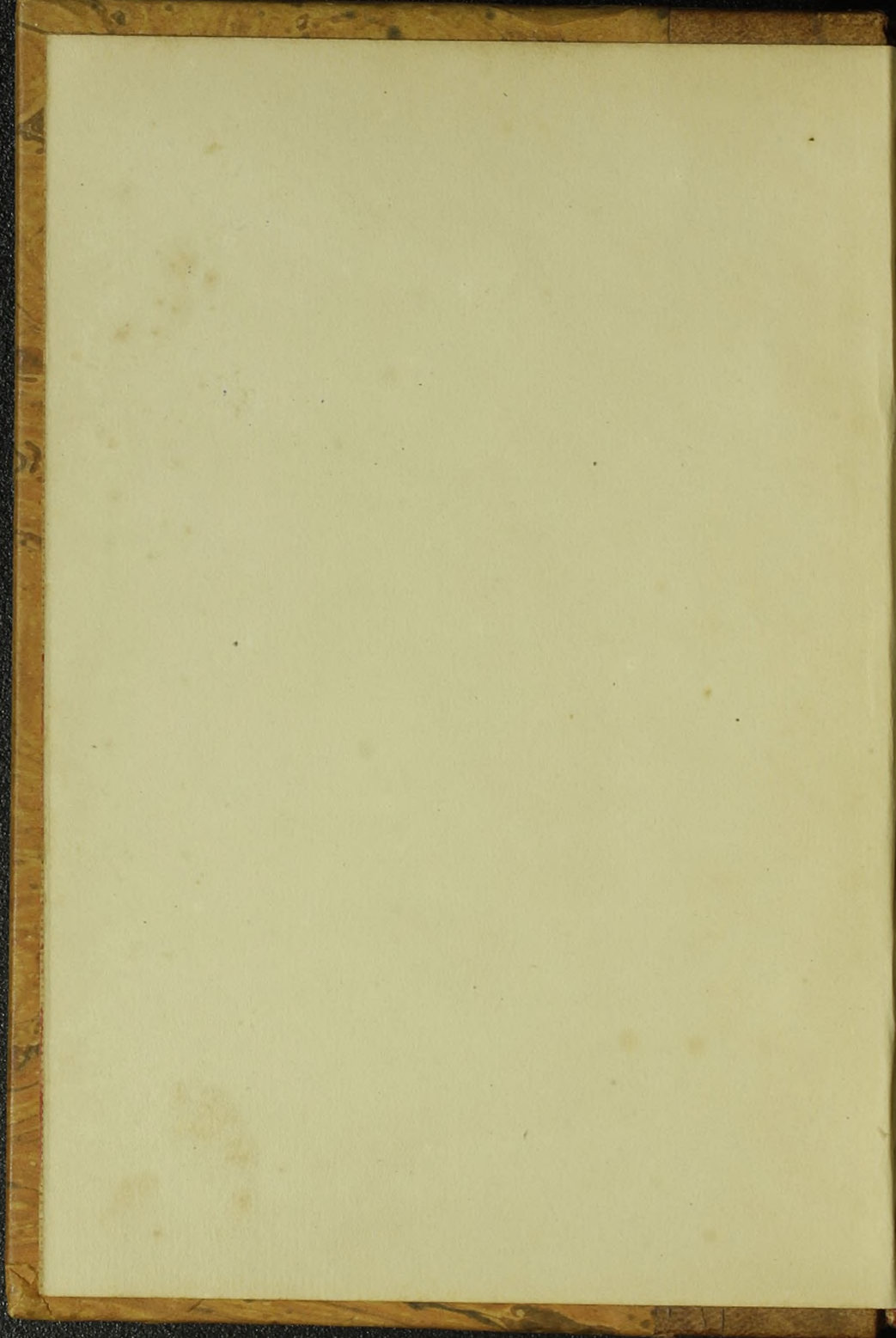
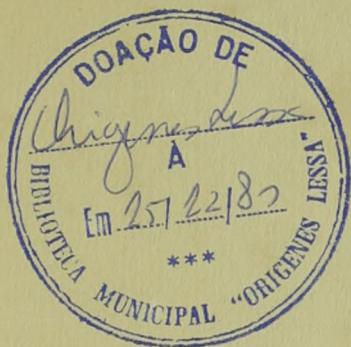
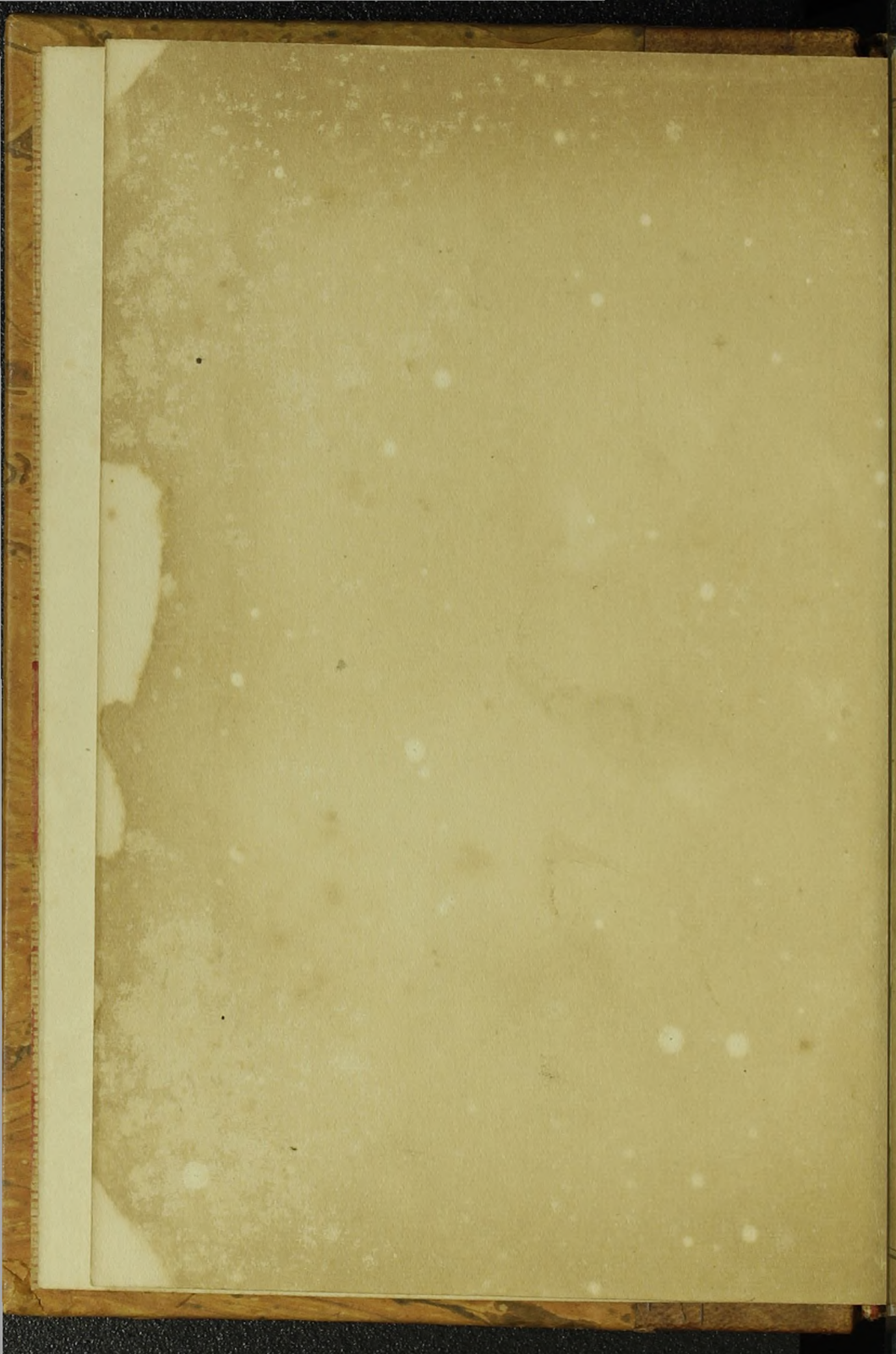


Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely a historical document or manuscript, covering the entire page. The text is arranged in approximately 25 horizontal lines, with characters written in a dark ink on aged, yellowish paper. The script is dense and consistent throughout the page.







EURIPIDES

IN
ENGLISH VERSE

BY
ARTHUR S. WAY, M.A.

*Author of "The Iliad of Homer done into English Verse,"
and "The Odyssey of Homer done into English Verse."*

MEDEA

BIBLIOTECA MUNICIPAL

"ORIGENES LESSA"

Tombo N.º 32.604

MUSEU LITERÁRIO

PRICE EIGHTEENPENCE.

London :

MACMILLAN & Co., 29, BEDFORD ST., STRAND

1894

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE ILIAD OF HOMER DONE INTO ENGLISH VERSE.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"Close, spirited, swift in movement, and simple. . . . The merits are such as to place Mr. Way's performance in the front rank of Homeric translations. . . . Mr. Way's version is never bald, frigid, or pompous.

In the point of metrical form it has advanced on all its predecessors; its metre comes very near, in length, volume, and movement, to that of the genuine English equivalent for the Greek Hexameter."—*Saturday Review*.

"He is a trustworthy scholar; he has fire and speed enough and to spare. He holds our attention; we read him for his own sake. . . . A work which we heartily admire."—*Athenæum*.

"Mr. Way has accomplished a remarkable feat. A line-for-line translation rendered with absolute conscientiousness, with scholarlike accuracy, and with unflagging vigour, is a success of which the author may well be proud."—*Oxford Magazine*.

"Really a great success. . . . There is a sonorous roll and a variety of pause, a flexibility, a richness, and a dignity about it that approach nearer to the splendid music of the Greek than anything else that has been produced in the same line. The diction, too, of the translation is Homeric, while Pope has smoothed and polished away all character out of his original, and its fidelity is really remarkable."—*Pan-Mall Gazette*.

"We feel confident that this spirited and powerful translation will grow in popularity and favour. Turn wherever we may, we read Mr. Way's verses with a different kind of pleasure from that which is derived from the ordinary run of translators."—*Westminster Review*.

"So accurate and forcible is this brilliant version of Homer's poem, that it will not only recommend itself to cultured readers, but it should also tend to popularise the study of the grand Greek poet's entire works."—*Morning Post*.

"A faithful line-for-line rendering of Homer. . . . A swing and energy which leave most translators far behind. A very high level is maintained from first to last in the Iliad, as if the grandeur of the theme, the sense of noble action, had constrained him."—*British Quarterly Review*.

"Where the poetry of simple action reaches sublimity, this is Mr. Way."—*Academy*.

"The former translations which Mr. Arthur S. Way issued some time since met with overwhelming cordiality, and this, his latest contribution to literature, is by far the best. So much feeling and earnest passion is thrown into the work that his skill deserves the thanks of every true student."—*Public Opinion*.

"He swings along as if he enjoys it, and carries the reader by the force of his swift movement."—*Atlantic Monthly*.

"The general admiration with which Mr. Arthur S. Way's '*Odyssey of Homer done into English Verse*' was received will certainly be revived by the present work. If the work be calculated to give students of Homer the greatest pleasure, it also deserves, by its original and brilliant qualities, to be esteemed as a great boon by all lovers of fine poetry."—*Harper's Monthly Magazine*.

"Perhaps the nearest equivalent we can hope for to the stirring heroic music of Homer."—*Literary World*.

