Philoctetes

by Sophocles

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE PHILOCTETES OF SOPHOCLES ***

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THE PHILOCTETES OF SOPHOCLES.

Translated from the GREEK.

Graiis ingenium, Graiis dedit ore rotundo

Musa loqui, præter laudem nullius avaris.

Hor.

DUBLIN:

Printed by J. Hyde and E. Dobson, for R. Owen

Bookseller in Skinner-Row. M.DCC.XXV.

TO THE

Right Honourable

THE

Lady CARTERET.

Madam,

With great Submission I present and dedicate the following Translation to Your Ladyship, having no other way of shewing my Gratitude, for the great Honour My Lord Lieutenant did me by His Presence, when my Scholars acted a Play of Sophocles in Greek. I have made choice of the same Author to entertain Your Ladyship, and he now makes his Appearance before You in plain English, but much to his disadvantage, which I hope will be excused, since I attempted it for the Reason which I already mentioned.

The Translation I have made is as close as the Propriety of our Language will admit, and Your Ladyship will observe in it at least some Traces of the Author’s Genius. But as the lowest Painter in drawing Your Ladyship’s Picture, would be able to

discover, that he at least designed to represent something extraordinary, and the best must needs fall infinitely short of the Original; So I cannot but hope that Your Ladyship will observe in this Translation some faint Lineaments of the Author's great Genius, superior to that of all modern Tragedians. And I cannot but fear, that you will easily perceive how unable I am to do him Justice, thro' my own Defects, as well as those of our own Language. And this would still be worse, if Your Ladyship should be so cruel to desire My Lord Lieutenant to criticize upon these Papers, His Excellency will detect, and expose me in every Line, and convince You, in a few Minutes, that I am as far unable to express that Sublime in Sophocles, as I should be able to describe the Virtues of Your Ladyship, or His Excellency, which is the only Cause that I pass them over in Silence in this Dedication.

I have added a few Notes, to explain some Passages that depend upon the Fabulous Stories of the antient Greeks, which perhaps may have escaped Your Ladyship's Reading.

I humbly entreat Your Ladyship's Pardon for this my Presumption, and remain with all Respect

Your Ladyship's

Most Obedient,

Humble Servant,

Thomas Sheridan.

The ARGUMENT.

To give some Light into the following Tragedy, it will not be amiss to give a short Account of the Persons concerned in it, that by knowing their Characters beforehand, the Reader may better judge of the Author's Performance. The first who appears upon the Stage is Ulysses, of whom I shall give the following short History.

Ulysses was King of Ithaca, Cephalenia, and Dulichium, (Islands in the Ionian Sea). Homer makes him remarkable for his great Experience, Eloquence, Counsel, and Skill in Military Affairs. And likewise very famous for his Stratagems. It was he who detected Achilles, disguised among the Daughters of Lycomedes; It was he who contriv'd the bringing of Philoctetes and his Arrows against Troy; who stole off the Ashes of Laomedon; the Palladium, or Image of Minerva; who killed Rhesus King of Thrace, and brought away his Horses, before they drank of the River Xanthus. For all these Conditions were necessary to be fullfilled; or Troy could never be taken.

Neoptolemus in the Original signifies a young Warriour; his true Name was Pyrrhus. He was the Son of Achilles. A young Man of strict Virtue and Honour, and one of great Tenderness and Humanity; but at the same Time he was ambitious. This was the only weak Part where Ulysses could attack him, which we find he took Advantage of, with great Art and Subtlety. Yet, what gives us great Pleasure in the Catastrophe of this Tragedy, we find, upon the moving Exclamations and Complaints of Philoctetes, that his good Nature, and the great Sense he had of Justice, prevails over all other Considerations.

As for the CHORUS it is the only thing unaccountable in the antient Tragedians. To examine nicely into the whole Conduct of it would require a particular Treatise, and therefore I pass it by for many Reasons, which would rather be impertinent to the Reader, than any way agreeable, or improving; However it will not be amiss to set down here what Horace says of the Chorus, in his Art of Poetry.

A Chorus shou'd supply what Action wants,

And hath a gen'rous and a manly Part;

Bridles wild Rage, loves rigid Honesty,

And strict Observance of impartial Laws,

Sobriety, Security, and Peace,

And begs the Gods to turn blind Fortune’s Wheel,

To raise the Wretched, and pull down the Proud.

But nothing must be sung between the Acts

But what some way conduces to the Plot.

Roscommon.

Philoctetes, Son of Pæan, went with seven Ships of his own a Voluntier to Troy; and, as Sophocles relates it, he was stung by a Viper in one of his Feet, which occasioned such an offensive Smell, and so great a Pain, that the Disturbance which he gave the Greeks with his Exclamations oblig’d the Grecian Generals to expose him in the Wilds of Lemnos. For which monstrous and ungrateful Treatment nothing less than the Ghost of Hercules appearing to him could make him join a second time against the Trojans.

The Merchant is a Person unknown, introduced by the Poet to make out the Stratagem of Ulysses.

Hercules, the Son of Jupiter and Alcumena; much persecuted by Juno because he was the Off-spring of a stoln Amour. Hence arise the great Number of Fables of his prodigious Exploits all over the World.

Dramatis Personæ.

PHILOCTETES.

ULYSSES.

NEOPTOLEMUS.

CHORUS.

MERCHANT.

Ghost of HERCULES.

THE

PHILOCTETES

OF

SOPHOCLES.

SCENE I.

Enter Ulysses.

Ul. Now are we landed on the [1]Lemnian Coast,
Encompass’d by the Ocean’s rolling Waves,
Where not a Print of human Foot is seen,
Nor House, nor Hut; where, Neoptolemus,
Thou blooming Branch of the renown’d Achilles,
I left expos’d the [2]Melian Son of Pæan.
Our Princes thus commanded; I obey’d,
Because a dreadful, nauseous, ranckling Wound
Eat thro’ his Foot, and made him rend the Skies
With Shrieks, and loud Laments, which much disturb’d
The Army; no Religious Rites cou’d be
Perform’d in Peace; of which I’ll say no more;
For Time contracts my Tale, and Dread of him,
Lest he shou’d find me here; and so confound
My secret Wiles to apprehend his Person.
The rest is thine. With careful Search explore
A pervious Rock, so form’d as to receive

The comfortable Beams of Winter-Suns,
And the cool Breezes from the Sea in Summer,
With fanning Wings inviting gentle Sleep.
Fast by this Rock, upon the Left, you'll find
A Spring, if still it's living Stream be fed;
To this repair with silent Pace, and see
Whether he lies conceal'd within these Bounds
Advance with cautious Steps, and let me know,
Then we'll consult what next is to be done.
Neop. Short is your Errand; for I now descry
The Cave which you express—
Ul. — above? below?
Or where? in vain I cast my Eyes around.
Neop. 'Tis there above; but not a single Trace
Of any Path conducts us tow'rds the Rock.
Ul. Go search, perhaps he is to Sleep reclin'd.
Neop. There's not a human Creature in this Place.
Ul. Nor fit Provision for a human Creature?
Neop. Some gather'd Leaves which by Impression shew
They have been lain on.
Ul. Is there nothing more?
Neop. Yes. I observe a wooden Vessel, fram'd
By some unskilful Hand, a little Pot
To boil his Food is all that I can see.

Ul. These then are all the Utensils he has?

Neop. Alas! they’re all, except some Rags a-drying,

Which by their Stains denote his fester’d Wound.

Ul. Then I’m convinc’d he dwells in this Abode,

And can’t be far from hence; his Wounds forbid

A distant Walk. Perhaps he went for Food,

Or Herbs to ease his Pains; but send this Man

To watch his Motion, lest by a Surprize

He takes me here; for justly I suspect

He’d gladly seize Me above all the Greeks.

Neop. I’ll send him straight to execute your Will—

Speak, is there any more you’d have me do?

Ul. Son of the great Achilles, it behoves thee

To use thy Prudence here, as well as Valour;

Whatever farther Counsel I shall give,

Perform, and with a chearful Mind assist.

Neop. What’s your Command?—

Ul. — To Philoctetes go,

With soothing Speeches his Belief betray;

When he enquires your Name, and whence you come,

Tell him Pelides[3] is your Sire; so far

Tell Truth; and that you now are homeward bound—

Disgusted at the Greeks you fly their Fleet.

That by Entreaties, and incessant Prayers,

They flatter'd you from home, to conquer Troy;
But now your Father's Armour they deny,
Which by Hereditary Right you claim.
Tell him they're giv'n to me; abuse and rail
With all the Malice of an injur'd Foe;
Speak what you please of Me, you can't offend.
If this Advice you spurn, you bring to all
The Greeks one great and universal Sorrow;
For if you don't contrive to get his Arrows,
You never can be conquerour of Troy.
Besides, you had a former Friendship with him,
Which makes you now the fitter to betray.
You went a Voluntier, not with the first,
Who bound by Oaths and fatal Influence,
Sail'd against Ilium; This was not my Case;
So that my Life's in Danger, your's no less,
If while he's arm'd with them he sees me here.
Your Bus'ness then is to deceive him straight,
And steal th' unconquerable Weapons from him.
I know by Nature you are much averse
To Artifice, but think how sweet it is
To bear such Arrows as are sure of Conquest.
Then bravely dare to do what I advise,
The Time will come, the World will think you just

For this Exploit; lay by your Shame one Hour,
And give yourself to me, and ever hence
You shall be deem’d the justest Man on Earth.
Neop. [4]Son of Laertes, I am griev’d to hear
Such Words from thee; to practise them is Death.
I was not born to stoop to such vile Arts,
Nor he from whom I glory to be sprung.
If open Force or Fortitude require
My Aid, I’ll venture; but I scorn Deceit.
Sure one poor maimed Wretch can’t overthrow
Such as we are, and since I’m sent with thee
To join in this Adventure, I will use
My utmost Force to help thee, nor betray
The Trust repos’d—but let me speak my mind—
I’d rather bravely die, than basely conquer.
Ul. Son of the greatest Man, when I was young
My Tongue was less employ’d, my Hands were more;
But now, by long Experience, I’m convinc’d
That Language more than Action can prevail.
Neop. But you a lying Language recommend.
Ul. I urge it still, this Man you must deceive.
Neop. But why deceive, can’t I as well perswade.
Ul. Force and Perswasion are to him the same.
Neop. Has he so great a Confidence in Strength?

