towards the Molossian mountains. The wild beasts gathered round Apollo as they did round Orpheus ("There where Orpheus harped of old, And the trees awoke and knew him, And the wild things gathered to him, As he piped amid the broken Glens his music manifold."—Bacchae, p. 35).

P. 37, l. 614, Scene with Pherês.]—Pherês is in tradition the "eponymous hero" of Pherae, i.e. the mythical person who is supposed to have given his name to the town. It is only in this play that he has any particular character. The scene gives the reader a shock, but is a brilliant piece of satirical comedy, with a good deal of pathos in it, too. The line (691) [Greek: chaireis horon phos, patera d' ou chairein dokeis]; ("Thou lovest the light, thinkest thou thy father loves it not?") seems to me one of the most characteristic in Euripides. It has a peculiar mordant beauty in its absolutely simple language, and one cannot measure the intensity of feeling that may be behind it. Pheres shows great power of fight, yet one feels his age and physical weakness. See Preface, p. xvi.

P. 40, l. 713 ff. The quick thrust and parry are sometimes hard to follow in reading, though in acting the sense would be plain enough. Admetus cries angrily, "Oh, live a longer life than Zeus!" "Is that a curse?" says Pheres; "are you cursing because

nobody does you any harm?" (i.e. since you clearly have nothing else to curse for). Admetus: "On the contrary I blessed you; I knew you were greedy of life." Pheres: "I greedy? It is you, I believe, that Alcestis is dying for."

P. 42, l. 732. Acastus was Alcestis's brother, son of Pelias.

P. 43, l. 747. It is rare in Greek tragedy for the Chorus to leave the stage altogether in the middle of a play. But they do so, for example, in the Ajax of Sophocles. Ajax is lost, and the Sailors who form the Chorus go out to look for him; when they are gone the scene is supposed to shift and Ajax enters alone, arranging his own death. This very effective scene of the revelling Heracles is to be explained, I think, by the Satyr-play tradition. See Preface.

P. 45, ll. 782-785. There are four lines rhyming in the Greek here; an odd and slightly drunken effect.

P. 46, l. 805 ff., A woman dead, of no one's kin: why grieve so much?]— Heracles is somewhat "shameless," as a Greek would say; he had much more delicacy when he was sober.

P. 48, l. 837 ff. A fine speech, leaving one in doubt whether it is the outburst of a real hero or the vapouring of a half-drunken man. Just the effect intended. Electryon was a chieftain of Tiryns. His daughter, Alcmênê, the Tirynthian Korê or Earth-maiden, was beloved of Zeus, or, as others put it, was chosen by Zeus to be the mother of the Deliverer of mankind whom he was resolved to beget. She was married to Amphitryon of Thebes.

P. 49, l. 860 ff. If Heracles set out straight to the grave and Admetus with the procession was returning from the grave, how was it they did not meet? The answer is that Attic drama seldom asked such questions.

Pp. 49-54, ll. 861-961. This Threnos, or lamentation scene, seems to our minds a little long. We must remember (1) that a Tragedy is a Threnos—a Trauerspiel—and, however much it develops in the direction of a mere entertainment, the

Threnos-element is of primary importance. (2) This scene has two purposes to serve; first to illustrate the helpless loneliness of Admetus when he returns to his empty house, and secondly the way in which remorse works in his mind, till in ll. 935-961 he makes public confession that he has done wrong. For both purposes one needs the illusion of a long lapse of time.

P. 53, l. 945 ff., The floor unswept.]—Probably the floor really would be unswept in the house of a primitive Thessalian chieftain whose wife was dead and her place unfilled; but I doubt if the point would have been mentioned so straightforwardly in a real tragedy.

Pp. 54-55, l. 966 ff., That which Needs Must Be.]—Ananke or Necessity.— Orphic rune.]—The charms inscribed by Orpheus on certain tablets in Thrace. Orphic literature and worship had a strong magical element in them.