Vicente Themudo.
S. Luján y Warrenton -

29-5-911

BIBLIOTHECA

DE

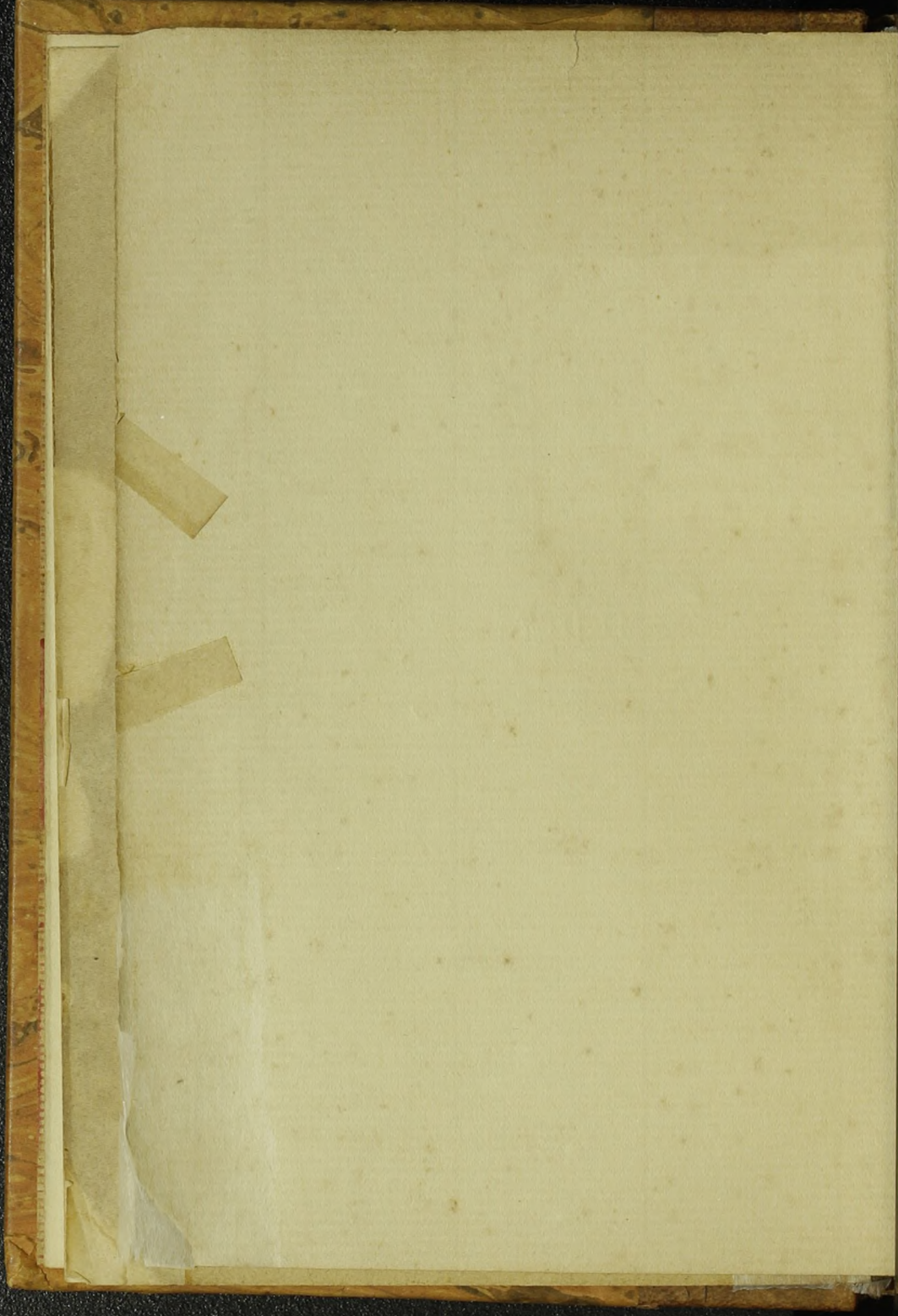
VICENTE THEMUDO

N. 494

VOL. 1

DATA 29-5-911

MEDEA.



THE ARGUMENT.

WHEN the Heroes, who sailed in the ship *Argo* to bring home the Golden Fleece, came to the land of *Kolchis*, they found that to win that treasure was a deed passing the might of mortal man, so terribly was it guarded by monsters magical, even fire-breathing bulls and an un-sleeping dragon. But *Aphroditè* caused *Medea* the sorceress, daughter of *Aiètes* the king of the land, to love *Jason* their captain, so that by her magic he overcame the bulls and the dragon. Then *Jason* took the Fleece, and *Medea* withal, for that he had pledged him to wed her in the land of *Greece*. But as they fled, *Absyrtus* her brother pursued them with a host of war, yet by *Medea's* devising was he slain. So they came to the land of *Iolkos*, and to *Pelias*, who held the kingdom which was *Jason's* of right. But *Medea* by her magic wrought upon *Pelias's* daughters so that they slew their father. Yet by reason of men's horror of the deed might not *Jason* and *Medea* abide in the land, and they came to *Corinth*. But there all men rejoiced for the coming of a hero so mighty in war and a lady renowned for wisdom unearthly, for that *Medea* was grandchild of the Sun-

god. But after ten years, Kreon the king of the land spake to Jason, saying, "Lo, I will give thee my daughter to wife, and thou shalt reign after me, if thou wilt put away thy wife Medea; but her and her two sons will I banish from the land." So Jason consented. And of this befell things strange and awful, which are told herein.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

NURSE OF MEDEA'S CHILDREN.

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN*

MEDEA.

CHORUS OF CORINTHIAN LADIES.

KREON, *King of Corinth.*

JASON.

AIGEUS, *King of Athens.*

MESSENGER.

CHILDREN OF MEDEA.

The Scene is in front of Jason's House at Corinth.

* *Pædagogus*.—A trusted servant, responsible for keeping the boys out of harm's way: he was present at their sports, accompanied them to and from school, and never let them be out of his sight. A similar institution is familiar to Englishmen resident in India.

MEDEA.

Enter Nurse of Medea's Children.

NURSE.

WOULD God that Argo's hull had never flown
Through those blue Clashing Rocks to Kolchis-land,
Nor that in Pelion's glens had fallen ever
The axe-hewn pine, nor filled with oars the hands
Of hero-princes, who at Pelias' hest 5
Requested the Golden Fleece ! My mistress then,
Medea, to Iolkos' towers had sailed not
With love for Jason thrilled through all her soul,
Nor had on Pelias' daughters wrought to slay
Their sire, nor now in this Corinthian land 10
Dwelt with her lord and children, gladdening
By this her exile them whose land received her,
Yea, and in all things serving Jason's weal,
Which is the chief salvation of the home,
When wife stands not at variance with her lord. 15
Now all is hatred : love is sickness-stricken.
For Jason, traitor to his babes and her,
My mistress, weddeth with a child of kings,
Daughter of Kreon ruler of the land.
And, slighted thus, Medea, hapless wife, 20
Cries on the oaths, invokes that mightiest pledge

Of the right hand, and calls the Gods to witness
 From Jason what requital she receives.
 Foodless she lies, her frame to griefs resigned,
 Wasting in tears all those long weary hours 25
 Since first she knew her outraged by her lord,
 Never uplifting eye, nor turning ever
 From earth her face ; but like a rock or sea-wave
 So hearkens she to friends that counsel her ;
 Saving at whiles, when, turning her white neck, 30
 All to herself she wails her sire beloved,
 Her land, her home, forsaking which she came
 Hither with him who holds her now dishonoured.
 Now knows she, hapless, by affliction's teaching,
 How good is fatherland unforfeited. 35
 She loathes her babes, joys not beholding them.
 I fear her, lest some mischief she devise.
 Grim is her spirit, one that will not brook
 Mishandling : yea, I know her, and I dread
 Lest through her heart she thrust the whetted knife, 40
 Through the halis stealing silent to her bed,
 Or slay the king and him that weds his child,
 And get herself therefrom some worse misfortune :
 For dangerous is she : who begins a feud
 With her, not soon shall sing the triumph-song. 45
 But lo, her boys, their racing-sport put by,
 Draw near, unwitting of their mother's ills,
 For the young heart loves not to brood in grief.

Enter Children's Guardian, with boys.

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN.

O ancient chattel of my mistress' home,
 Why at the gates thus lonely standest thou, 50
 Thyself unto thyself discoursing ills ?

How wills Medea to be left of thee ?

NURSE.

O grey attendant of the sons of Jason,
The hearts of faithful servants still are touched
By ill-betiding fortunes of their lords. 55
For I have come to such a pass of grief,
That yearning took me hitherward to come
And tell to earth and heaven my lady's fortunes.

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN.

Ceaseth not yet the hapless one from moan ?

NURSE.

Cease!—her pain scarce begun, the midst far off! 60

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN.

Ah fool!—if one may say it of his lords—
Little she knoweth of the latest blow.

NURSE.

What is it, ancient? Grudge not thou to tell me.

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN.

Nought: I repent me of the word that 'scaped me.

NURSE.

Nay, by thy beard, from fellow-thrall hide not— 65
Silence, if need be, will I keep thereof.

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN.

I heard one saying—feigning not to hear,
As I drew near the marble thrones,¹ where sit
The ancients round Peirênê's hallowed fount,—

¹ So Mahaffy, adopted by Paley.

That Kreon, this land's lord, will shortly drive 70
 These boys from soil Corinthian with their mother?
 Howbeit, if the tale I heard be true
 I know not: fain were I it were not so.

NURSE.

Will Jason brook his children suffering this,
 What though he be estrangèd from their mother? 75

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN.

The old ties in the race lag far behind
 The new:—no friend is *he* unto this house.

NURSE.

We are undone then, if we add fresh ill
 To old, ere lightened be our ship of this.

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN.

But thou—for 'tis not season that thy lady 80
 Should know—keep silence, and speak not the tale.

NURSE.

Hear, babes, what father this is unto you!
 I curse him—not: he is my master still:
 But to his friends he stands convict of baseness.

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN.

What man is not?—Hast learnt this only now, 85
 That each man loves self better than his neighbour,
 For just cause some, and some for greed of gain?
 So, for a bride's sake, these their father loves not.

NURSE.

Pass in, dear children, for it shall be well.
 But thou, keep these apart to the uttermost : 90
 Bring them not nigh their mother angry-souled.
 For late I saw her glare, as glares a bull
 On these, as 'twere for mischief ; nor her wrath,
 I know, shall cease, until its lightning strike.
 To foes may she work ill, and not to friends ! 95

MEDEA (*behind the scenes*).

O hapless I!—O miseries heaped on mine head !
 Ah me ! ah me ! would God I were dead !

NURSE.

Lo, darlings, the thing that I told you !
 Lo the heart of your mother astir !
 And astir is her anger : withhold you 100
 From her sight, come not nigh unto her.
 Haste, get you within : O beware ye
 Of the thoughts as a wild-beast brood,
 Of the nature too ruthless to spare ye
 In its desperate mood.

Pass ye within now, departing
 With all speed. It is plain to discern
 How a cloud of lamenting, upstarting
 From its viewless beginnings, shall burn
 In lightnings of fury yet fiercer.
 What deeds shall be dared of that soul,
 So haughty, when wrong's goads pierce her,
 So hard to control ? 110

[*Exeunt Children with Guardian.*

MEDEA (*behind the scenes*).

Woe! I have suffered, have suffered, foul wrongs that
 may waken, may waken,
 Mighty lamentings full well! O ye children accursed
 from the womb,
 Hence to destruction, ye brood of a loathed one for-
 saken, forsaken!
 Hence with your father, and perish our home in the
 blackness of doom!