Ul. Where’er his Arrows fly they carry Death.

Neop. Who can with Safety then approach his Presence?

Ul. You can’t, except you circumvent him first.

Neop. Do you not think it base to forge a Lie?

Ul. No; when your Safety on a Lie depends.

Neop. Who when he lies can see another’s Face?

Ul. When for your Gain you act, you shou’d not scruple.

Neop. Where is my Gain to make him go to Troy?

Ul. Because his Weapons must o’erthrow the Town.

Neop. Then, as you said, the Conquest can’t be mine.

Ul. In vain his Arrows fly without your Aid,

And you attack without their Aid in vain.

Neop. If so, I must deceive—

Ul. — and well you do,

For two Rewards you’re sure of—

Neop. ——— what are they?

Ul. Wisdom and Fortitude will both be thine.

Neop. Farewel then Modesty, for once farewel.

Ul. Do you remember all my Counsels?

Neop. Yes.

I can’t forget where once I give Assent.

Ul. Here wait his coming, I must hence withdraw

Lest I be seen; back to the Ship I send

Our Spy, and if I find a long Delay

I’ll send him hither, dress’d in such Disguise
That he shall pass for Captain of the Ship.
His very Language too shall be disguis’d;
Not so but you shall plainly understand
What is convenient to be done; hence then
In haste I go, and leave the rest to thee.
May Mercury assist, God of Deceit,
And wise Minerva, on whose Care depend
Whole States; for she is still Ulysses’ Friend.
ANTISTROPHICA
STROPHE.
Chorus.
What shall I do a Stranger here?
Or what conceal?
Or what reveal?
Behold I see the Man appear!
Instruct me then; for well I know
That Arts may Arts excell,
As well
Counsels Counsels overthrow.
Among the Sceptred Great,
Few can fathom the Designs of State.
To thee, my Son, this princely Pow’r is given;
A Pow’r deriv’d from Heav’n.

How far subservient I must be, relate.

Neop.

Perhaps you willingly wou’d trace,

With long expecting Eyes,

The wretched solitary Place

Where Philoctetes lies.

Then look around and do not fear,

And when he comes this way,

A dreadful Sight approaching near,

What I command obey.

ANTISTROPHE.

Chorus.

I was determin’d long before

To fix my Eyes on thine,

Whatever Object they explore

To view the same is mine.

But tell me where this wretched Creature lives,

Or in what Field he lies,

Such Information much Advantage gives;

For much I dread Surprize.

What Place? what Path? what Seat?

Is it an open or a close Retreat?

Neop.

No Place to rest his weary Head,

A pervious Rock you see is both his House and Bed.

Chorus.

Where is the friendless Creature then?

The most unfortunate of Men!

Neop.

Not far from hence, to find him Food,

The poor dejected Soul

Is gone to shed the harmless Blood

Of some unguarded Fowl:

He lives on present Chance they say,

His winged Arrows fly,

To bring the Food of ev’ry Day

Down flutt’ring from the Sky.

But what avail him all the slain!

For still he feels a sleepless Pain.

Chorus.

Much I lament his dismal Case,

Without the Sight of human Face;

Unhappy, and alone!

Whole Nights and Days

Rack’d with Disease!

To sigh, to grieve, to groan!

How can he bear the dreadful Shock of Fate?

What num’rous Woes

Encompass those,

Who live not in a middle State.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Chorus.

Shou’d you the noblest ancient Lineage trace,

You’ll find him of an equal Race;

And yet behold him of all Joy bereft,

Behold him solitary left!

No Friend, no kind Companion to relieve his Pain.

The spotted and the shagged Beasts around

Unheeding graze;

Hunger and Torment he must both sustain;

For both at once the wretched Mortal seize.

With piercing Shouts and Cries

He rends the Skies,

And Eccho faithfully returns the Sound.

Neop.

Nothing of this my Breast can move,

If I in things divine am skill’d,

Whatever is decreed above,

Must be on Earth fulfill’d.

At Chrysa first his Malady began,

’Twas there the angry Gods attack’d the wretched Man.

Nor can we think they plac’d him here alone,

Without a Friend,

For any other End,

But that they fix’d a Season of their own,

When ev’ry Wall,

Of Troy shou’d fall,

And Troy no longer be a Town.

Chorus.

Be silent for a while———

Neop.

——— For what I pray?

Chorus.

His piteous Groans afflict my Ear,

I hear them now approaching near.

Neop.

What here? or there? or in what Place?

Methinks I hear a mournful Cry

Of one, who moves a wretched Pace,

And dreads his maimed Foot to try.

’Tis he instructed by his Voice I know;

I feel the murth’ring Language of his Woe.

Chorus.

But have my Son——

Neop.

—— have what?

Chorus.

Some other Thoughts; you see him near at Hand,

Not like a Shepherd with a tuneful Reed;

But one who dreads upon his Foot to stand,

Because the lightest Pressure makes it bleed.

If by ill chance he trips against a Stone,

With loud lamenting Voice he shrieks and roars;

And when he spies a Ship; he cries, begone!

Fly far from these inhospitable Shores!

Enter Philoctetes.

Phil. Alas, ye Strangers! tell me whence ye come,

Whence to these wild, these unfrequented Shores?

There’s neither House, nor Port! whence? tell me whence

Ye come? your Country and your Names: I see

You’re Greeks in Dress, a lovely Dress to me.

Delight my Ears for once with welcome Sounds;

My native Tongue; ah! don’t ye start, or dread

To see me thus grown savage; rather shew

Compassion to a poor unfortunate,

Friendless, forsaken Wretch; speak if you’re Friends.

O! answer me in haste, it is not meet

A mutual Conversation shou’d be wanting.

Neop. Know we are Greeks; for this you want to know.

Phil. O dearest Voice, after ten long years Silence,

To hear the Words of such a Man! what Joy!
What Rapture does it give! my Son, tell who
Has brought you hither? what Necessity?
What Expectations? or what friendly Wind
Has wafted you to us? O! tell us all,
For much I long to know the happy Cause.
Neop. My Country's Scyros; homewards I am bound;
My Sire's Achilles; Neoptolemus
My Name; thus I have told you all in short.
Phil. Son of my dearest Friend, and dearest Country;
Of [5]Lycomedes the peculiar Care
When young; what Fleet has brought thee here? or whence?
Neop. From Troy directly, thence I steer my Course.
Phil. What's this you say? when first we went to Troy
You were not with us on that Expedition.
Neop. Why, were you one of that advent'rous Fleet?
Phil. Know you me not, my Son?
Neop. —— How shou'd I know
A Person whom I never saw before?
Phil. Did you not hear my Name, or the Report
Of all the Torments which have rack'd my Soul?
Neop. No not one single Word of Name or Torments.
Phil. Ah! wretched me!—odious to Heav'n's great Powers!—
My woful Case was neither heard at Home,

Nor ev’n among the Greeks,—but those who cast
Me out smile at my Wrongs, and keep them secret.
My Wounds still ranckle, and encrease my Pain.
Beloved Youth, Son of the fam’d Pelides,
I the Successor of great Hercules
Possess his Arrows: I’m the Son of Pæan,
Call’d Philoctetes, whom two Grecian Chiefs,
Join’d with the subtle [6]Cephalenian Prince
Basely cast out into this desert Isle;
Torn with wild Anguish, with Impressions dire
Of Vipers Teeth all burning; thus they left me
Forlorn, when hither they from [7]Chrysa sail’d;
Tir’d with the Agitation of the Waves,
And sunk to Sleep profound; rejoic’d to find
This cruel Opportunity, they fled
And laid me in the hollow of a Rock;
A few small Rags to bind my noisome Wounds,
And present Food a little, all they left me.
I wak’d! O Heavens! my Son, what Tongue can tell
The Sorrows of my Soul? what Floods of Tears
Flow’d down my Cheeks! what Sighs! what Groans!
To see them sailing off, and not one Soul
With solitary mourning Philoctetes.
No Help, no friendly Care, no kind Relief

To my distracting Sores; I look’d around,
And found not one Companion but my Pain;
Which ne’er remits. Day after Day went on,
I saw my little Cave must be supply’d
By my own Care, and Hunger be subdu’d
By the wild Doves my faithful Arrows slew.
What Birds I shot I crawl’d along with Pain
To bring them home, and dragg’d my bleeding Foot
With Anguish great. When to the limpid Spring
I crept to cool my parching Thirst, or went
To gather Fewel for my Fire, (the same
Affliction seiz’d me as I limp’d along)
This by repeated Stroaks of Flints I kindled,
But long before the little Seeds of Fire,
Scarce visible, became a living Flame.
This is my chief Support, my Cave’s best Comfort;
It grants me all but a Release from Pain.
But now, my Son, ’tis Time I should relate
The Nature of this Place. No Sailor steers
With willing Sails to these inhuman Shores;
No Trade; no Harbours; here no Mortal dwells
With hospitable Care to tend a Stranger;
None in their Senses will approach this Place.
If hither by tempestuous waves they’re driven

(As oft it happens in the length of Time)
To soft Compassion mov’d, my sad Condition
They pity, and some Food and Raiment give;
But not a Soul will take me home, but here
I’m left to perish in the desert Wilds.
For ten long Years of Hunger and of Pain,
I fed the Wounds, that feed themselves on me.
This the [8]Atridæ did, and this Ulysses;
For which may Heav’n inflict like Woes on them.
Chorus.
Like those by chance who hither sail,
I feel Compassion rise;
Thy Suff’rings force me to bewail,
They pierce my wounded Heart and melt my Eyes.
Neop. I am a Witness of thy sad Complaint;
The Truth of what you say I cannot doubt;
I by Experience know, how violent
The Sons of Atreus and Ulysses are.
Phil. Have you then felt their curst, destructive Power,
That with a just Resentment you accuse them?
Neop. I wish my Passion were with Arms supply’d,
That [9]Sparta and Mycenæ both might know,
What valiant Heroes Scyros can produce.
Phil. Well said, my Son, what is your Cause of Anger?