P. 55, l. 995 ff., A grave-mound of the dead.]—Every existing Greek tragedy has somewhere in it a taboo grave—a grave which is either worshipped, or specially avoided or somehow magical. We may conjecture from this passage that there was in the time of Euripides a sacred tomb near Pherae, which received worship and had the story told about it that she who lay there had died for her husband.

Pp. 56-67, ll. 1008-end. This last scene must have been exceedingly difficult to compose, and some critics have thought it ineffective or worse. To me it seems brilliantly conceived and written, though of course it needs to be read with the imagination strongly at work. One must never forget the silent and veiled Woman on whom the whole scene centres. I have tried conjecturally to indicate the main lines of her acting, but, of course, others may read it differently.

To understand Heracles in this scene, one must first remember the traditional connexion of Satyrs (and therefore of satyric heroes) with the re-awakening of the dead Earth in spring and the return of human souls to their tribe. Dionysus was, of all the various Kouroi, the one most widely connected with resurrection ideas, and

the Satyrs are his attendant daemons, who dance magic dances at the Return to Life of Semele or Persephone. And Heracles himself, in certain of his ritual aspects, has similar functions. See J.E. Harrison, Themis, pp. 422 f. and 365 ff., or my Four Stages of Greek Religion, pp. 46 f. This tradition explains, to start with, what Heracles—and this particular sort of revelling Heracles—has to do in a resurrection scene. Heracles bringing back the dead is a datum of the saga. There remain then the more purely dramatic questions about our poet's treatment of the datum.

Why, for instance, does Heracles mystify Admetus with the Veiled Woman? To break the news gently, or to retort his own mystification upon him? I think, the latter. Admetus had said that "a woman" was dead; Heracles says: "All right: here is 'a woman' whom I want you to look after."

Again, what are the feelings of Admetus himself? First, mere indignation and disgust at the utterly tactless proposal: then, I think, in 1061 ff. ("I must walk with care" … end of speech), a strange discovery about himself which amazes and humiliates him. As he looks at the woman he finds himself feeling how exactly like Alcestis she is, and then yearning towards her, almost falling in love with her. A most beautiful and poignant touch. In modern language one would say that his subconscious nature feels Alcestis there and responds emotionally to her presence; his conscious nature, believing the woman to be a stranger, is horrified at his own apparent baseness and inconstancy.

P. 57, l. 1051, Where in my castle, etc.]—The castle is divided into two main parts: a public megaron or great hall where the men live during; the day and sleep at night, and a private region, ruled by the queen and centring in the thalamos or royal bed-chamber. If the new woman were taken into this "harem," even if Admetus never spoke to her, the world outside would surmise the worst and consider him dishonoured.

P. 66, l. 1148, Be righteous to thy guest, As he would have thee be.]— Does this

mean "Go on being hospitable, as you have been," or "Learn after this not to take liberties with other guests"? It is hard to say.

P. 66, l. 1152, The feasting day shall surely come; now I must needs away.]—A fine last word for Heracles. We have seen him feasting, but that makes a small part in his life. His main life is to perform labour upon labour in service to his king. Euripides occasionally liked this method of ending a play, not with a complete finish (Greek catastrophê), but with the opening of a door into some further vista of endurance or adventure. The Trojan Women ends by the women going out to the Greek ships to begin a life of slavery; the Rhesus with the doomed army of Trojans gathering bravely for an attack which we know will be disastrous. Here we have the story finished for Admetus and Alcestis, but no rest for Heracles. See the note at the end of my Trojan Women.

THE END

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ALCESTIS ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and

printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG™ LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg electronic works even without complying with the full terms of

this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a

Project Gutenberg work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg electronic works provided that:

• You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in

Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.” • You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works. • You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work. • You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™

trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement,

the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg’s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3)

educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 41 Watchung Plaza #516, Montclair NJ 07042, USA, +1 (862) 621-9288. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to

donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate.

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.