NURSE.

Ah me, in the father's offences
 What part have the babes, that thine hate
 Should blast them?—forlorn innocences,
 How sorely I fear for your fate!
 Ah princes—how fearful their moods are!—
 Long ruling, unschooled to obey,— 120
 Unforgiving, unsleeping their feuds are.
 Better life's level way.

Be it mine, if in greatness I may not,
 In quiet and peace to grow old.
 Sweeter name than "The Mean" shall ye say not;
 But to taste it is sweetness untold.
 But to men never weal above measure
 Availed: on its perilous height
 The Gods in their hour of displeasure
 The heavier smite. 130

Enter Chorus of Corinthian Ladies.

CHORUS.

I have hearkened the voice of the daughter of Kolchis,
 the sound of the crying

Of the misery-stricken ; nor yet is she stilled. Now
 the tale of her tell,
 Grey woman ; for moaned through the porch from her
 chamber the wail of her sighing ;
 And I cannot, I cannot be glad while the home in
 affliction is lying,
 The house I have loved so well.

NURSE.

Home ?—home there is none : it hath vanished away :
 For my lord to a bride of the princes is thrall ; 140
 And my lady is pining the livelong day
 In her bower, and for nought that her friends' lips say
 On her heart may the dews of comfort fall.

MEDEA (*behind the scenes*).

Would God that the flame of the lightning from heaven
 descending, descending,
 Might burn through mine head!—for in living wherein
 any more is my gain ?
 Alas and alas ! Would God I might bring to an ending,
 an ending,
 The life that I loathe, and behind me might cast all
 its burden of pain !

CHORUS.

(Str.)

O Zeus, Earth, Light, did ye hear her,
 How wailleth the woe-laden breath
 Of the bride in unhappiest plight ?
 What yearning for vanished delight, 150
 O passion-distraught, should have might
 To cause thee to wish death nearer—
 The ending of all things, death ?

Make thou not for this supplication !
 If thine husband hath turned and adored
 New love, that estranged he is,
 O harrow thy soul not for this.
 It is Zeus that shall right thee, I wis.
 Ah, pine not in over-vexation
 Of spirit, bewailing thy lord !

MEDEA (*behind the scenes*).

O Lady of Justice, O Artemis' Majesty, see it, O see
 it— 160
 Look on the wrongs that I suffer, by oaths ever-
 lasting who tied
 The soul of mine husband, that ne'er from the curse he
 might free it, nor free it
 From your vengeance!—O may I behold him at
 last, even him and his bride,
 Them, and these halls therewithal, all shattered in
 ruin, in ruin!—
 Wretches, who dare unprovoked to do to Medea
 despite!
 O father, O city, whom erst I forsook, for undoing, un-
 doing,
 And for shame, when the blood of my brother I spilt
 on the path of my flight !

NURSE.

Do ye hear what she saith, and uplifteth her cry
 Unto Themis and Zeus, to the Suppliant's King,
 Oath-steward of men that be born but to die? 170
 O my lady will lay not her anger by
 Soon, making her vengeance a little thing.

CHORUS.

(Ant.)

If she would but come forth where we wait her,
 If she would but give ear to the sound
 Of our speech, that her spirit would learn
 From its fierceness of anger to turn,
 And her lust for revenge not burn !
 O ne'er may my love prove traitor,
 Never false to my friends be it found !

But go thou, and forth of the dwelling 180
 Thy mistress hitherward lead.
 Say to her that friends be we all.
 O hasten, ere mischief befall
 The lords of the palace-hall.
 For her grief, like a tempest upswelling,
 Resistless shall ruin-ward speed.

NURSE.

I will do it : but almost my spirit despaireth
 To win her ; yet labour of love shall it be.
 But my queen on her thralls as a mad bull glareth,
 Or a lioness couched mid her whelps, whoso dareth
 With speech to draw near her, so tameless is she.

He should err not, who named the old singers in
 singing 190
 Not cunning, but left-handed bards, for their lays
 Did they frame for the mirth-tide, the festal in-bringing
 Of the wine, and the feast, when the harp-strings are
 ringing
 To sweeten with melody life's sweet days :

But the dread doom of mortals, the anguish heart-
rending—

Never minstrel by music hath breathed on them
peace,

Nor by song with his harp-notes in harmony blending ;
Albeit of these cometh death's dark ending

Unto many a home that is wrecked of these.

And yet were it surely a boon to bring healing

Of sorrow to mortals with song : but in vain 200

Mid the fulness of feasting ring voices clear-pealing,

And the banquet itself hath a glamour, concealing

From mortals their doom, flinging spells over pain.

[*Exit Nurse.*]

CHORUS.

I have heard it, the sigh-laden cry of the daughter

Of Kolchis, the woe-shrilling anguish of wailing

For the traitor to love who with false vows caught her,

Who in strength of her wrongs chideth Heaven,
assailing

The Oath-queen of Zeus, who with cords all-pre-
vailing [210

Forth haled her, and brought her o'er star-litten water,

Where the brine-mists hover o'er Pontus' Key,

Unto Hellas far over the boundless sea.

Enter Medea.

MEDEA.

Corinthian dames, I have come forth my doors

Lest ye should blame me. Many folk I know 215

Accounted haughty, some, for proud staid mien,¹

Some, stranger-shy :² and some, that softly go,

¹ *lit.* "from their looks."

² *lit.* "as being *σεμνοί* (reserved) when amongst strangers."

Have gotten ill repute of indolence.
 For justice sits not in the eyes of man,
 Who, ere he hath discerned his neighbour's heart, 220
 Hates him at sight, albeit nowise wronged.
 The sojourner must learn the city's wont ;
 Nor praise I citizens-born, law to themselves,
 Mannerless churls, which flout their fellow-folk.
 But me—unlooked-for fell this blow on me, 225
 And brake mine heart. Undone I am ; have lost
 All grace of life, and long to die, my friends.
 For he that was mine all,—thou know'st it well,—¹
 My lord, of all men basest hath become.
 Surely, of creatures that have life and wit, 230
 We women are of all things wretchedest,
 Who, first, must needs, as buys the highest bidder,
 Thus buy a husband, and our body's master
 So win—for deeper depth of ill is this.
 Nay, risk is dire herein,—or shall we gain 235
 An evil lord or good ? For change is shame
 To woman, nor may she renounce her spouse.
 And, coming to new customs, habits new,
 Seer need she be, to know the thing unlearnt,
 What manner of man her couch's mate shall be. 240
 But if we learn our lesson, if our lord
 Dwell with us, plunging not against the yoke,
 Happy our lot : if not—no help but death.
 For the man, when at home they fret his soul,
 Goes forth, and stays his loathing heart's disgust, 245
 Unto a friend or age-mate turning him.
 We have but one, one heart to seek for comfort.
 But we, say they, live an unperilled life

¹ Or, reading *γινώσκειν*—"For he, to know whom rightly was mine all."

At home, while they do battle with the spear.
 Falsely they deem : twice would I under shield 250
 Stand, rather than bear childbirth peril once.
 Yet thee and me the selfsame reasons touch not.
 Thine is this city, thine a father's home ;
 Hast bliss of life and fellowship of friends.
 But I, lone, cityless, and outraged thus 255
 Of him who kidnapped me from foreign shores,
 Mother nor brother have I, kinsman none,
 For port of refuge from calamity.
 Wherefore I fain would win of thee this boon :—
 If any path be found me, or device, 260
 Whereby to avenge these wrongs upon mine husband,
 On her who weds, on him who gives the bride,
 Keep silence. Woman quails at every peril,
 Faint-heart to face the fray and look on steel ;
 But when in wedlock-rights she suffers wrong, 265
 No spirit more bloodthirsty shall be found.

CHORUS.

This will I ; for 'tis just that thou, Medea,
 Requite thy lord : no marvel thou dost grieve.
 But I see Kreon, ruler of this land,
 Advancing, herald of some new decree. 270

Enter Kreon.

KREON.

Thee the black-lowering, wroth against thy lord,
 Medea, bid I forth this land to fare
 An exile, taking thy two sons with thee,
 And make no tarrying : daysman of this cause
 Am I, and homeward go I not again 275
 Ere from the land's bounds I have cast thee forth.

MEDEA.

Ah me! undone am I in utter ruin!
 My foes crowd sail pursuing: landing-place
 Is none from surges of calamity.
 Yet, howso wronged, one question will I ask— 280
 For what cause, Kreon, dost thou banish me?

KREON.

I fear thee—need is none to cloak my words—
 Lest on my child thou wreak some ill past cure.
 And to this dread do many things conspire.
 Wise art thou, cunning in much evil lore; 285
 Chafed art thou, of thine husband's couch bereft:
 I hear thou threatenest, so they bring me word,
 To wreak on sire, on bridegroom, and on bride
 Mischief. I guard mine head ere falls the blow.
 Better be hated, woman, now of thee, 290
 Than once relent, and sorely groan too late.

MEDEA.

Not now first, Kreon,—many a time ere now
 Rumour hath wronged and wrought me grievous harm.
 Ne'er should the man whose heart is sound of wit
 Let teach his sons more wisdom than the herd. 295
 They are burdened with unprofitable lore,
 And spite and envy of other folk they earn.
 For, if thou bring strange wisdom unto dullards,
 Useless shalt thou be counted, and not wise:
 And, grant thy name o'ertop the self-extolled 300
 Wits, in the city odious shalt thou be.
 Myself too in this fortune am partaker.
 Of some my wisdom wins me jealousy,

Some count me idle ; some, o'erbusy ; some
 Unsocial :—yet not over-wise am I. 305
 And thou, thou fear'st me, lest I mar thy music.
 Not such am I—O Kreon, dread not me—
 That against princes I should dare transgress.
 How hast thou wronged me ? Thou hast given thy
 child [310
 To whomso pleased thee. But—I hate mine husband :
 And, doubtless, this in prudence hast thou done ?
 Nay, but I grudge not thy prosperity.
 Wed ye, and prosper. But in this your land
 Still let me dwell : for I, how wronged soe'er,
 Will hold my peace, o'ermastered by the strong. 315

KREON.

Soft words to hear : but lurks mine heart within
 Dread lest thou plottest mischief all the while ;
 And all the less I trust thee than before.
 The vehement-hearted woman—yea, or man—
 Is easier watched-for than the silent-cunning. 320
 But forth with all speed : plead me pleadings none.
 For this is stablished : no device hast thou
 To bide with us, who art a foe to me.

MEDEA.

Nay,—by thy knees, and by the bride, thy child !

KREON.

Thou wastest words ; thou never shalt prevail. 325

MEDEA.

Wilt drive me forth, respecting nought my prayers ?

KREON.

Ay: more I love not thee than mine own house.

MEDEA.

O, how I call thee now to mind, my country!

KREON.

Ay, dear to me is Corinth, next my children.

MEDEA.

Alas! to mortals what a curse is love! 330

KREON.

Blessing or curse, I trow, as fortune falls.

MEDEA.

Zeus, may the cause of this 'scape not thy ken!

KREON.

Hence, passionate fool, and rid me of my trouble.

MEDEA.

Troubled am I, nor need I troubles new.

KREON.

Soon shalt thou be by servants' hands thrust out. 335

MEDEA.

Nay—nay—not this, O Kreon, I beseech thee!

KREON.

A coil thou wilt make, woman, as it seems.

MEDEA.

I will flee forth :—not this the boon I crave.

KREON.