Neop. Thou Son of Pæan, I'll impart it all,
Tho' Words are wanting justly to describe
The injur'd Neoptolemus, when he
Had lost his best Defence, his martial Father.
Phil. Alas! proceed no farther 'till I hear
Whether the [10]Son of Peleus be no more.
Neop. He fell, but by no mortal hand; they say
It was Apollo sent the fatal Shaft.
Phil. Great was the Hand that slew! and great the slain!
But now, my Son, I am divided much
Between thy Suff'rings and his Death to know
Whether to hear thy Griefs, or wail his Fate.
Neop. Thy own Misfortunes bring sufficient Pains,
And leave no room to think of any others.
Phil. You reason well. Then to yourself proceed,
And let me know the Injuries you bear.
Neop. Ulysses and my Tutour Phœnix came
Both in one Ship to me, and this their Message;
That now my Father was no more, my Help
Was requisite to conquer Troy; none else
Alive could do. For so the Fates decreed.
How true or false I shan't presume to say.
With quick Perswasion off I went, but more
Desirous far to see my Father's Body;

But saw it not. Yet still Ambition fir’d
My gen’rous Soul with glorious Thoughts of Conquest.
In two days Time on the [11]Sigeian Shore
I landed; wretched was that Shore to me!
While the whole Army stood around to pay
Their due Respect, and all did loudly swear
They saw Achilles still alive in me;
But he, alas! was dead; unhappy I
Let fall some silent Tears, and so retir’d
A while to think of him, and grieve alone.
To the Atridæ, whom I thought my Friends,
I went, demanding my dead Father’s Treasures,
Among the rest his Armour; when, alas!
How great my Sorrow! this the dismal Answer.
“Son of Achilles, all the rest is thine;
“The Armour is dispos’d of to Ulysses.
At this Intelligence I griev’d; and wept.
At length my Passion struggling broke its way,
And thus I spoke; Injurious Prince, who durst
Without my Leave dispose of what was mine?
Then said Ulysses, standing near, they’re mine;
“And justly were they given: I sav’d your Sire
“From being stript of them and dragg’d him off,
“When hostile Foes wou’d make his Coarse a Prey.

Now much enrag’d, my swelling Anger burst,
And out in dreadful Imprecations flew
Upon them all, for such injurious Treatment.
Ulysses then advanc’d, suppress’d his Anger;
But stung at what he heard, he thus reply’d.
You ran no Risk, but staid behind at Home;
Rant as you please, you ne’er shall bear it hence.
Thus injur’d and repuls’d, I homeward sail’d,
Spoil’d of my native Right, by one I deem
The worst of Men, I mean the base Ulysses.
But yet I blame the chief Commanders more;
The Army and the Civil Pow’r is theirs;
Their Orders all obey; when Wrongs are done,
It is by their Connivance, or Example.
I’ve told you all; whoever hates th’ Atridæ,
I hold him dear both to the Gods and me.
Chorus.
All feeding Mother Earth,
On whom the lofty [12]Mountains stand,
From thee great Jove derives his [13]Birth,
Supported by thy bounteous Hand.
Thou who dost dwell where rich [14]Pactolus shines
With Wealth exhausted from the Golden Mines,
Shall I invoke thy Name

Within that Stream?

And tell what Injuries are done

To Neoptolemus, the Son

Of great Pelides, that great Man of Fame?

His Armour to Ulysses given,

And he the Son from his own native Right is driven.

Thee, mighty Goddess, we invoke,

Who dost Bull-slaught'ring [15]Lyons Yoke,

And drawn by them in Car-triumphant ride,

Humble th' Atridæ and pull down their Pride.

1. Lemnian Coast. Lemnos is an Island in the Ægean Sea, South of Thrace, in the Latitude of 41 Deg. now called Stalimene by the Turks: The Form of it is Quadrangular, it is 25 Miles over, which makes it 100 Miles about.

2. Melian Son of Pæan. Philoctetes the Thessalian Son of Pæan, and Companion of Hercules.

3. Pelides. Achilles the Son of Peleus.]

4. Son of Laertes. Ulysses.

5. Lycomedes King of Scyros, (one of the Cyclades) to whom the Goddess Thetis gave her Son Achilles in Charge, having stoln him from his Master Chiron, as he was asleep; because she foresaw that he would never return alive from the Siege of Troy. For this Reason he was kept at the Court of Lycomedes, in a Woman's Dress, among his Daughters, the better to conceal him. He was at last discover'd by a Stratagem of Ulysses.

6. Cephalenian Prince. Ulysses. So call'd from the Island Cephalenia, of which he was King.

7. Chrysa, an Island near Lemnos.

8. Atridæ. Agamemnon and Menelaus, the two Sons of Atreus. One was King of Mycenæ, and the other of Sparta. They were the chief Commanders of the Greeks who went upon the Trojan Expedition.

9. Sparta and Mycenæ. Both Towns of the Peleponnesus in Greece.

10. Son of Peleus. Achilles. Peleus was King of Thessaly.

11. Sigeum, a Promontory near Troy.

12. Orea, or Mountains according to Mythologists were said to be Daughters of the Goddess Terra, or Earth.

13. Jupiter was born in Crete.

14. Pactolus, a River in Lydia, which has its Rise from the Mountain Tmolus famous for Golden Sands.

15. Cybele, who was the same with Terra, or the Earth, had her Chariot drawn by Lyons.

SCENE II.

Phil. Strangers, ye seem to bear the Marks of Sorrow,

And I perceive your Sentiments and mine

Concerning the Atridæ, and Ulysses,

Are both the same: As for his Part, I know

His artful, false, disguis’d, deluding Tongue,

To Truth and Justice is a perfect Stranger:

At which I wonder not, but much admire

How braver [16]Ajax cou’d allow such Wrongs.

Neop. Ajax, my Friend, is dead, or had he Life,

I shou'd not thus be made a shameful Prey.

Phil. And is the great, the valiant Ajax dead?

Neop. He now no longer breathes in Heav'ns fair Light.

Phil. Wretched am I—There's [17]Diomede alive

And curs'd Ulysses, sprung from [18]Sisyphus,

And both unworthy of the Breath they draw.

Neop. Both live and flourish, both in Pomp appear,

Peculiar Fav'rites of the Grecian Host.

Phil. Where is my good, my old, my faithful Friend,

[19]Nestor of Pylos? for he well foresaw

Their dark Designs, their base, their treach'rous Deeds.

Neop. Loaded with Woes, his only Son is dead,

Antilochus; the Comfort of his Age.

Phil. Two dismal Evils you have told, I hear

Them both with much Affliction; O my Heart!

What shall I think? The brave are dead and gone;

Ulysses lives! who well deserv'd to die.

Neop. He wisely fights; but even the wise sometimes

Perceive their deepest Counsels overthrown.

Phil. Tell me, I pray thee by the Gods, where was

Thy Father's dearest Friend [20]Patroclus then.

Neop. Slain with the rest. Observe this one Remark,

Mars ever singles out the brave to die;

Cowards are safe; he scorns their panting Breast.

Phil. I grant it’s true; and for this Cause I shall
Enquiry make for one unworthy Wretch,
Whose Tongue had Words and Cunning at command,
In what Condition’s he?——
Neop. ———Ulysses sure
You mean; this Character suits none but him.
Phil. No. One [21]Thersites clamorous and loud,
In spight of Opposition; does he live?
Neop. I saw him not, but heard he was alive.
Phil. ’Tis like, because no Evil yet is dead.
The Gods to me seem Guardians to the base,
And take a Pleasure to preserve from Death
The false and fraudulent; the just and good
They snatch away from hence. What shall we think
Of this? or how give Praise to them? who shew
So much Regard to wicked Men their Fav’rites.
Neop. As for myself, I’ll freely speak my Thoughts,
Thou Son of Pæan, I resolve to live
Remote from Troy, and the Atridæ both;
Where wicked Men with Pow’r oppress the Good,
Where Virtue is destroy’d, and Vice commands.
As for my self, I cannot love such Men;
And rocky Scyros shall hereafter be
My best Content—There shall I joy to live.

Now to my Ship I go, dear Son of Pæan,
Farewel; with all my Soul farewel; and may
The Gods remove thy Pain ev'n as thou wilt;
For go we must, whenever Heav'n is pleas'd
To send a fair and favourable Wind.
Phil. And do ye now prepare?——
Neop. ———No Time we lose;
The moment that the Winds invite, we go.
Phil. O! for thy Father's, and thy Mother's sake,
For all that can be dear to thee at home,
I beg, beseech, and pray you not to leave
A poor, forsaken, solitary Man,
In all the dire Calamities you see;
And such as I already have related;
But place me any where, in any manner.
I know a wretched Burthen that I am,
However bear me to the generous Soul;
What's base is hateful; Goodness is his Glory.
If I be left behind, it brings Disgrace;
But if you take me off, it brings you Honour.
If I shall get alive to Oeta's Land,
'Tis but the trouble of one single Day;
Then dare to take me, throw me where you please;
Or by the Pump, or Stern, or Prow, my Friend,

Or any part, where I shall give no Pain.
By Jove, who over suppliant Men presides,
I beg you to consent, my Son; I fall
Down prostrate, and in Tears embrace your Knees;
A poor, lame, helpless, miserable Man.
Ah! leave me not alone, where not a Print
Of human Foot is seen; but save me hence;
Whether you take me to your native home,
Or land me on [22]Eubea's Coast; from thence
To [23]Oeta I've not far to go; not far
To the Trachinian Hills, where [24]Spercheus winds
It's lovely Stream; there let my Father see me.
Tho' long since much I fear he's dead; for oft
By many Passengers I sent, to beg
He'd send a Ship to take me safely home;
But he is either dead, or they perhaps
Slighted my Message; or they pass'd him by.
Now is my last Resort, be thou at once
Conductor both and Messenger; O save,
And have Compassion, and consider well
How frail are human Things; how much expos'd
To Change! This day the happy Man may be
Cast down from all his Joy; then he who stands
Without the Storm, shou'd cast a tender Eye

On the poor shipwreck’d Man, and bring Relief;

’Tis in the midst of Happiness we shou’d

Live on our Guard, for fear of a Surprize.

Chorus.

O Prince, for once be kind,

Let him Compassion find.

He told you all his dreadful Woes,

Which Heaven avert from any Friend of mine.

Then let the Joy be thine,

To make th’ Atridæ know

He shall obtain

Release from Pain,

And ev’ry haughty Foe.

Then haste away and hoist your Sails,

Make haste to catch the flying Gales,

And waft him o’er

Unto his native Shore,

Lest Heav’n pursues you if my Counsel fails.

16. Ajax, the Son of Telamon and Hesione, accounted the next Hero to Achilles among the Greeks.

17. Diomede, Son of Tydeus, next in Prowess to Ajax. Homer makes him wound Mars and Venus.

18. Sisyphus, a great Robber in Attica, the Grandfather of Ulysses.

19. Nestor. An experienc’d General and Orator, Son of Neleus; So excellent in

Wisdom, that Agamemnon said, if he had ten such in his Army, Troy would soon be conquer'd.

20. Patroclus, Son of Menætius. When he was young having kill'd one of his Playfellows by accident, was forc'd to fly his Country, and go to Pthia in Thessaly, where he was receiv'd by Tydeus, and bred up with his Son Achilles under Chiron: This made him and Achilles such inseparable Companions and Friends.

21. Thersites. The most deformed of all the Greeks. He is painted by Homer in a most ridiculous Manner.

22. Eubea, an Island in the Ægean Sea, now called Negrepont.

23. Oeta, a Mountain on the Borders of Thessaly. Trachin a Town near it, whence the Hills are called Trachinian.

24. Spercheus. A River which runs with a rapid Course from a Mountain in Thessaly.

SCENE III.

Neop. Take care you do not now disguise your Thoughts,

And soon again with Violence exclaim,

When he no longer can suppress his Anguish.

Chorus. Falshood be far from me, such foul Disgrace

You shall not justly have to charge me with.

Neop. It wou'd be scandalous and base in me,

To be less willing to assist this Stranger;

Then sail we must away, let him prepare

With Expedition; for I shan't deny

To take him in my Ship, and may the Gods

Propitious prove, and safely fill our Sails.

Phil. O friendly Day to me! O best of Men!

Ye dearest Mariners, how shall I make

Acknowledgments? or how can I express

What Obligations bind me to you all?

But let us go, my Son, to visit now

My little homeless Home, and there you'll see

What Life I led; how strong my Heart to bear

Such Hardships; that the Place wherein I lay

Wou'd give your Eyes offence; yet I, alas!

Was by Necessity inur'd to this.

Chorus. Hold, let us see; two Men advance this Way,

The one belongs to thee, t'other I know

Him not, but hither they approach. Before

We go, 'tis fit we shou'd enquire their Business.

Enter the Merchant.

Mer. Son of Achilles, here by Chance I came;

And unexpected find thee, by this Man

Inform'd; for he, it seems, with two Men more,

Guarded thy Vessel. Sailing right from Troy

And homewards bound to [25]Peparethos fam'd

For Vines, I heard these Men, prepar'd to sail,

Were thine; I straightway then resolv'd to hail

The Crew, and not to pass before I shou'd

Acquaint you, what you little think; The Greeks
Have form’d Designs against you, which not long
Will so be call’d, for soon you’ll find them Facts.
Neop. My Friend, I thank thee for thy Care; I shou’d
Be base indeed, were you not dear to me
For this Intelligence. What new Designs
Concerning me? What have the Greeks resolv’d?
Mer. Old Phœnix and the Sons of Theseus in
Pursuit of thee set sail—
Neop. ———Do they intend
By Force of Arms, or Reason, to subdue
And bring me back?—
Mer. ——I know not which they mean;
But this Intelligence I thought was proper.
Neop. Will Phœnix and his Men, to gratify
The base Atridæ, turn their Force on me?
Mer. They have resolv’d so far, they won’t delay.
Neop. Why not Ulysses, Was it Fear detain’d him?
Mer. He and the Son of Diomede are bent
Upon another Prey, they hoist their Sails
The very day I launch’d my Ship from thence.
Neop. Against what Man is this Ulysses sent?
Mer. A certain Man—But whisper me who’s this?
Neop. This is the famous Philoctetes, Friend.

Mer. Say not a Word—But hence—begone in Haste;—
Fly from this Island with your utmost Speed.
Phil. What does he say, my Son? what private Gain
Does he propose by whisp'ring thus of me?
Neop. I know not what he means. He must himself
Explain it, in the Presence of us all.
Mer. Son of Achilles, do not you betray me,
For thus disclosing what I shou'd conceal;
Because I'm much indebted to the Greeks,
Bound by the strongest Ties of Gratitude;
For I was poor, and they reliev'd my Want's.
Phil. To the Atridæ I'm an Enemy—
But here's my greatest Friend, because his Hate
For them with mine agrees; and now you're come,
Sincerely act, and do not ought conceal
That may be grateful for my Soul to know.
Mer. See what you do, my Friend—
Neop. ———I've thought on't well.
Mer. The Blame shall all be thine——
Neop. ——On what Account?
Mer. Once more, my Friend, I must acquaint you, That
The Son of Tydeus and Ulysses come
Against this Person, sworn by Force to take him,
Or by Perswasion sooth him back again;

This from Ulysses all the Grecians heard;
For none beside had so much Confidence.
Neop. What mov'd th' Atridæ, after so long Time,
To have a Thought of banish'd Philoctetes?
Whence this Desire for him? was it because
They fear'd the Vengeance of th' offended Gods?
Mer. I'll tell thee all; (perhaps you heard it not)
A Royal Prophet, Son of aged Priam,
Call'd Helenus, in dead of Night betray'd
By false Ulysses, (that detested Man!)
Was led in Chains, and brought a glorious Prey
By him presented to the Greeks; he told
All his Prophetick Soul cou'd then foresee
Concerning Troy; That it wou'd ne'er be conquer'd,
Except they brought this Person, whom you see
Upon this Island; which Laertes' Son
No sooner hear'd, but he straight undertook
The Task, and said he'd bring him to the Greeks
With free Consent, or else against his Will;
If not, he wou'd engage to lose his Head.
Now you have heard it all, I urge your Haste,
And his, and any else whom you regard.
Phil. Alas for me! did he, who's stain'd all thro'
With Crimes, engage to bring me back again?

He might as well perswade me back from Death
To Life, as basely as his Father came.
Mer. These Things I know not, but I must from hence
On Board; may some good God conduct you both.
Phil. Is not this harden'd Impudence, that he
Shou'd hope by flatt'ring Speeches to prevail,
And take me to the Greeks? I'd sooner hear
The Viper which depriv'd me of my Foot.
But he will say and dare do ev'ry Thing;
And now I know for certain he will come.
But let us go, my Son, that we may be
Divided by a distant Sea from him.
Let us be gone—a seasonable Haste,
When Labour's over, brings a pleasing Rest.
Neop. How can we go when Heav'n's against our Sails,
Adverse the Wind, commanding us to stay?
Phil. No Wind's against us when we fly from Evils.
Neop. It blows against their Sails as much as ours.
Phil. By adverse Winds a Pyrate ne'er is hindred,
When forth he sallies for his lawless Plunder.
Neop. Since you request it, let us go, and take
Whatever Things are needful for your Voyage.
Phil. Some I shall want, but they are very few.
Neop. What can you need which I cannot supply?

Phil. Some Herbs, whose Virtues mitigate my Pain,
And often put my restless Wounds to sleep.
Neop. Well—bring them out—what other Things beside?
Phil. My Bow—Alas I had almost forgot!
And left it here behind a Prey to him.
Neop. Is this the celebrated Bow you bear?
Phil. The very same; my Hand no other holds.
Neop. Give me a nearer View, and let me take
It in my Hands, and pay it Adoration.
Phil. This, and whatever else I have, my Son,
Whatever pleases you, you may command.
Neop. I love thee well, and thus I shew my Love;
If Heav'n permits to touch thy Bow, I will;
If not, refuse me; if a wrong Request.
Phil. You speak religiously, my Son, you may—
You who have brought me to the Sun's fair Light,
To see the sweet Oetean Fields again,
My aged Father, and my dearest Friends;
Who rais'd me up, o'erwhelm'd by envious Foes;
You shall, and welcome, take it in your Hands;
But then return it safely to it's Owner.
Then may you boast that you're the only Man,
Whom for your Virtue, and for that alone,
So much I've honour'd, as to touch this Bow;

’Twas giv’n to me for human Acts; for which

I’m pleas’d to see so good a Friend enjoy it.