Why restive then ?—why rid not Corinth of thee ?

MEDEA.

Suffer me yet to tarry this one day, 340
 And somewhat for our exile to take thought,
 And find my babes a refuge, since their sire
 Cares nought to make provision for his sons.
 Compassionate these : a father too art thou
 Of children : meet it is thou show these grace. 345
 Not for myself I fret, if I be banished :
 For them in their calamity I mourn.

KREON.

My spirit least of all is tyrannous.
 Many a plan have my relentings marred :
 And, woman, now I know I err herein, 350
 Yet shalt thou win this boon. But I forewarn thee,
 If thee the approaching Sun-god's torch behold
 Within this country's confines with thy sons,
 Thou diest :—the word is said that shall not lie.
 Now, if remain thou must, remain one day— 355
 Too short for thee to do the deeds I dread. [*Exit.*]

CHORUS.

O hapless thou !
 Woe's me for thy misery, woe for the trouble and
 anguish that meet thee !
 Whitherward wilt thou turn thee ?—what welcoming
 hand mid the strangers shall greet thee ?

What home or what land to receive thee, deliverance
 from evils to give thee, 360
 Wilt thou find for thee now?
 How mid surge of despair to o'erwhelm thee in ruin
 God's hand on thine helm
 Hath steered, O Medea, thy prow!

MEDEA.

'Tis ill done every way; who shall gainsay?
 Yet nowise ill in this: deem not so yet. 365
 Bridegroom and bride grim conflicts yet await;
 Nor troubles light abide these marriage-makers.
 Think'st thou that I had cringed to yon man ever,
 Except to gain some gain, or work some wile? [370
 Nor word nor touch of hand had I vouchsafed him.
 But to such height of folly hath he come,
 That, when he might forestall mine every plot
 By banishment, this day of grace he grants me
 To stay, wherein three foes will I lay dead,
 The father, and the daughter, and mine husband. 375
 And, having for them many paths of death,
 Which first to take in hand I know not, friends;
 Whether to set the bridal bower aflame,
 Or through the heart to thrust the whetted knife,
 Through yon halls stealing silent to their couch. 380
 Yet one thing bars the way—if I be found
 Crossing the threshold of the house and plotting,
 Die shall I, and make mirth unto my foes.
 Best the straight path, wherein my nature's cunning
 Excels, by poisons to destroy them:—yea. 385
 Now, grant them dead: what city will receive me,
 What host vouchsafe a land of refuge, home
 Secure, and from the avenger shield my life?

There is none. Tarrying then a little space,
 If any tower of safety shall appear, 390
 These deaths by guile and silence will I compass ;
 But if misfortune drive me desperate forth,
 Myself will grip the sword,—yea, though I die,—
 And slay, and dare the strong hand's reckless deed :
 For, by the Queen of Night, whom I revere 395
 Above all, and for fellow-worker chose,
 Hekatê, dweller by mine hearth's dark shrine,
 Not one shall vex my soul, and rue it not.
 Bitter and woeful bridal will I give them,
 Bitter troth-pledge and banishing of me. 400
 Up then !—spare nought of all thy sorcery-lore,
 Medea, of thy plotting and contriving ;
 On to the dread deed ! Now is need of daring.
 Look on thy wrongs : thou must not make derision
 For sons of Sisyphus, for Jason's bride,— 405
 Thou, sprung from royal father, from the Sun !
 Thou know'st means. Yea, our woman-nature 'tis—
 Say they—to be most helpless for all good,
 But fashioners most cunning of all ill.

CHORUS.

(Str. 1.)

Upward aback to their fountains the sacred rivers are
 stealing ;
 Justice is turned to injustice, the order of old to con-
 fusion : 410
 The thoughts of the hearts of men are treachery wholly,
 and, reeling
 From its ancient foundations, the faith of the Gods
 is become a delusion.
 Changes—and changes !—the voice of the people shall
 crown me with honour :

My life shall be sunlit with glory ; for woman the
 old-time story
 Is ended, the slanders hoary no more shall as chains
 be upon her.

(*Ant.* 1.)

And the strains of the singers of old generations for
 shame shall falter, 420
 Which sang evermore of the treason of woman, her
 faithlessness ever.

Alas, that our lips are not touched with the fire of song
 from the altar

Of Phœbus, the Harper-king, of the inspiration-
 giver !

Else had I lifted my voice in challenge of song high-
 ringing

Unto men : for the roll of the ages shall find for the
 poet-sages

Proud woman-themes for their pages, heroines worthy
 their singing.

(*Str.* 2.)

But thou from the ancient home didst sail over leagues
 of foam, 430

On-spced by a frenzied heart, and the sea-gates sawest
 dispart,

The Twin Rocks. Now, in the land
 Of the stranger, thy doom is to waken
 To a widowed couch, and forsaken
 Of thy lord, and woe-overtaken,
 To be cast forth shamed and banned.

(*Ant.* 2.)

Disannulled is the spell of the oath : no shame for the
 broken troth

In Hellas the wide doth remain, but heavenward its
 flight hath it ta'en.

No home of a father hast thou 440
 For thine haven when trouble-storms lower.
 Usurped is thy bridal bower
 Of another, in pride of her power,
 Ill-starred, overqueening thee now.

Enter Jason.

JASON.

Not now first, nay, but oft-times have I marked
 What desperate mischief is a froward spirit.
 For in this land, this home, when thou might'st stay
 Bearing unfractiously thy rulers' pleasure,
 Banished thou art for wild and whirling words. 450
 Me they vex not—cease never, an thou wilt,
 Clamouring, "Jason is of men most base!"
 But, for thy words against thy rulers spoken,
 Count it all gain—mere exile punishing thee.
 For me—still strove I to appease the wrath 455
 Of kings incensed: fain would I thou shouldst stay.
 But thou rein'st not thy folly, speaking still
 Evil of dignities; art therefore banished.
 Yet, for all this, not wearied of my friends,
 With so much forethought come I for thee, lady, 460
 That, banished with thy babes, thou lack not gold,
 Nor aught beside. Full many an ill is brought
 In exile's train. Yea, though thou hatest me,
 Ne'er can I harbour evil thought of thee.

MEDEA.

Caitiff of caitiffs!—blackest of reproaches 465
 My tongue for thine unmanliness can frame—
 Thou com'st to me—thou com'st, most hateful proved
 To heaven, to me, to all the race of men!

This is not daring, no, nor courage this, [470
 To wrong thy friends, and blench not from their eyes,
 But, of all plagues infecting men, the worst,
 Even shamelessness. And yet 'tis well thou cam'st,
 For I shall ease the burden of mine heart
 Reviling thee, and thou be galled to hear.
 And with the first things first will I begin. 475
 I saved thee, as they know, what Greeks soe'er
 Entered with thee the self-same Argo's hull,
 Thee, sent to quell the flame-outbreathing bulls
 With yoke-bands, and to sow the tilth of death.
 The dragon, warder of the Fleece of Gold, 480
 That sleepless kept it with his manifold coils,
 I slew, and raised deliverance-light for thee.
 Myself forsook my father and mine home,
 And to Iolkos under Pelion came
 With thee, more zealous in thy cause than wise, 485
 And Pelias slew by his own children's hands—
 Of all deaths worst,—so cast out all thy¹ fear.
 And thus of me, basest of men, entreated,
 For a new bride hast thou forsaken me,
 Though I had born thee children. Wert thou child-
 less, 490
 Not past forgiving were this marriage-craving.
 But faith of oaths hath vanished. I know not
 Whether thou deem'st the olden Gods yet rule,
 Or that new laws are now ordained for men ;
 For thine heart speaks thee unto me forsworn. 495
 Out on this right hand, which thou oft wouldst clasp,—
 These knees !—how vainly have we been embraced
 By a base man, thus frustrate of our hopes !

¹ Or "Yea, cast out all their fear."

Come, as a friend will I commune with thee—
 Yet what fair dealing should I hope from thee?— 500
 Yet will I : questioned, baser shalt thou show.
 Now, whither turn I?—to my father's house,
 Which, with my country, I for thee cast off?
 To Pelias' hapless daughters?—Graciously
 Their father's slayer would they welcome home! 505
 For thus it is: a foe am I become
 To mine own house. Whom I should ne'er have
 harmed,
 For grace to thee I made mine enemies.
 So then midst Hellas' daughters hast thou made me
 Blest in return for all: in thee have I— 510
 O wretched I!—a wondrous spouse and leal,¹
 If from the land cast forth I pass to exile
 Forlorn of friends, alone with children lone.
 A proud reproach for our new bridegroom this—
 In poverty thy babes, thy saviour, wander! 515
 O Zeus, ah wherefore hast thou given to men
 Plain signs for gold which is but counterfeit,
 But no assay-mark nature-graven shows
 On man's form, to discern the base withal?

CHORUS.

Awful is wrath, and past all balm of healing, 520
 When they that once loved clash in feud of hate.

JASON.

Needs must I be not ill at speech, meseems,
 But, like the careful helmsman of a ship,
 With close-reefed canvas run before the gale,

¹ Or, reading *καπίστον*, "Woe's me!—a marvellous spouse beyond belief,"

Woman, of thy tempestuous-railing tongue. 525
 I—for thy kindness tower-high thou pilest—
 Deem Kypris saviour of my voyaging,
 Her, and none other or of Gods or men.
 A subtle wit thou hast—what need to force me
 To tell the tale how Love, by strong compulsion 530
 Of shafts unerring, made thee save my life ?
 Yet take I not account too strict thereof ;
 For, in that thou didst save me, thou didst well.
 Howbeit, more hast thou received than given
 Of this my safety, as my words shall prove :— 535
 First, then, in Hellas dwell'st thou, in the stead
 Of land barbaric, knowest justice, learnest
 To live by law without respect of force.
 And all the Greeks have heard thy wisdom's fame.
 Renown is thine : but if on earth's far bourn 540
 Thou dwelledst yet, thou hadst not lived in story.
 Now mine be neither gold mine halls within,
 Nor sweeter song be mine than Orpheus sang,
 If my fair fortune be to fame unknown.
 Thus far of my great labours have I spoken,— 545
 Since thou flung'st down this challenge to dispute :—
 But, for thy railings on my royal marriage,
 Herein will I show, first, that wise I was ;
 Then, temperate ; third, to thee the best of friends
 And to my children—nay, but hear me out. 550
 When I came hither from Iolkos-land
 With many a desperate fortune in my train,
 What happier treasure-trove could I have found
 Than to wed—I, an exile—with a princess ?
 Not—where it galls thee—loathing couch of thine, 555
 And for a new bride smitten with desire,
 Nor eager I to multiply mine offspring ;—

Suffice these born to me : no fault in them :—
 But that we might with honour live—grave import,—
 And be not straitened,—for I know full well 560
 How all friends from the poor man stand aloof,—
 And I might nurture as beseems mine house
 Our sons, and to these born of thee beget
 Brethren, and, knitting in one family all, [565
 Live happy days. Thou, what wouldst thou of children?
 But me it profits, through sons to be born
 To help the living. Have I planned so ill?
 Not thou wouldst say it, but the lost couch galls thee.
 But ye—ye women—so unreasoning are
 That, wedlock-rights unmarred, ye count all well ; 570
 But to the couch if aught untoward hap,
 With the best, fairest lot are ye at feud
 Most bitter. Would that mortals otherwise
 Could get them babes, that womankind were not,
 And so no curse had lighted upon men. 575

CHORUS.

Words, Jason, words, tricked out full cunningly :
 Yet to me—though I speak not to thy mind—
 Unjust thou seem'st, betraying thus thy wife.