Whoever knows for Benefits receiv’d

To make a just Return, that Man I deem

A Friend beyond the Value of all Treasure.

Neop. ——’Tis Time to enter in thy Cave.

Phil. ————And thee

I must entreat to go; for I shall want thy Help.

ANTISTROPHICA

STROPHE I.

Chorus.

I heard of those eternal Pains,

Which rack’d [26]Ixion feels,

Fast bound by Adamantine Chains

To ever-turning Wheels.

Doom’d to this Fate by angry Jove,

For tempting to embrace

The Queen of Heav’n with impious Love;

His Torments never cease.

But never did I hear or see

A Man so rack’d before,

As Philoctetes seems to me,

What Suff’rings can be more?

He never did an Act was wrong,

But Justice still maintain’d;

I wonder much that he so long,

Such Torments has sustain’d.

Tell me the Cause, ye angry Pow’rs,

In Fortune’s stormy Seas,

He’s tost so many tedious Hours,

Without one Moment’s Ease.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Expos’d to all the Storms that blow,

From whence he cannot fly;

And not a Friend to feel his Woe

Returning Sigh for Sigh.

Not one the healing Herb applies

To sooth his angry Wound;

But torn with Anguish, there he lies

Extended on the Ground.

The Instant that his Pains abate,

He like an Infant creeps,

To find a Plant to quell that Heat,

And thus the Venom sleeps.

STROPHE II.

Not from the sacred Earth his Foods

Nor from the Tiller’s Care,

Does he recruit his streaming Blood,

But from the Bird-flown Air.

When soaring Fowls advance this Way

He lets his Arrows fly;

To certain Death the feather’d Prey

Falls flutt’ring from the Sky.

Ah! wretched Soul, thy Fate was hard,

To live ten Years in Pain,

To be from joyful Wine debarr’d

To drink the tastless Rain.

ANTISTROPHE II.

His Fortune’s now revers’d we see,

A gen’rous Youth’s inclin’d

To waft him Home; to set him free;

And ease his tortur’d Mind.

Lo! to the Melian Nymphs he’s gone,

To Sperchius’ vagrant Streams,

To Oeta’s Mount where Jove’s great Son

To Heav’n aspir’d in Flames.

Neop. Come, gently move along; what means this Silence?

Why stand you thus confounded in amaze?

Phil. Alas! alas! alas!———

Neop. ———What mean these Sounds?

Phil. Nothing that’s worth Complaint; my Friend proceed.

Neop. Perhaps our walking may increase your Pains.

Phil. Not in the least, I rather feel my Wound
Much lighter since our Walk. Ye heav'nly Powers! (aside)
Neop. Why do you then invoke the heav'nly Powers?
Phil. To be propitious, and attend our Voyage.
O Heav'ns, what Pains I feel!——
Neop. ———What Suff'rings now?
Why are you silent? For you seem to me
By Starts and Groans your Torture to confess.
Phil. My Son, I'm lost; no longer I conceal
The Malady; it wounds my very Soul;
It pierces thro' and thro'; O wretched me!
Murther'd! undone! and lost beyond Redress.
O dismal, racking, burning, poison'd Pains!
Reach me a Sword, my Son, an Ax, a Dagger;
Cut off my Foot this instant; spare it not.
Neop. What new Addition do you feel, that makes
You roar with hideous Exclamation loud.
Phil. You know, my Son——
Neop. —Not I—
Phil. You know indeed.
Neop. What do you mean?
Phil. —I know not what I mean.
Neop. Why know you not?
Phil. ———I cannot speak for Pain.

Neop. Dreadful the shooting of thy Wound indeed!

Phil. Dreadful beyond Expression; O! my Friend,

Have some Compassion on the Woes I feel.

Neop. What shall I do to give thee Ease?—

Phil. ————Ah! don't

Forsake me for the piteous Moans I make.

By Fits and Starts, my Torments come and go

Like Vagabonds, to feed; and then they vanish.

Neop. Unhappy Mortal, I lament thy Fate,

And all the lamentable Shocks thou bearest—

Shall I support you as you walk along?

Phil. Support me not, but hold my Bow a-while,

Until the present Torment which I feel

Abates, and keep it safe; for when my Pains

Are at the full, I sink to sleep; no means

Beside can give me Ease; then sleep I must,

And let me lie from all Disturbance free;

If in that Interval my Foes shou'd come,

By all the Gods I must conjure thee, not

To part it from thy Hands, by Will, or Force,

Or any Stratagem may be contriv'd

To get it from thee; for on this depends

Thy Safety, and thy humble Suppliant's Life.

Neop. Fear not, thy Caution I'll observe—No Man

Alive shall touch this Bow, except thy self,
And me—Give it—May Fortune guard us both.
Phil. Take it—Good luck attend thee—But adore
The Goddess Envy first, lest the same Fate
Pursues thee which annoy’d its former Masters.
Neop. Ye Gods! grant my Request; may happy Winds,
When ye think fit, convey us home with Safety.
Phil. I fear your Pray’rs are all in vain, my Son;
The boiling Blood ’stills from my burning Sole.
Some Change much worse I dread, alas! alas!
O wretched Foot, what Evils do you feed!
Now, now it tears, now to my Soul it comes,
Attacks with greatest Force. O wretched me!
Bear with my loud Complaints, and fly not hence,
My Friends, O fly not from my dismal Groans.
My Cephalenian Friend, I wish thy Breast
Felt all my Grief at once. O Agamemnon,
And you his Brother-Leader Menelaus,
How would you bear these Wounds I feel, so long?
Ah me what num’rous Evils I endure!
O Death! Death! Death! whom ev’ry Day I call;
Will you not come and end my loathsome Life?
Thou generous Youth in whom true Pity dwells,
Take me and throw me in the Lemnian Flames;

There burn me all, do me that friendly Office,

Which I did for the Son of Jove, when he

Bequeath'd these Arrows, which to thee I've given.

What do you say? ah! speak, and be not silent;

Where's thy Attention? where's thy wand'ring Mind.

Neop. I grieve long since and all thy Pains deplore.

Phil. But, O my Son, bear; bear my Griefs a-while;

They're short, and violent, and quickly gone;

Therefore I beg you leave me not alone.

Neop. I shall not leave thee.

Phil. No?

Neop. For certain not.

Phil. I shall not by an Oath engage thy Faith.

Neop. It is not fit I leave thee behind.

Phil. Pledge me your Hand you'll stay.

Neop. I do.

Phil. O place me there, there place me.

Neop. In what Place?

Phil. Above.

Neop. What makes you wildly look around.

Phil. O let me go from hence.

Neop. Where let thee go?

Phil. Let me, I say.

Neop. I will not let thee go.

Phil. One Touch is Murder.

Neop. Then I let thee go.

Hast thou recover’d yet thy perfect Senses?

Phil. O Earth receive me sinking to thy Bosom.

I can’t sustain myself one Moment longer.

Neop. Poor Man! a sudden Slumber seals his Eyes!

His drooping Head upon his Breast is fallen!

The dewy Sweat distils from all his Pores;

And bursting Gore streams from his tortur’d Foot.

O let us leave him now to Rest and Quiet;

Let him forget himself in Sleep a while.

25. Peparethos. One of the Cluster of Islands in the Ægean Sea called the Cyclades.

26. Ixion. After he had murther’d his Father-in-law Deioneus being much rack’d on that Account, Jupiter in Compassion translated him to Heaven, where he basely attempted Juno; for which, Jupiter had him fix’d to a Wheel in Hell, which was to turn round for ever.

SCENE IV.

EPODICA.

STROPHE I.

Chorus.

Soft Sleep, thou Stranger to all Pain,

Breathe on him with thy softest Gale;

Thou Prince of a most happy Reign,

Upon his Eye-Lids gently steal.

Keep off the bright extended Rays of Light,

And gather all the gloomy Shades of Night.

Come hither thou Physician sure,

Thou the universal Cure.

ANTISTROPHE.

Resolve, my Son, what you must do,

Why are you wav’ring in Suspense?

Our first Designs we shou’d pursue,

At once surprize and bear him hence.

The wisest Counsels still we see

Depend on Opportunity.

And now this favourable Hour

Entirely puts him in our Pow’r.

Neop. Tho’ fast asleep he hears us not, in vain

We take his Bow, and leave him here behind;

The Crown is due to him, the Gods desire

That we shou’d take him with us, but to boast

A vain Attempt will bring us foul Disgrace.

ANTISTROPHE.

Chorus.

These Things are to the Gods alone,

To their all-searching Wisdom known;

But in your Answer tell in short,

And fix upon our last Resort;
For Pains th’ afflicted wakeful keep,
They only have a sleepless Sleep.
Whatever Counsel’s best to thee,
That Counsel is the best for me;
But see it be in secret done,
You know the Man I fix upon.
If your Opinion be the same
With mine, to prosecute the Scheme,
You’ll find what Difficulty lies
In all the Projects of the wise.

EPODOS.

We cannot have a fairer Wind,
Behold you see the Man is blind!
Helpless in Darkness there he lies;
Nocturnal Sleep has clos’d his Eyes.
No Motion, Hand, or Foot, or Breath,
He lies all silent there as Death;
But now he seems to look around,
And murmur out a deadly Sound.
Our Bus’ness is to seize him here;
Success is to be void of Fear.
Neop. Be silent then and resolute; you see
His Eyes are open’d, and his Head is rais’d.