MEDEA.

Of many things I think not as think many.
 For in my sight the villain subtle-tongued 580
 Getteth himself for gain exceeding loss,
 Who, confident his tongue can gloze the wrong,
 Becomes a bold knave :—no great wisdom this.
 So be not thou, as touching me, fair-seeming [585
 And crafty-tongued : one word shall overthrow thee :

Thou shouldest, if not base, have wed this bride
With my consent, not hid it from thy friends.

JASON.

Ay, nobly hadst thou helped in this my purpose,
Had I a marriage named, who even now
Canst not refrain thy heart's exceeding wrath ! 590

MEDEA.

Not this thine hindrance, but the alien wife
No crown of honour was as eld drew on.

JASON.

Now know this well—not for the woman's sake
I wed the royal bride whom I have won,
But, as I said, of my desire to save 595
Thee, and beget seed royal, to my sons
Brethren, and for mine house a tower of strength.

MEDEA.

No prosperous life 'neath sorrow's cloud for me,
Nor weal, with thorns of conscience in mine heart !

JASON.

Know'st how to change thy prayer, and show the wiser ?
May thy good never seem to thee thy sorrow ; [600
Nor in fair fortune deem thy lot misfortune.

MEDEA.

O yea, insult !—Thou hast a refuge, thou ;
But desolate I am banished from this land.

JASON.

Thyself hast chosen this : none other blame. 605

MEDEA.

I?—sooth, by wedding and betraying thee!

JASON.

By cursing princes with an impious curse.

MEDEA.

Even so,—and thus am cursing now *thine* house?

JASON.

With thee no more I wrangle touching this.

But if, or for the children or thyself, 610

For help in exile thou wilt take my gold,

Speak: ready am I to give with hand ungrudging,

And send guest-tokens which shall find thee friends.

If this thou wilt not, foolish shalt thou be:

Refrain wrath, and advantaged shalt thou be. 615

MEDEA.

Thy friends!—nothing will I of friends of thine.

No whit will I receive, nor offer thou.

No profit is there in a villain's gifts.

JASON.

In any wise I call the Gods to witness

That all help would I give thee and thy sons; 620

But thy good likes thee not: thy stubborn pride

Spurns friends: the more thy grief shall therefore be.

MEDEA.

Away!—impatience for the bride new-trapped

Consumes thee while thou loiterest at the doors! [625

Wed: for perchance—and God shall speed the word—

Thine shall be bridal thou wouldst fain renounce.

[Exit Jason.]

CHORUS.

(Str. 1.)

Love bringeth nor glory nor honour to men when it
cometh restraining

Not its unscanted excess : but if Kypris, in measure
raining 630

Her joy, cometh down, there is none other Goddess
so winsome as she.

Not upon me, O Queen, do thou aim from thy bow all-
golden

The arrow desire-venomed that none may avoid—
not on me !

(Ant. 1.)

But let Temperance shield¹ me, the fairest of gifts of
the Gods ever-living :

Nor ever with passion of jarring contention, nor feuds
unforgiving,

In her terrors may Love's Queen visit me, smiting
with maddened unrest

For a couch mismated my soul : but the peace of the
bride-bed be holden 640

In honour of her, and her keen eyes choose for us
bonds that be best.

(Str. 2.)

O fatherland, O mine home,

Not mine be the exile's doom !

Into poverty's pathways hard to be trod may my feet
not be guided !

Most piteous anguish were this.

By death—O by death ere then may the conflict of life
be decided,

¹ *στέγιοι* (Verrall), *vice* MSS. *στέργοι*, "befriend."

Ended be life's little day ! To be thus from the home-
land divided— 650

No pang more bitter there is.

(*Ant.* 2).

We have seen, and it needeth nought

That of others herein we be taught :

For thee not a city, for thee not a friend hath com-
passionated

When affliction most awful is thine.

But he, who regardeth not friends, accursed may he
perish, and hated, 660

Who opes not his heart with sincerity's key to the
hapless-fated—

Never such shall be friend of mine !

Enter Aigeus.

AIGEUS.

Medea, hail !—for fairer greeting-word
None knoweth to accost his friends withal.

MEDEA.

All hail thou also, wise Pandion's son, 665
Aigeus. Whence art thou journeying through this
land ?

AIGEUS.

Leaving the ancient oracle of Phœbus.

MEDEA.

Why didst thou fare to earth's prophetic navel ?

AIGEUS.

To ask how seed of children might be mine.

MEDEA.

'Fore Heaven!—aye childless is thy life till now? 670

AIGEUS.

Childless I am, by chance of some God's will.

MEDEA.

This, with a wife, or knowing not the couch?

AIGEUS.

Nay, not yoked to wedlock's bed am I.

MEDEA.

Now what to thee spake Phœbus touching issue?

AIGEUS.

Deep words of wisdom not for man to interpret. 675

MEDEA.

Without sin might I know the God's reply?

AIGEUS.

O yea—good sooth, it needs the wise heart most.

MEDEA.

What said he? Say, if sin be not to hear.

AIGEUS.

The wine-skin's prominent foot I should not loose.

MEDEA.

[680

Till thou shouldst do what thing, or reach what land?

AIGEUS.

Till to the hearth ancestral back I came.

MEDEA.

And thou, what wouldst thou sailing to this shore ?

AIGEUS.

There is one Pittheus, king of Trœzen he,—

MEDEA.

A man most pious, Pelops' son, they say.

AIGEUS.

To him the God's response I fain would tell. 685

MEDEA.

Yea—a wise man, and having skill herein.

AIGEUS.

Yea, and my best-belovèd spear-ally.

MEDEA.

Now prosper thou, and win thine heart's desire.

AIGEUS.

Why droops thine eye ?—why this wan-wasted hue ?

MEDEA.

Aigeus, of all men basest is mine husband. 690

AIGEUS.

What say'st thou ? Clearly tell me thine heart's pain.

MEDEA.

He wrongs me—Jason, nothing wronged of me.

AIGEUS.

What hath he done? More plainly tell it out.

MEDEA.

Another wife he takes, his household's mistress.

AIGEUS.

Ha ! hath he dared in truth this basest deed? 695

MEDEA.

Yea : I am now dishonoured, once beloved.

AIGEUS.

Another love was this ?—or hate of thee ?

MEDEA.

Love ?—yea, of the highest :—traitor he to love !

AIGEUS.

Away with him, if he be base as this !

MEDEA.

His love was for affinity with princes. 700

AIGEUS.

Who giveth him his daughter? End the tale.

MEDEA.

Kreon, who ruleth this Corinthian land.

AIGEUS.

Sooth, lady, reason was that thou shouldst grieve.

MEDEA.

'Tis death to me ! Yea, also am I banished.

AIGEUS.

Of whom ? A new ill this thou namest is.¹ 705

MEDEA.

Kreon from Corinth driveth me an exile.

AIGEUS.

Doth Jason suffer this ?—I praise it not.

MEDEA.

In pretence, no : but to stand firm—not he !
 But I beseech thee, touching this thy beard,
 Claspings thy knees, and so become thy suppliant ;—
 Pity, O pity me the evil-starred, [710
 And see me not cast forth to homelessness :
 Receive to a hearth-place in thy land and homes.
 So by heaven's blessing fruitful be thy love
 In children, and in death thyself be blest. 715
 Thou know'st not what good fortune thou hast found :
 For I will end thy childlessness, will cause
 Thy seed to grow to sons ; such drugs I know.

AIGEUS.

For many causes am I minded, lady,
 This grace to grant thee : for the Gods' sake first ; 720
 Then, for the seed of children thou dost promise ;

¹ Or "Another's crime thou namest now," reading *ἄλλου* *vice* *ἄλλο* (Verrall).

For herein wholly extinct is Aigeus' name.
 But thus it is—if to my land thou come,
 I thy defence essay, in bounds of justice.
 Howbeit of this do I forewarn thee, lady, 725
 From this land will I not consent to lead thee.
 But, if thou reachest of thyself mine homes,
 Safe shalt thou bide : to no man will I yield thee.
 But from this land thou must thyself escape ;
 For blameless will I be to allies too. 730

MEDEA.

So be it. Yet, were oath-pledge given for this
 To me, then had I all I would of thee.

AIGEUS.

Ha, dost not trust me ?—Or at what dost stumble ?

MEDEA.

I trust thee : but my foes are Pelias' house [735
 And Kreon. Oath-bound, thou couldst never yield me
 To these, when they would drag me from the land.
 Hadst thou but promised, to the Gods unpledged,¹
 Thou mightest turn their friend, might'st lightly yield
 To herald-summons. Strengthless is my cause :
 Wealth is on their side, and a princely house. 740

AIGEUS.

Foresight exceeding, lady, in thy words !²
 Yet, if this be thy will, I draw not back ;

¹ Reading *ἀνώμοτος* (737) and *τάχ'* (739)

² v.l. *προθυμίαν* : "Much eagerness to help thy words imply !" (ironical).

Since for myself is this the safest course,
 To have a plea to show unto thy foes ;
 And surer is thy part. The Oath-gods name. 745

MEDEA.

Swear by Earth's plain, and by my father's father
 The Sun, and join the Gods' whole race thereto.

AIGEUS.

That I will do or not do—what ? Say on.

MEDEA.

That from thy land thyself wilt never cast me,
 Nor, if a foe of mine would hale me thence, 750
 Wilt, while thou liv'st, consenting yield me up.

AIGEUS.

By Earth, the Sun's pure majesty, and all
 The Gods, I swear to abide by this thou hast said.

MEDEA.

Enough. For broken troth what penalty ?

AIGEUS.

Whatso befalleth God-despising men. 755

MEDEA.

Pass on thy way rejoicing : all is well.
 I too will come with all speed to thy burg,
 When mine intent is wrought, my wish attained.

[*Exit Aigeus.*]

CHORUS.

Now the Scion of Maia, the Wayfarer's King,
 Bring thee safe to thine home, and the dream of thine
 heart, 760
 The sweet visions that wing thy feet, may'st thou bring
 To accomplishment, Aigeus, for now this thing
 Hath taught me how noble thou art.

MEDEA.

Zeus, Justice child of Zeus, and Light of the Sun,
 Over my foes triumphant now, my friends, 765
 Shall we become : our feet are on the path.
 Now is there hope of vengeance on my foes.
 For this man, there where lay my chiefest weakness,
 Hath for my plots a haven in storm appeared.
 To him my bark's stern-hawser make I fast, 770
 To Pallas' burg and fortress when I go.
 And all my plots to thee now will I tell ;
 Nor look I that my words should pleasure thee :—
 One of mine household will I send to Jason,
 And will entreat him to my sight to come ; 775
 And soft words, when he cometh, will I speak,
 Saying, " Thy will is mine," and, " It is well."
 How that his royal marriage, my betrayal,
 Is our advantage, and right well devised.
 I will petition that my sons may stay— 780
 Not for that I would leave on hostile soil
 Children of mine for foes to trample on,
 But the king's daughter so by guile to slay.
 For I will send them bearing gifts in hand
 Unto the bride, that they may not be banished, 785
 A robe fine-spun, a golden diadem.