Phil. O Light succeeding Sleep, Death’s Image! see,
Beyond my Hopes, the Stranger’s faithful Guard!
This I could never hope, my Son, to find,
That you with such Compassion cou’d behold
The dismal racking Torments which I bear,
And wait with kind Assistance, to relieve
A poor afflicted Soul; not so the good,
The great Atridæ, were they here, wou’d grant
Such friendly Aid; But thou art gen’rous, good,
And great; of Ancestors the same you’re sprung.
My nauseous Wounds, my tiresome Groans you bore
With unexampled Patience; now my Pains
Abate, they’re gone, and sunk in sweet Oblivion,
Do you yourself with helping Hand up raise me.
Now that my Torture’s vanish’d, let us haste
On Board; for Time requires our Speed.
Neop. What Joys I feel at this surprizing Sight!
To see you free from Pains and breathing still!
For all the Marks of ghastly Death I saw
In thy pale Face, by Life deserted quite.
Arise, my Friend, and these shall bear thee hence,
Well pleas’d to do’t if you and I command.
Phil. I thank thee for thy Offer; but, my Son,
Raise me thy self, lest the ungrateful Stench

Offend their Nostrils; they must bear it all
While I'm on Board, and giv'n to them in Charge.
Neop. Thy Will is mine—But help to raise thy self.
Phil. I shall; for well I'm us'd to this hard Task.
Neop. Ye Gods! what shall I do?——
Phil. ———What's this, my Son?
What means this sudden Change? and why these Sighs?
Neop. O my distracted Soul! what Doubts arise!
Phil. And do you doubt, my Son? O never own it.
Neop. My Suff'rings now are equal to his Pains. (aside.)
Phil. Are you offended at my foul Disease,
And now relent to take me in your Ship?
Is this the Hardship that weighs down your Spirits.
Neop. All is a Hardship to a gen'rous Soul,
When 'tis oblig'd to turn against its Nature;
To act against Compassion, which was stampt
Upon it's Essence when it first began.
Phil. But you do neither act nor speak a Thing
That's unbecoming of your noble Sire,
In doing good to me a virtuous Man.
Neop. But for the Character which I must bear,
The base, the treach'rous Character, my Friend!
That is my Grief, 'tis that which wounds me most.
Phil. Your Actions give me no great Cause to fear,

But your Expressions much alarm my Soul.

Neop. Great Jove, what shall I do! I’m doubly curss’d,

Both in concealing what I shou’d reveal,

And speaking what I rather shou’d keep secret.

Phil. If I mistake not I am now betray’d,

And your Intent’s to leave me here behind.

Neop. I shall not leave thee, but my only Grief

Is that I take thee hence, to thy great Sorrow.

Phil. What’s this you say, my Son? your Words explain.

Neop. I shall no longer hide my Thoughts; you must

For Troy prepare, and to the Grecian Fleet

We must from hence to the Atridæ sail.

Phil. Ah me! what’s this?——

Neop. ——Don’t grieve before you know.

Phil. Know what? inform me what you mean to do.

Neop. To free thee from this foul Disease, and then

To lay Troy waste by thy assisting Hand.

Phil. Are you for certain then resolv’d on this?

Neop. Necessity commands, you must obey;

Be deaf to Anger, and in Peace submit.

Phil. Undone! poor Wretch! betray’d! is’t thus you act,

My Friend? O give me back my faithful Bow.

Neop. That cannot be; for to the Pow’rs Supreme

Justice and Publick Good command our Faith.

Phil. All-seeing Sun, all Terror, all Deceit!
Detested Wretch, what hast thou done to me?
How am I now betray’d? dost thou not blush
To see me thus on bended Knees before thee?
Thou impious, cruel, base, destructive Man!
Of Life you robb’d me when you took my Bow.
O give it back, upon my Knees I beg;
Return my Life’s Support, by all your Gods,
Your Country Gods! don’t rob me of my Life.
O wretched me! will you not speak one Word,
But look averse, resolv’d to keep my Right?
Ye Shores, ye Promontories, and ye Rocks,
Ye Beasts, my dumb Companions in this Isle,
To you I now complain; none else will hear
My sad Complaints, to you I speak my Grief:
To you so well acquainted with my Woes.
See what the Son of great Achilles does!
He who has sworn to take me home, to Troy
Now bears me; and forgetful of his Vow
And plighted Hand, the sacred Bow he keeps,
Which once belong’d to the great Son of Jove.
He drags me to the hated Greeks away,
As if some mighty Conquest he had gain’d;
What is his Triumph! but a poor dead Carcass!

A Cloud of Smoak! an incorporeal Shade!
Had I the Strength I once possess’d, in vain
Wou’d he attempt (or ev’n as now I am)
To force me; had he not o’ercome by Fraud.
Now I’m betray’d, undone! what shall I do?
Return my Bow, and be thy self again.
No Answer; but dumb Silence; then I’m lost.
To thee again, my pervious Rock, I go,
Naked and void of any earthly Food;
Now must I die enclos’d alone in thee.
No Bird, or Mount-ascending Beast shall be
Slain by my Bow; but I, poor lonely I,
Who fed on them, shall be to them for Food;
They’ll hunt for me for whom I hunted once;
And Blood for Blood, and slain for slain I’ll be.
This Evil’s from an unexpected Hand!
O may you never die, before I know
Whether for this base Action you repent!
If not; I wish you an inglorious Death.
Chorus. What shall we do? ’Tis now full Time to sail,
To put in Execution our Commands.
Neop. Compassion moves me for this friendless Man;
And has long since engag’d my Heart to him.
Phil. O for the Gods let pity plead for me!

And do not brand thy self with such a Stain
Of black Disgrace, as to be thought perfidious.
Neop. What shall I do? I wish I never had
Left Scyros to be thus perplex'd with Woes.
Phil. Thou'rt not inclin'd to wicked Deeds thy self,
Thy Nature's gentler far; some horrid Mind
Suggested this to thee; let others whom
So base a Crime befits perform this Task.
Neop. What shall we do, my Friends——
Ul. ———Basest of Men!
You think not to return the Bow again.
Phil. O Heav'ns, methinks I hear Ulysses speak!
Ul. And you may see him too as well as hear him.
Phil. Alas for me! deceiv'd! betray'd! undone!
'Tis he contriv'd the Fraud—he got my Bow.
Ul. 'Twas I—I own the Fraud—and no one else.
Phil. O give me back my Bow again——
Ul. ———Not I,
But you shall march with it by Peace or Force.
Phil. Detested Man! shall these use Force to me?
Ul. They shall, except you willingly depart.
Phil. O Lemnian Land! and all-subduing Flames
Of Vulcan! can you bear that I shou'd hence
Be dragg'd by Force, in Spight of thy Protection?

Ul. ’Tis Jove that o’er this Isle presides; ’tis Jove;

’Tis Jove decrees what I must execute.

Phil. Impious Ulysses, what Pretence is this!

You introduce the Gods to vouch your Lies.

Ul. No. But my Truths;—Therefore be gone you must.

Phil. This I deny——

Ul. ——You shall, and must obey.

Phil. Alas my Father has begot a Slave!

To gen’rous Freedom I’m a perfect Stranger.

Ul. Not so. But equal to those mighty Princes,

With whom you’re destin’d to demolish Troy.

Phil. Who I! all Racks I rather wou’d endure;

I’d rather live for ever here alone.

Neop. What do you mean to do?——

Phil. ———I mean to fall

Headlong, and dash my Brains upon that Rock.

Ul. Seize him, and take him from the Precipice.

Phil. My Hands! what rude Affronts are these ye feel!

Robb’d of your faithful Bow, your best Defence!

You who have never fram’d one Thought of Good;

Or shewn one gen’rous Principle within;

How have you circumvented me! and gain’d

Upon my honest Heart, under Disguise

Of my Friend’s Son estrang’d, not fit to join

With thee, as he was fit to take my Part;
Artless to do but what he was enjoin’d—
’Tis evident he grieves at what is done;
At his own Rashness, and my Suff’rings more;
Thy wicked Soul, from dark Retirement, still
Contriving Evils, gain’d upon his Weakness,
And took Advantage of his tender Years;
His unexperienc’d Years; to work thy Plot:
And now, insulting Man, you bind me fast
To take me from these Shores, where once you left me,
Friendless, forsaken, banish’d, and alone;
Dead ’midst the living; may some horrid Fate
Attend thee for it; This I often pray’d.
No Joys to me the Gods propitious give;
You live in Pleasures; I am doom’d to Woes.
And what is worse become a Sport to thee
And the Atridæ, whom you come to serve.
It was by Force and Stratagem compell’d
You sail’d with them from Greece; I freely went
With sev’n good Ships commanded by my self;
From whence, as you relate, they cast me out;
As they relate it all the Blame is thine.
Whom come you now to take? why lead me hence?
On what Account? For I am nothing now.

Long since I’ve been translated to the Dead.
Thou who art hated by the Gods above,
Am I not lame, and loathsome, with my Wounds?
How can you pray to them? or burn your Incense?
Or with Libations those high Pow’rs invoke;
While I am in the Ship, in which you sail?
’Twas this Pretence you made to leave me here.
O may you perish for these Injuries!
(I once again with Zeal repeat my Curse)
For what you’ve done to me; if Heav’n regards
The just, and makes Reprizals for the wrongs
They bear; and I am sure it does—or else
You had not hither come—some Sting divine
Must goad you with Remorse, to think of me;
O’erwhelm’d with all the Sorrows Man can bear.
O my dear native Land! and all ye Gods!
Who see what’s done within this World below,
Avenge my present Suff’rings on them all,
If ye can pity such a Wretch as me;
In their Destruction I should find a Cure.
Chorus. Wretched the Man, and grievous is his Speech!
He has a Soul that will not stoop to Evils.
Ul. I cou’d say many things in answer to
This Speech of his, cou’d Arguments prevail;

But now I use but one; for such ’tis meet;
This is my Method with such Men as he;
When there’s a Trial of the Just and Good,
There’s none alive more piously inclin’d—
My Reasons ever did subdue; but thee
I can’t convince; for which I shall submit—
Detain him not—but let him stay behind—
We shall not need thee, while we have thy Bow;
Teucer can manage it as well as you;
And I myself can bend the Bow as well,
At least as you; and take as good an Aim—
Where is the Use of thee?—Then fare thee well.
Here traverse Lemnos; we shall sail away,
And gain that Honour which you might obtain.
Phil. What shall I do? Unhappy Wretch, Shall you
Shine with those Arms among the hated Greeks?
Ul. In vain you contradict, for now I go.
Phil. Son of Achilles, won’t you speak one Word
E’er you depart, but leave me thus forlorn.
Ul. Begone without Regard, lest you relent;
Your gen’rous Heart must not defeat our Fortune.
Phil. Will ye, my Friends, fly off, and leave me thus?
And have no pity for the Wrongs I feel?
Chorus. This is our Captain; He determines all;

What he prescribes must be a Law to us.

Neop. I know Ulysses will condemn me for

The Tenderness I shew; However stay,

If it seems good to Philoctetes; stay

Until the Sailors have the Ship prepar’d,

And we our Vows perform unto the Gods.

Perhaps his Mind may change, and then we go,

And see that you be ready at our Call.

ANTISTROPHICA.

STROPHE I.

Phil.

My lonely Cave, my last Retreat,

Expos’d alike to Cold and Heat;

I never shou’d thy Limits leave,

But make thee both my House and Grave.

Alas! by me thy craggy Stones

Are fill’d with Sobs, and Sighs, and Groans!

What will become of me this Day!

No Hopes to catch the flying Prey!

I wish that Vultures here wou’d fly,

And bear me swiftly to the Sky,

And tear me piece-meal in the Air;

This wretched Life I cannot bear.

STROPHE II.

The Fault’s thy own,

And thine alone

’Tis to your self you owe this Fate:

’Twas in your Breast

To chuse the best,

And yet you chose this dismal State.

Phil. O wretched, wretched me! what Woes I find!

Of human Conversation quite debarr’d!

For ever—and for ever—to this Cave

Confin’d—’till Death alone must give Release.

No more I hope for Food; Life’s Fewel’s gone—

The Birds in Safety hover o’er my Head—

My Arrows lost! which were more swift than they—

A dark and subtle Stratagem’s my Ruin—

O cou’d I see its Author feel my Pains

As long as I! what Pleasure wou’d it give!

Chorus.

Not I, but Heav’n, I’d have thee know,

Inflicts on thee this dreadful Blow;

Thy Imprecations then refrain,

And blame not others for thy Pain;

For I’m resolv’d, against thy Will,

To shew my Friendship for thee still.

Phil. What shall I do? Upon the sandy Shore

He bears the sure Provider of my Food—
Which no Hand ever forc’d before; and there
Derides my Woes, and jests upon my Torments.
O my dear Bow, wrench’d from these friendly Hands,
Cou’d you but see or feel the Wrongs I bear!
That I, who did the Son of Jove succeed,
In Right of thee, must never more enjoy thee—
But by a cursed Usurpation seiz’d,
By one who had no Right to thy Succession.
Coud’st thou but see this vile deceitful Man
Of base Extraction, my insulting Foe;
What num’rous Evils he contriv’d for me,
How wou’d it grieve thee to be born by him!
Chorus.
Whate’er this Person has express’d,
You shou’d interpret it the best,
Nor wrest his Meaning to invidious Sense;
The publick Orders he obey’d
Justly in ev’ry thing he said,
And well contriv’d it for his Friends Defence.
Phil. Ye wanton Fowl, that skim the liquid Air;
Ye spotted Beasts that graze the sloaping Hills;
Ye need not now be shy, to come within
The Reach of this my solitary Cave;

My Bow is ravish’d from me, my keen Shafts
Are gone, and I am now compleatly wretched.
What need ye fly from this unguarded Place!
Now is your Time to come and make Reprizals;
Eat me alive, and take your Flesh again;
Soon I shall quit my Life for want of Food.
Who can on empty Air support himself,
Devoid of those Supplies, those Fruits which grow
Our Nourishment from the Life-giving Earth?
Chorus.
By all the Gods, if Strangers are
Entitled to thy friendly Care,
Let him a good Reception find,
I thee conjure, with willing Mind.
You may your present Grievance shun;
For none but Fools to ruin run.
Phil. Again, again my Anguish is renew’d;
Thou best of Men why am I ruin’d thus?
What’s this you do? why do you back re-call
My sleeping Mem’ry to my former Pains?
Chorus. Why say you so?———
Phil. ——Because you now propose
With cruel Force to take me hence to Troy.
Chorus. It best seems so to me——

Phil. ———Leave me behind.

Chorus. This I’m content to do; therefore I shall

Obey your Will—and to the Ship we go.

Phil. Don’t for the Love of Jove, to whom we pray.

Chorus. Be mod’rate then——

Phil. ——O for the Gods don’t leave me.

Chorus. What makes you roar with so much Vehemence?

Phil. O Fortune, Fortune, I’m undone for ever!

My painful, burning Foot, how shall I now

Hereafter thy unhappy Wound sustain!

Return, my Friends, ah! turn again to me.

Chorus. What can we do but what you have desir’d?

Phil. Why shou’d my loud Complaints provoke your Anger?

I’m not my self; Distraction makes me wild.

Chorus. Then be advis’d, and come along with us.

Phil. No—never—never—firmly I’m resolv’d—

Tho’ threat’ning Jove with his red flaming Hand

Shou’d come, and point his Thunder at my Breast;

Farewel to Troy, and all the Army round it,

Who cast me off for these distracting Pains.

One thing I must entreat you, grant me one.

Chorus. What’s that?———

Phil. ——A Sword, or Ax, or any Weapon.

Chorus. What Murder wou’d you fain commit?—

Phil. ————My Head—

My Limbs—with my own Hands, I'd chop them off;

For my Disease does loudly call for Death.

Chorus. Why so?—

Phil. Because I want to go and seek my Father.

Chorus. Speak in what Country—

Phil. ————With the Shades below;

For he no longer lives upon the Earth.

O my dear Father's Country, how I long

To see you once again! I who forsook

Your sacred Altars to attend the Greeks,

My greatest Foes; for which I'm thus rewarded.

Chorus. Long since I had departed to my Ship,

But that I see Ulysses here advance,

And Neoptolemus attends him hither.

Ul. Tell me the Reason why you hasten back?

Neop. To mend the Wrongs I did some time ago.

Ul. You shock me much. What were the Wrongs you did?

Neop. 'Twas in obeying you and all the Army.

Ul. What did you act repugnant to your Honour?

Neop. By Fraud I did ensnare the Innocent.

Ul. As how? Alas, what new Device is this?

Neop. No new Device. But as to Pæan's Son—

Ul. What will you do? I dread what he intends.

Neop. I will return his Bow again to him.

Ul. O Heav'ns! what do you mean? You will not sure.

Neop. I got them basely, 'gainst all Laws of Justice.

Ul. Is't to perplex me that you say this thing?

Speak, by th' Immortal Gods I must conjure thee.

Neop. Is it perplexing to declare the Truth?

Ul. What say'st thou? or what Speech is this that 'scapes

Thy Lips? thou Son of great Achilles, tell.

Neop. Once can't suffice; but twice, or thrice I must

Repeat my Words. You're slow of Apprehension.

Ul. I wish I had not heard thee once begin.

Neop. Then be content; you've heard my Resolution.

Ul. There is a certain Person will prevent thee.

Neop. What say you? who will dare presume to do it?

Ul. Why all the Greeks; and I amongst the rest.

Neop. Tho' you be wise you talk like one that's mad.

Ul. But you do neither think or act with Wisdom.

Neop. Justice surpasses Wisdom—I am just.

Ul. How are you just, when what's acquir'd by me,

You now return without my Leave?—

Neop. ————————But I,

'Tis plain, was guilty of a horrid Crime.

Ul. Do you not dread the Grecian Army, Friend?

Neop. When Justice sides with me I dread it not;

Nor shall I ever by thy Pow’r be sway’d.

Ul. I shall not with the Trojans fight, but thee.

Neop. Happen what will———

Ul. ———You see my Right Hand fixt

Upon the Handle of my Sword——

Neop. ————————I do;

And am no less prepar’d to fight than you.

Ul. Well, Sir—I’ll let the Army know your Mind,

And they will find a way to punish you.

Neop. You’re wise indeed, if always thus you act;

You never will have any Cause to grieve—

Thou Son of Pæan, Philoctetes, come

And leave thy lonesome craggy Habitation.

Phil. What Clamour’s this I hear disturbs my Cave?

Why do ye call me out? For what, my Friends?

Alas! some Evil sure. What brought you here?

Is it to add Misfortunes to Misfortunes?

Neop. Confide in me, and listen to my Words.

Phil. So you dissembled once before when you

Prov’d false, and robb’d me of my faithful Bow.

Neop. I don’t dissemble now; but tell me whether

You here intend to stay, or sail with us.

Phil. Hold—not one Word—you speak them all in vain.

Neop. You’re so resolv’d———

Phil. ——More fixt than Words can tell.

Neop. All my Design was to perswade you hence;

But since I find that my Proposal's vain,

And much afflicts your Mind, I shall desist.

Phil. All that you say is vain, and you shall never

Gain the Affection of my Heart; for you

Basely betray'd me of my Life. And now,

Thou worst of Men, worst Son of the best Father,

You come with your Advice, whom most I hate.

May the Atridæ perish, and may you

And your Companion, subtle, false Ulysses.

Neop. Curse us no more, but here receive your Bow.

Phil. How say you! sure I'm not deceiv'd again.

Neop. No. By the Pow'r of sacred Jove you're not.

Phil. How grateful is thy Speech, if this be true!