If she receive and don mine ornaments,
 Die shall she wretchedly, and all who touch her,
 With drugs so dread will I anoint my gifts.
 Howbeit here I pass this story by, 790
 And wail the deed that yet for me remains
 To bring to pass; for I will slay my children,
 Yea, mine: no man shall pluck them from mine hand.
 Then, having brought all Jason's house to wrack,
 I leave the land, fleeing my dear babes' blood, 795
 And having dared a deed most impious.
 For unendurable are mocks of foes.
 Let all go: what is life to me? Nor country
 Nor home have I, nor refuge from mine ills.
 Then erred I, in the day when I forsook 800
 My father's halls, by yon Greek's words beguiled,
 Who with God's help shall render me requital.
 For never living shall he see hereafter
 The sons I bare him, nor shall he beget
 Of his new bride a son, for doomed is she, 805
 Wretch, to die wretchedly by drugs of mine.
 Let none account me impotent, nor weak,
 Nor meek of spirit!—Nay, in other sort,
 Grim to my foes, and kindly to my friends,
 For of such is the life most glorious. 810

CHORUS.

Since thou hast made me partner of this tale,—
 Wishing to help thee, championing withal
 The laws of men, I say, do thou not this.

MEDEA.

It cannot be but so: yet reason is
 That thou say this, who art not wronged as I. 815

CHORUS.

Woman, wilt have the heart to slay thy sons ?

MEDEA.

Yea : so mine husband's heart shall most be wrung.

CHORUS.

But thou of wives most wretched shouldst become.

MEDEA.

So be it : wasted are all hindering words. [820

But ho ! [*to the Nurse*] go thou and Jason bring to me—

Thou whom I use for every deed of trust.

And look thou tell none aught of mine intent,

If thine is loyal service, thou a woman.

[*Exit Medea and Nurse.*

CHORUS.

(Str. 1)

O happy the race in the ages olden

Of Erechtheus, the seed of the blest Gods' line,

In a land unravaged, peace-enfolden,

Aye quaffing of Wisdom's glorious wine,

Ever through air clear-shining brightly 830

As on wings uplifted pacing lightly,

Where they tell how Harmonia of tresses golden

Bare the Pierid Muses, the stainless Nine.

(Ant. 1)

And the streams of Cephisus the lovely-flowing

They tell how the Lady of Cyprus drew,

And in Zephyr-wafts of the winds sweet-blowing

Breathed far over the land their dew.

And she sendeth her Loves which, throned in glory

By Wisdom, fashion all virtue's story, 840
 Over her tresses throwing, throwing,
 Roses in odorous wreaths aye new.

Re-enter Medea. (Str. 2)

How then should the hallowed city,
 The city of sacred waters,
 Which shields with her guardian hand
 All friends that would fare through her land,
 Receive a murderess banned,
 Who had slaughtered her babes without pity,
 A pollution amidst of her daughters? 850

In thine heart's thoughts set it before thee—
 To murder the fruit of thy womb!
 O think what it meaneth to slay
 Thy sons—what a deed this day
 Thou wouldst do!—By thy knees we pray,
 By heaven and earth we implore thee,
 Deal not to thy babes such a doom!

(Ant. 2)

O whence, and O whence wilt thou gain thee
 Such desperate hardihood
 That for spirit so fiendish shall serve,
 That shall strengthen thine heart, that shall nerve
 Thine hand, that it shall not swerve
 From the ruthless deed that shall stain thee
 With horror of children's blood?

O how, when thine eyes thou art turning 860
 On thy little ones, wilt thou refrain
 The motherhood in thee, to feel
 No upwelling of tears?—Canst thou steel
 Thy breast when thy children kneel,
 To crimson thine hand, with unyearning
 Heart for thy darlings slain?

Enter Jason.

JASON.

Summoned I come : for, though thou be my foe,
This grace thou shalt not miss ; but I will hear
What new thing, lady, thou dost wish of me.

MEDEA.

Jason, I ask thee to forgive the words
Late-spoken, and to bear with that my mood : 870
Well mayst thou, for remembrance of old loves.
Now have I called myself to account, and railed
Upon myself—"Wretch, wherefore am I mad?
And wherefore rage against good counsellors,
And am at feud with rulers of the land, 875
And with my lord, who works my veriest good,
Wedding a royal house, to raise up brethren
Unto my sons? Shall I not cease from wrath?
What aileth me, when the Gods proffer boons?
Have I not children? Know I not that we 880
Are exiles from our own land, lacking friends?"
Thus musing, was I ware that I had nursed
Folly exceeding, anger without cause.
Now then I praise thee ; wise thou seem'st to me
In gaining us this kinship, senseless I, 885
Who in these counsels should have been thine ally,
Have furthered all, have decked the bridal couch,
And joyed to minister unto the bride.
But we are—women : needs not harsher word.
Yet evil shouldst thou not for evil render, 890
Nor pit against my folly folly of thine.
I yield, confessing mine un wisdom then,
But unto better counsels now am come.
Children, my children, hither : leave the house ;

[Enter Children.]

Come forth, salute your father, and with me 895
 Bid him farewell : be reconciled to friends
 Ye, with your mother, from the hate o'erpast.
 Truce is between us, rancour hath given place.
 Clasp ye his right hand.—Woe for ambushed ills !
 I am haunted by the shadow of hidden things ! 900
 Ah children, will ye thus, through many a year
 Living, still reach him loving arms ? Ah me,
 How swift to weep am I, how full of fear !
 Feuds with your father ended—ah, so late !—
 Have filled with tears these soft-relentng eyes. 905

CHORUS.

And from mine eyes start tears of pale dismay.
 Ah may no evil worse than this befall !

JASON.

Lady, I praise this mood, yet blame not that :
 'Tis nothing strange that womankind should rage
 When the spouse trafficketh in alien marriage. 910
 But now to better thoughts thine heart hath turned,
 And thou, though late, upon the victor side
 Hast voted : a wise woman's deed is this.
 And for you, children, not unheedfully
 Your sire hath ta'en much forethought, so help heaven.
 For ye, I ween, in this Corinthian land 915
 Shall with your brethren stand the foremost yet.
 Grow ye in strength : the rest shall by your sire,
 And whatso God is gracious, be wrought out.
 You may I see to goodly stature grown, 920
 In manhood's prime, triumphant o'er my foes.
 Thou, why bedew'st thou with wan tears thine eyes,

Turning aback from them thy pallid cheek,
And dost not hear with gladness this my speech ?

MEDEA.

'Tis nought : but o'er these children broods mine
heart. 925

JASON.

Fear not : all will I order well for them.

MEDEA.

This will I :—'Tis not I mistrust thy words ;
But woman is but woman—born for tears.

JASON.

Why, hapless one, dost make moan over these ?

MEDEA.

I bare them. When thou prayedst life for them, 930
Pity stole o'er me, whispering, " Shall this be ?"
But that for which thou cam'st to speech of me
In part is said ; to speak the rest is mine :—¹
Since the king pleaseth forth the land to send me,
For me too this is best,—I know it well,— 935
That I bide not, a stumblingblock to thee
And the land's lords, whose house's foe I seem,
So fare I forth to exile from this land.
But, that my sons by thine hand may be reared,
Entreat thou Kreon that they be not banished. 940

¹ Verrall here says " There is no apparent reason for the emphatic pronoun," (ἐγώ). Is it not that the object of the interview was twofold, first, to ask Jason's pardon,—that had now been spoken by him,—secondly, to introduce a proposal of her own, involving independent action on her part ?

JASON.

Prevail I may not, yet must I essay.

MEDEA.

Nay then, thy bride bid thou to pray her sire
That thy sons be not banished from this land.

JASON.

Yea surely ; and, I trow, her shall I win,
If of her sister women she is one.

945

MEDEA.

I too will bear a part in thine endeavour ;
For I will send her gifts unmatched for beauty
Of all that men see now, I know, by far,
A robe fine-spun, a golden diadem ;
Our sons to bear them. Now must an attendant 950
With all speed hither bring the ornaments.
Blessings shall hers be, not one, but untold,
Who winneth thee for lord, a peerless spouse,
Who owneth ornaments which once the Sun,
My father's father, gave unto his offspring ! 955
Take in your hands, my sons, these bridal gifts,
And to the happy princess-bride bear ye
And give : with gifts shall she be satisfied.

JASON.

But, fond one, why make void thine hands of these ?
Deem'st thou a royal house hath lack of robes, 960
Or gold, deem'st thou ? Keep these and give them not.
For, if my wife esteems me aught, my wish
Will she prefer to treasures, well I wot.

MEDEA.

Nay, speak not so : gifts sway the Gods, they say.
 Gold weigheth more with men than words untold. 965
 Hers fortune is ; God favoureth now her cause ;
 Young is her power. Life would I give for ransom
 Of my sons' banishment, not gold alone.
 Now, children, enter ye the halls of wealth.
 Unto your sire's new wife, my lady-queen, 970
 Make supplication, pray ye be not exiled,
 Giving mine ornaments. Most importeth this,
 That she into her hands receive my gifts.
 Haste ye, and to your mother bring glad tidings
 Of good success in that she longs to win. 975

[*Exeunt Jason and Children.*]

CHORUS.

(*Str. 1*)

Now for the life of the children mine hope hath been
 turned to despairing.
 No hope any more ! On the slaughterward path even
 now are they faring !
 The bride shall receive it, the diadem-garland that
 beareth enfolden
 Doom for the hapless mid glittering sheen :
 And to set the adorning of Hades about her tresses
 golden 980
 She shall take it her hands between.

(*Ant. 1*)

For its glamour of beauty, its splendour unearthly,
 shall swiftly persuade her
 To bedeck her with robe and with gold-wrought crown :
 she shall soon have arrayed her

In attire as a bride in the presence of phantoms from
Hades uprisen ;

In such dread gin shall her feet be ta'en :
In the weird of death shall the hapless be whelmed,
and from Doom's dark prison
Shall she steal forth never again.

(*Str.* 2)

And thou, wretch, bridegroom accurst, who art fain of
a princely alliance, 990
Blasting thou bringest—unknowing, un-
thinking!—

Of life on thy sons, and thy bride shall to foul death
plight her affiance.

How far from thy fortune of old art thou
sinking!

(*Ant.* 2)

And amidst my lamentings I mourn for thine anguish,
O hapless mother

Of children, who makest thee ready to
slaughter

Thy babes, to avenge thee on him who would lawlessly
wed with another, 1000

Would forsake thee to dwell with a prince's
daughter.

Enter Children's Guardian, with Children.

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN.

Mistress, remission for thy sons of exile!
Thy gift the princess-bride with joy received
In hand ; and there is peace unto thy sons.

MEDEA.

Alas!

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN.

Why dost thou stand confounded mid good hap? 1005
Now wherefore turnest thou thy face away,
And dost not hear with gladness this my speech?

MEDEA.

Woe's me!

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN.

This cry is to the tidings not attuned.

MEDEA.

Woe yet again!

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN.

Can I have brought ill hap
Unwitting—erred in deeming these glad tidings? 1010

MEDEA.

As they are, are thy tidings: thee I blame not.

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN.

Why down-drooped is thine eye? Why flow thy
tears?

MEDEA.

Needs must they, ancient; for these things the Gods
And I withal—O fool!—have ill contrived.

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN.

Fear not: thy children yet shall bring thee home. 1015

MEDEA.

Others ere then shall wretched I send home.

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN.

Not thou alone art severed from thy sons.
 Submissively must mortals bear mischance.

MEDEA.