Neop. It shall be true in Fact; here stretch thy Hand,

And be Possessor of thy Arms again.

Ul. This I forbid—I call the Gods to witness.

In the Atridæ's Name, and all the Army.

Phil. Whose Voice is this, my Son? is't not Ulysses?

Ul. 'Tis I for certain, and I'll take thee hence.

Whether Achilles' Son consents or no.

Phil. You shall not triumph long, if once I take

This Arrow, and direct it at thy Breast.

Neop. O shoot him not—I beg thee lay it down.

Phil. Restrain me not—My dearest Son let go.

Neop. I will not———

Phil. —You have hindred me from killing

An Enemy———

Neop. —'Tis neither good for you nor me.

Phil. Thus much I'd have thee know, the Grecian Chiefs

Are Cowards all; but valiant in their Tongues.

Neop. 'Tis true—But now you've got your Bow, your Anger

Ceases of Course, and all Complaints of me.

Phil. I grant they do; and O my Son! you've shewn

The noble Race from whence you sprung, not from

The subtle Sisyphus; but from Achilles,

Famous among the Living, and the Dead.

Neop. Thy Praises of my Father, and my self,

Transport me much; but hear what I advise.

Whatever Lot by Heav'n's assign'd to us

We must with humble Patience bear, 'tis fixt,

And once decreed must be unalterable.

Those who submit to voluntary Woes

Deserve not our Forgiveness, or Compassion.

You are grown fierce with Anger, and won't hear

The Counsel of a Friend; for tho' he comes

With true Benevolence to set thee right;

You spurn his Admonitions, and you deem
Him as your greatest Foe. But still I'll speak;
And call great Jove to witness what I say.
Then hear the Sequel—print it in thy Mind—
And be convinc'd this Wound, which frets thee so,
Was Heav'n's Decree; because you did approach
The Guard of Chrysa, that same hidden Viper,
Which watches the uncover'd Temple there.
And know, thou never shalt enjoy Release
From grievous Pain, while that all-seeing Sun
Rises in th' Eastern Clime, and sets again,
Except you go a Voluntier to Troy;
Where we shall have the Sons of Æsculapius
To work thy Cure, and Troy shall be subdu'd
By these thy Arrows, and by my Assistance.
How I'm inform'd of this be pleas'd to hear—
We have a Trojan Prophet taken Pris'ner,
One Helenus, who says all this must be
Fulfill'd, and he's a Prophet of undoubted Credit;
Nay more, he says this very Summer will
The Fate of Troy determine; if 'tis false
He does declare his Life shall be the Forfeit.
Now you're assur'd of this, consent and come;
It is a noble Prize, that you alone

Of all the Greeks shou'd be esteem'd the bravest;
And next to have Release from all thy Pains;
To gain a Conquest over Troy, that shall
Bring you the greatest Glory Man can gain.
Phil. Detested Life! why am I here preserv'd!
Why not transmitted to the Shades below!
What shall I do? How shall I now suspect
His Truth, who's so benevolent to me?
But grant I yield; How then shall I behold
The Light of Heav'n? To whom shall I appeal?
Ye shining Orbs above, that view all things,
How will ye bear to see me go, and join
The Sons of Atreus, who were once my Ruin?
Or join with all-destroying false Ulysses?
'Tis not the past that frets my anxious Soul,
But the sad Prospects of my Grief's to come;
For they whose Minds are pregnant still with Evils,
Pour forth a num'rous Brood, they never fail.
I wonder more at you for this, who ought
Never to think of Troy, when such Disgrace
Befel you there, robb'd of your Father's Armour,
Which was adjudg'd to curss'd Laertes' Son,
And Ajax turn'd aside; methinks you shou'd
Use all your Pow'r to hinder me from going;

Sure after such Affronts you cannot go
To join in their Designs; and force me hence;
But sacred keep your Oath, and steer us home;
And there at Scyros pass your Life in Peace;
Let all those Wretches die as they deserve.
Thus will you doubly please your aged Sire,
And me, and equal Thanks from both receive;
Thus you'll escape a foul Surmise, nor be
Suppos'd a Fav'rer of such wicked Men.
Neop. All that you say is well. But still I wou'd
Entreat you to obey the Gods and me;
Sail with your Friend, and leave this hated Shore.
Phil. What! to the Land of Troy! to Atreus' Sons!
And with this bleeding Foot, which oft reminds me
What barb'rous Treatment I from them receiv'd.
Neop. It is my best Advice; for there you'll find
A full Discharge of all the Pains you feel.
Phil. What's this you say? what's the Advice you give?
Neop. 'Tis what will bring Advantage to us both.
Phil. Don't you disgrace the Gods in saying this?
Neop. No. But I rather their Commands fulfil.
Phil. For the Atridæ do you speak, or me?
Neop. I am your Friend—and I shall say no more.
Phil. Where is your Friendship, when you thus betray

And give me up unto my Enemies?

Neop. My Friend, be humbler in Adversity.

Phil. I know you well, you now contrive my Ruin.

Neop. Not I—But this I'll say—You're much mistaken.

Phil. I don't mistake, that I was here expos'd

By the Atridæ, and by all the Greeks.

Neop. Your Foes are now your Friends, and come to save you.

Phil. I never will consent to go to Troy.

Neop. What shall I do! since you reject my Counsel,

I can with Ease desist; and say no more;

But leave you to your Choice to live in Pain.

Phil. Then give me leave to do what suits me best,

And as you pledg'd your Right-hand's Faith to do it,

Conduct me home, my Son, without delay;

And think no more of Troy;—I've griev'd enough.

Neop. Since 'tis your Will we go—

Phil. ———O gen'rous Word!

Neop. Then let us move—

Phil. ——As well as Pains allow.

Neop. How shall I shun the Fury of the Greeks?

Phil. Let that be not thy Care—

Neop. ———But what if they

Shou'd come and work my Country's Overthrow!

Phil. Then I am there—

Neop. ——But how can you assist.

Phil. I have the Arrows here of Hercules.

Neop. What do you say?——

Phil. —I'll drive them from thy Country.

Neop. If this you'll do—march on—adore the Earth.

SCENE V.

Enter the Ghost of Hercules.

Her. O Son of Pæan, move not hence, before
You hear my Words, and you yourself shall own
You do not only hear, but see me too;
'Tis for your sake I leave my Heav'nly Mansion,
Here to impart Jove's Will; 'tis on his Errand
I come, to stop the Journey you intend;
Thy Bus'ness is my Counsel to obey.
Then first I shall of my own Fate inform thee;
How many Labours, Toils, and Pains, I pass'd,
Immortal Glory to obtain; which now
You may behold in me; 'tis destin'd too
That you thro' Danger's Path arrive at Fame.
With this Prince, going to the Town of Troy,
The first Advantage you shall find, will be
A Freedom from Disease; and next, the Greeks
Shall well distinguish you the first in Valour,

Paris to slay, the Author of their Woes,
With these my fatal never-failing Arrows.
And Troy shall sink by them; the richest Spoils
Be thine, by full Consent of all the Greeks;
These to thy Native Oeta thou shalt send
Unto thy Father Pæan. All the Spoils,
Which from the Grecian Army you shall take,
Bear them unto my Pile, and there erect
A Monument to this my faithful Bow.
Son of Achilles, this Advice be thine—
You must not think to conquer Troy without
His Help; or Philoctetes without your's;
But, like two Lyon's Whelps, each other's Aid
Engage; one Moment don't ye part asunder.
To cure thy Wounds, I'll Æsculapius bring
To Troy, which must a second time submit
To these my Arrows; But remember this—
When you the Conquest gain, return your Thanks
To Heav'n for your Success; for Jove regards
Religious Rites above all human Acts.
Religion, which attends departing Souls,
Whether we live or die, is still immortal.
Phil. O Voice desirable to me, tho' long
Unheard! I shall not disobedient be.

Neop. To the same Counsel I with Joy subscribe.

Her. Haste then and hoist your Sails; the Winds are fair.

Phil. Off then I go; but let me thus express

My last farewel, it is a Debt I owe.

My little Cave, wherein I dwelt so long;

Ye wat'ry Nymphs, which tread the verdant Meads;

Ye stormy Sounds that break upon the Shore,

Which often did convey your frothy Dews

Upon my Head, as in my Cave I lay,

And loudly of the Tempest's Rage complain'd,

'Till the Hermean Promontory rung.

Ye Springs, from whose delicious Streams I drank,

I leave ye all; beyond my Hopes I leave you;

To thee, dear Lemnos, I must bid farewel,

Which in the Ocean's swelling Bosom liest;

Grant us a lucky Voyage hence; and land

Our Ship in Safety where the Fates decree;

And where our Friends direct; where Heav'ns great King,

Who conquers all, commands that we shou'd go.

Chorus.

Then let us leave the Lemnian Shore,

And all together sail;

The Nymphs who guide the Seas implore

To send a prosp'rous Gale.

FINIS.

Transcriber’s Notes

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In some cases, two short lines of dialogue were printed on the same line in the printed play; each of these has been moved to its own line. The following changes and corrections have been made:

Dedication: Supplied missing period after phrase “some Traces of the Author’s Genius.” p. 6: Capitalized and formatted heading “Strophe” to match other occurrences. p. 13: Added comma after “Sigeum” in note 11. p. 21: Supplied missing period after speaker “Neop.” before phrase “Do they intend / By Force of Arms.” p. 40: Replaced “Friendip” with “Friendship” in phrase “To shew my Friendship for thee still.” p. 43: Supplied missing period after speaker “Neop.” before phrase “Tho’ you be wise you talk like one that’s mad.” p. 47: Replaced “Souls” with “Soul” in phrase “’Tis not the past that frets my anxious Soul.”

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE PHILOCTETES OF SOPHOCLES ***

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