This will I: but within the house go thou,
 And for my children's daily needs prepare. 1020

[*Exit Children's Guardian.*]

O children, children, yours a city is,
 And yours a home, where, leaving wretched me,
 Dwell shall ye, of your mother aye bereft.
 I shall go exiled to another land,
 Ere I have joyed in you, have seen your bliss, 1025
 Ere I have decked for you the couch, the bride,
 The bridal bower, and held the torch on high.
 O me accurst in this my ruthless mood!
 For nought, for nought, my babes, I nurtured you,
 And all for nought I laboured, travail-worn, 1030
 Bearing sharp anguish in your hour of birth.
 Ah for the hopes—unhappy!—all mine hopes
 Of ministering hands about mine age,
 Of dying folded round with loving arms,
 All men's desire! But now—'tis past—'tis past, 1035
 That sweet imagining! Forlorn of you
 A bitter life and woeful shall I waste.
 Your mother never more with loving eyes
 Shall ye behold, passed to another life. [1040
 Woe! woe! why gaze your eyes on me, my darlings?
 Why smile to me the latest smile of all?
 Alas! what shall I do?—Mine heart is failing
 As I behold my children's laughing eyes!
 Women, I cannot! farewell, purposes

O'erpast! I take my children from the land. 1045

What need to wring the father's heart with ills

Of these, to gain myself ills twice so many?

Not I, not I!—Ye purposes, farewell!

Yet—yet—what ails me? Would I earn derision,

Letting my foes slip from mine hand unpunished? 1050

I must dare this. Out on my coward mood

That from mine heart let loose relenting words!

Children, pass ye within. [*Exeunt Children.*]

Now, whoso may not

Sinless be present at my sacrifice,

On his head be it: mine hand faltereth not. 1055

Oh! oh!

O heart, mine heart, do not—do not this deed!

Let them be, wretched heart, spare thou thy babes!

There dwelling with me shall they gladden thee.—

No!—by the nether fiends that dwell with Hades,

Never shall this betide, that I will leave 1060

My children for my foes to trample on.

They needs must die. And, since it needs must be,

Even I will slay them, I, who gave them life.

All this is utter doom:—she shall not 'scape!

Yea, on her head the wreath is; in my robes 1065

The princess-bride is perishing—I know it.

But—for I fare on journey most unhappy,

And shall speed these on yet unhappier—

I would speak to my sons. [*Re-enter Children.*]

Give, O my babes,

Give to your mother the right hand to kiss. 1070

O dearest hand, O lips most dear to me,

O form and noble feature of my children,

Blessing be on you—*there!*—for all things here

Your sire hath reft. O sweet, O sweet embrace!

O children's roseleaf skin, O balmy breath ! 1075
 Away, away ! Strength faileth me to gaze
 On you, but I am overcome of evil.

[*Exeunt Children.*]

Now, now, I learn what horrors I intend :
 But passion overmastereth sober thought :
 And this is cause of direst ills to men. 1080

CHORUS.

I

Full oft ere this my soul hath scaled
 Lone heights of thought, empyrean steeps,
 Or plunged far down the darkling deeps,
 Where woman's feebler heart hath failed.

Yet wherefore failed ? Should woman find
 No inspiration thrill her breast,
 Nor welcome ever that sweet guest
 Of Song, that uttereth Wisdom's mind ?

Alas ! not all ! Few, few are they,—
 Perchance amid a thousand one
 Thou shouldest find,—for whom the sun
 Of poesy makes an inner day.

II

Now this I say—calm bliss, that ne'er 1090
 Knew love's wild fever of the blood,
 The pains, the joys, of motherhood,
 Passeth all parents' joy-blent care.

The childless, they that never prove
 If sunshine comes, or cloud, to men
 With babes, far lie beyond their ken
 The toils, the griefs, of parent-love.

But they whose halls with laughter sweet
 Of children ring—I mark them aye
 Care-fretted, travailing alway 1100
 To win their loved ones nurture meet.

III

One toils with love more strong than death :
 Yet—yet—who knoweth whether he
 A wise man or a fool shall be
 To whom he shall his wealth bequeath ?

But last, but worst, remains to tell :
 For though ye get you wealth enow,
 And though your sons to manhood grow,
 Fair sons and good :—if Death the fell,

To Hades vanishing, bears down 1110
 Your children's lives, what profit is
 That Heaven hath laid, with all else, this
 Upon mankind, this sorrow's crown ?

MEDEA.

Friends, long have I, abiding fortune's hap,
 Expected what from yonder shall befall.
 And lo, a man I see of Jason's train
 Hitherward coming, and my eager heart
 Foretelleth him the herald of new ills. 1120

Enter Messenger.

MESSENGER.

O thou who hast wrought an awful deed and lawless,
 Flee, O Medea, flee, nor once leave thou
 The sea-wain, or the car that scours the plain.

MEDEA.

Now what hath happed that calleth for such flight ?

MESSENGER.

Dead is the princess even now, and dead 1125
Kreon her father, by thy poison-drugs.

MEDEA.

A glorious tale thou tellest : thou henceforth
Art of my benefactors and my friends.

MESSENGER.

What say'st ?—Of sound mind art thou, and not mad,
Who, hearing of the havoc of the hearth 1130
Of kings, art glad, and hast no fear for this ?

MEDEA.

O yea ; I too with words of controversy
Could answer thee :—yet be not hasty, friend,
But tell how died they : thou shouldst gladden me
Doubly, if these most horribly have perished. 1135

MESSENGER.

When, with their father, came thy children twain,
And passed into the halls for marriage decked,
Glad were we thralls who sorrowed for thy woes.
And straightway buzzed from ear to ear the tale
Of truce to old feuds 'twixt thy lord and thee. 1140
The hand one kisseth, one the golden head
Of those thy sons : myself by joy on-drawn
Followed thy children to the women's bowers.
Now she which had our worship in thy stead,

Ere she beheld thy chariot-yoke of sons, 1145
 Aye upon Jason turned her yearning gaze.
 But then her veil before her eyes she cast,
 And swept aback the scorn of her white neck,
 Loathing thy sons' approach: but now thy lord,
 To turn the maiden's wrath and spite aside, 1155
 Thus spake: "Nay, be not hostile to thy friends:
 Cease from thine anger, turn thine head again,
 Accounting friends whomso thy spouse accounts.
 Their gifts receive, and plead thou with thy sire
 To pardon these their exile:—for my sake." 1155
 She, when she saw the attire, could not refrain,
 But yielded her lord all. And ere their father
 Far from her bower with those thy sons had gone,
 She took the rich-wrought robes and clad herself,
 Circling her ringlets with the golden crown, 1160
 And by a shining mirror ranged her tresses,
 Smiling at her own phantom image there.
 Then, rising from her seat, she paced adown
 The halls with mincing tread of ivory feet,
 Exulting in the gifts, and oftentimes 1165
 Sweeping her glance from neck to ankle-hem.
 But then was there a fearful sight to see.
 Suddenly changed her colour: reeling back
 With trembling limbs she goes; and scarce in time
 Drops on the couch to fall not on the ground. 1170
 Then a grey handmaid, deeming peradventure
 That frenzy was of Pan or some God sent,
 Raised the prayer-cry, before she saw the foam
 White-frothing from her lips, or marked how rolled
 Her eyeballs, and her face's bloodless hue. 1175
 Then a scream, unaccordant, long and loud,
 She shrilled forth. Straight to her father's chambers one

Darted, and one unto her new-made spouse,
 To tell the bride's mischance : and all the roof
 Echoed with multitudinous-hurrying feet. 1180
 And a swift athlete's straining limbs had won
 By this the goal of the six-plethra course :
 Then she from trance all speechless of closed eyes
 Awoke—ah wretch !—with horrible-shrilling shriek :
 For like two charging hosts her agony came :—
 The golden coil about her head that lay 1185
 'Gan spurt a marvellous stream of ravening fire ;
 While the fine robes, the gift thy children brought,
 Devoured the white flesh of the unhappy one.
 Upstarting from her seat she flees, all flame, 1190
 Shaking her hair, her head, this way and that,
 To cast from her the crown ; but firmly fixed
 The gold held fast its clasp : the fire, whene'er
 She shook her locks, with doubled fury blazed.
 Then misery-vanquished falls she on the floor, 1195
 Past recognising, save for a father, marred.
 No more was seen her eyes' imperial calm,
 No more her comely features ; but the gore
 Dripped from her head's crown flecked with blended
 fire. [1200
 The flesh-flakes from her bones, like the pine's tears,
 'Neath that mysterious drug's devourings melted,—
 Dread sight !—and came on all folk fear to touch
 The corpse : her hideous fate had we for warning.
 But, ignorant of all, her wretched sire,
 Suddenly entering, falls upon her corpse, 1205
 And straightway wailed and clasped the body round,
 And kissed it, crying, “ O my hapless child,
 What God thus horribly hath thee destroyed ?
 Who maketh this old sepulchre bereft

Of thee? Ah me, would I might die with thee!" 1210
 But, when from wailing and from moans he ceased,
 Fain would he have upraised his aged frame,
 Yet clave, as ivy clings to laurel boughs,
 To those fine robes: then was a ghastly wrestling:
 For, while he laboured to upraise his knee, 1215
 She strained against him: if by force he haled,
 Then from the bones he tare his agèd flesh.
 At last refrained he, and gave up the ghost,
 Ill-starred, who could no more withstand his bane.
 There lie the corpses, child by agèd sire 1220
 Clasped;—such affliction tears, not words, must mourn.
 And of thy part no word be said by me:—
 Thyself from punishment wilt find escape.
 But man's lot now, as oft, I count a shadow,
 Nor fear to say that such as seem to be 1225
 Wise among men and cunning in speech-lore,
 Even these are chargeable with deepest folly;
 For among mortals happy man is none.
 In fortune's flood-tide might a man become [1230
 More prosperous than his neighbour: happy?—no!
 [*Exit.*

CHORUS.

Meseems the God with many an ill this day
 Will compass Jason,—yea, and rightfully.
 But O the pity of thy calamity,
 Daughter of Kreon, who to Hades' halls
 Hast passed, because with thee would Jason wed! 1235

MEDEA.

Friends, my resolve is taken, with all speed
 To slay my children, and to flee this land,
 And not to linger and to yield my sons

To death by other hands more merciless. [1240
 They needs must die: and, since it needs must be,
 Even I will give them death, who gave them life.
 Up, gird thee for the fray, mine heart! Why loiter
 To do the dread ill deeds that must be done?
 Come, wretched hand of mine, grasp thou the sword;
 Grasp it;—move toward life's bitter starting-post, 1245
 And turn not craven: think not on thy babes,
 How dear they are, how thou didst bear them: nay,
 For this short day do thou forget thy sons,
 Thereafter mourn them. For, although thou slay,
 Yet dear they are, and I a wretched woman. 1250

[*Exit Medea.*

CHORUS.

(*Str.*)

O Earth, O all-revealing splendour
 Of the Sun, look down on a woman accurst,
 Or ever she slake the murder-thirst
 Of a mother whose hands would smite the tender
 Fruit of her womb.

Look down, for she sprang of thy lineage golden,
 And by terror of men is the Gods' seed holden¹
 And the shadow of doom.

But thou, O heaven-begotten glory,
 Restrain her, refrain her: the wretched, the gory
 Erinnyes by demons dogged, we implore thee, 1260
 Cast forth of the home!

(*Ant.*)

For nought was the childbirth-travail wasted;
 For nought didst thou bear them, the near and
 the dear,
 O thou who hast fled through the Pass of Fear,

¹ Conjecturing *πίτνει* for MSS. *πίτνειν*.

From the dark-blue Clashing Crags who hast
hasted

Speeding thy flight !

Alas for her !—wherefore hath grim wrath stirred
her

Through depths of her soul, that ruthless murder
Her wrongs must requite ?

For stern upon mortals the vengeance falleth

For kin's blood spilt ; from the earth it calleth,

A voice from the Gods, and the slayers appalleth
On whose homes it shall light. 1270

[*Children's cries behind the scenes.*]

CHILD 1.

What shall I do ?—How flee my mother's hands ?

CHILD 2.

I know not, dearest brother. Death is here !

CHORUS.

Ah the cry !—dost thou hear it ?—the children's cry !

Wretch !—woman of cursèd destiny !

Shall I enter ?—My heart crieth, “ Rescue the children
from murder drawn nigh ! ”

CHILD 1.

Yea, for the Gods' sake, help ! Sore is our need—

CHILD 2.

For now we are hemmed in by the sword's death-toils !

CHORUS.

Wretch ! of what rock is thy breast ?—of what steel is
 the heart of thee moulded,
 That the babes thou hast born, with the selfsame hands
 that with love have enfolded 1280
 These, thou hast set thee to slay ?
 Of one have I heard that laid hands on her loved ones
 of old, one only,
 Even Ino distraught of the Gods, when Zeus' bride
 drave her, lonely
 And lost, from her home to stray :
 And she fell—ah wretch !—on the brink as she
 stood
 Of the sea-scaur : guilt of her children's blood
 Dragged downwards her feet to the salt sea-flood,
 And she died with her children twain.
 What ghashtlier horror remains to be wrought ?
 O bride-bed of women, with anguish fraught, 1290
 What scathe upon mortals ere now hast thou
 brought,
 What manifold bane !

Enter Jason.

JASON.

Women, which stand anear unto this roof—
 Is she within the halls, she who hath wrought
 Dread deeds, Medea, or in flight passed thence ? 1295
 For either must she hide her 'neath the earth,
 Or lift on wings her frame to heaven's far depths,
 Or taste the vengeance of a royal house.
 How, trusts she, having murdered the land's lords,
 Scatheless herself from these halls forth to flee ? 1300

Yet not for her care I, but for my sons.
 Whom she hath wronged shall recompense her wrong :
 But I to save my children's life am come,
 Lest to my grief the kinsmen of the dead
 Avenge on them their mother's impious murder. 1305

CHORUS.

Wretch, thou know'st not what depth of woe thou hast
 reached,
 Jason, or thou hadst uttered not such words.

JASON.

What now?—and is she fain to slay me too?

CHORUS.

Thy sons are dead, slain by the mother's hand.

JASON.

Ah me!—what say'st thou?—thou hast killed me,
 woman! 1310

CHORUS.

Thy children are no more: so think of them.

JASON.

How?—slew them?—Where?—within, without, the
 halls?

CHORUS.

Open, and thou shalt see thy children's corpses.

JASON.

Shoot back the bolts with all speed, serving-men!
 Unbar, that I may see this twofold woe,— 1315
 The dead, and her, with slaughter to requite her.

Medea appears in mid air in a chariot drawn by dragons.

MEDEA.

Why shakest thou these doors and wouldst unbar,
 Seeking thy dead and me who wrought the deed?
 Cease this essay. If thou wouldst aught of me, [1320
 Say what thou wilt: thine hand shall touch me never.
 Such chariot hath my father's sire, the Sun,
 Given me, a defence from foeman's hand.

JASON.

O thing abhorred! O woman hatefullest
 To Gods, to me, to all the race of men,
 Thou that couldst thrust the sword into the babes 1325
 Thou bar'st, and me hast made a childless ruin!
 Thus hast thou wrought, yet look'st thou on the sun
 And earth, who hast dared a deed most impious?
 Now ruin seize thee!—clear I see, who saw not
 Then, when from halls and land barbarian 1330
 To a Greek home I bare thee, utter bane,
 Traitress to sire and land that nurtured thee!
 Thy guilt's curse-bolt on me the Gods have launched;
 For thine own brother by his hearth thou slewest
 Ere thou didst enter fair-prowed Argo's hull. 1335
 With such deeds thou begannest. Wedded then
 To this man, and the mother of my sons,
 For wedlock-right's sake hast thou murdered them.
 There is no Grecian woman that had dared
 This:—yet I stooped to marry thee, good sooth, 1340
 Rather than these, a hateful bride and fell,
 A tigress, not a woman, harbouring

A fiercer nature than Tyrrhenian Scylla.
 But—for untold revilings would not sting
 Thee, in thy nature is such hardihood :— 1345
 Avaunt, thou miscreant stained with thy babes' blood !
 For me remains to wail my destiny,
 Who of my new-wed bride shall have no joy,
 And to the sons whom I begat and nurtured
 Living I shall not speak—lost, lost to me ! 1350

MEDEA.

I might have lengthened out long controversy
 To these thy words, if Father Zeus knew not
 How I have dealt with thee and thou with me.
 'Twas not for thee to set my couch at nought
 And live a life of bliss, bemocking me ! 1355
 Nor for thy princess, and thy marriage-kinsman,
 Kreon, unscathed to banish me this land !
 Wherefore a tigress call me, an thou wilt,
 Or Scylla, haunter of Tyrrhenian shore ;
 For thine heart have I wrung, as well behaved. 1360

JASON.

Ha, but thou sorrowest too, thou shar'st mine ills !

MEDEA.

O yea : yet grief is gain, so thou laugh not.

JASON.

O children mine, what miscreant mother had ye !

MEDEA.

O sons, destroyed by your own father's lust !

JASON.

Sooth, 'twas no hand of mine that murdered them. 1365

MEDEA.

Nay, but thine insolence and thy new-forged bonds.

JASON.

How, claim the right for wedlock's sake to slay them !

MEDEA.

A light affliction count'st thou this to woman ?

JASON.

So she be wise :—in thy sight nought were good.

MEDEA.

These live no more : this, this shall cut thine heart ! 1370

JASON.

They live—ah me !—avengers on thine head.

MEDEA.

The Gods know who began this misery.

JASON.

Yea, verily, thy spirit abhorred they know.

MEDEA.

Abhorred art thou : I loathe thy bitter tongue.

JASON.

And I thine :—yet were mutual riddance easy. 1375

MEDEA.

How then?—what shall I do?—fain would I this.

JASON.

Yield me my dead to bury and bewail.

MEDEA.

Never : with this hand will I bury them,
 To Mountain Hère's precinct bearing them,
 That never foe may do despite to them, 1380
 Rifling their tomb. This land of Sisyphus
 Will I constrain with solemn festival
 And rites to atone for this unhallowed murder.
 But I—I go unto Erechtheus' land,
 With Aigeus to abide, Pandion's son. 1385
 Thou, as is meet, foul wretch, shalt foully die,
 By Argo's wreckage smitten on the skull,
 Now thou hast seen this bridal's bitter ending.

JASON.

Now the Fury-avenger of children smite thee,
 And Justice that looketh on murder requite thee ! 1390

MEDEA.

What God or what spirit will heed thy request,
 Caitiff forsworn, who betrayest the guest ?

JASON.

Avaunt, foul thing by whose deed thy children have
 died !

MEDEA.

Go hence to thine halls, thence lead to the grave thy
 bride !

JASON.

I go, a father forlorn of the two sons reft from his
home !

1395

MEDEA.

Not yet dost thou truly mourn : abide till thine old age
come.

JASON.

O children beloved above all !

MEDEA.

Of their mother beloved, not of thee.

JASON.

Yet she slew them !

MEDEA.

That thou mightest fall in the net that
thou spreadest for me.

JASON.

Woe's me ! I yearn with my lips to press
My sons' dear lips in my wretchedness.

1400

MEDEA.

Ha, now art thou calling upon them, now wouldst thou
kiss,

Who rejectedst them then ?

JASON.

For the Gods' sake grant me but this,
The sweet soft flesh of my children to feel !

MEDEA.

No—wasted in air is all thine appeal.

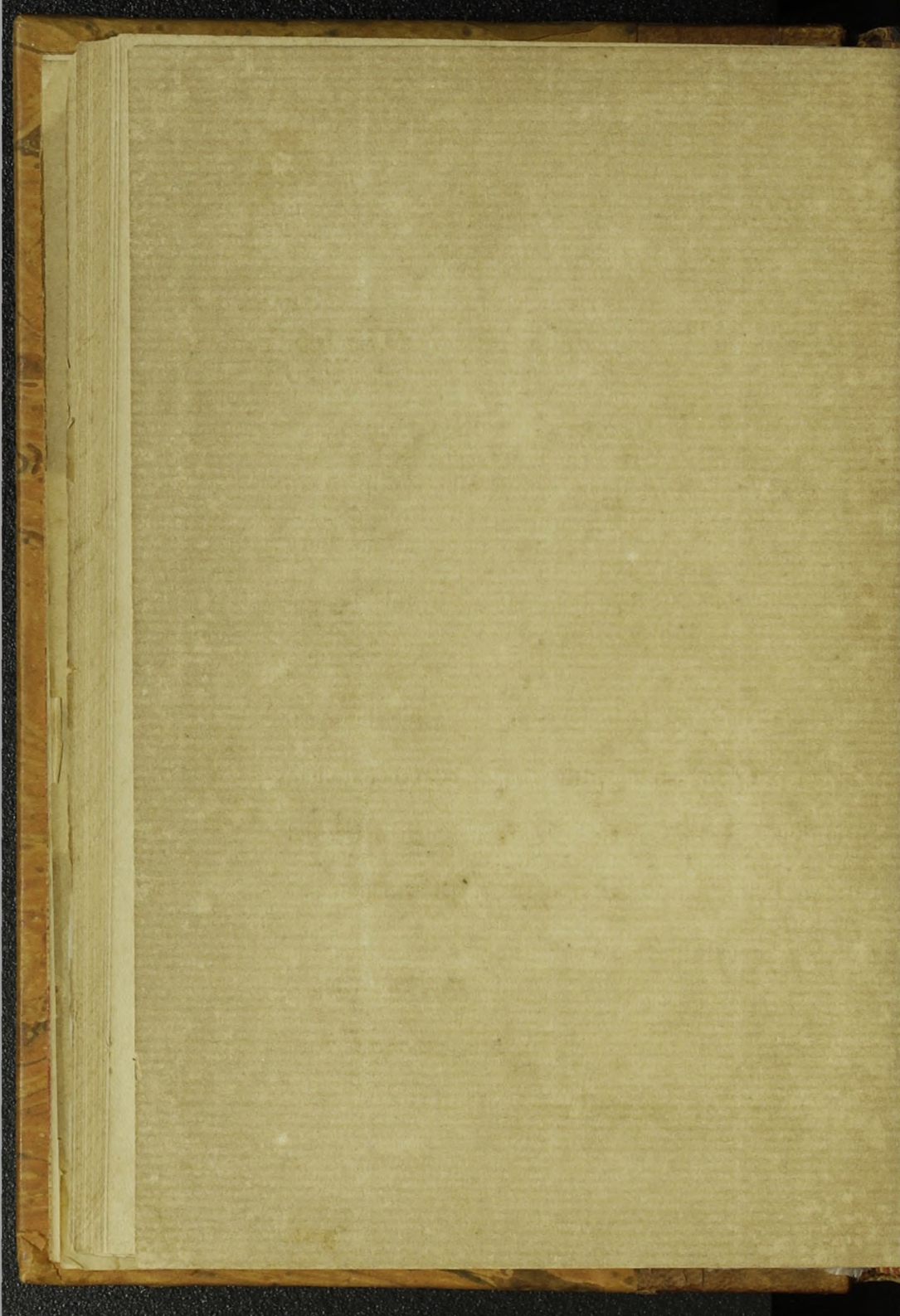
JASON.

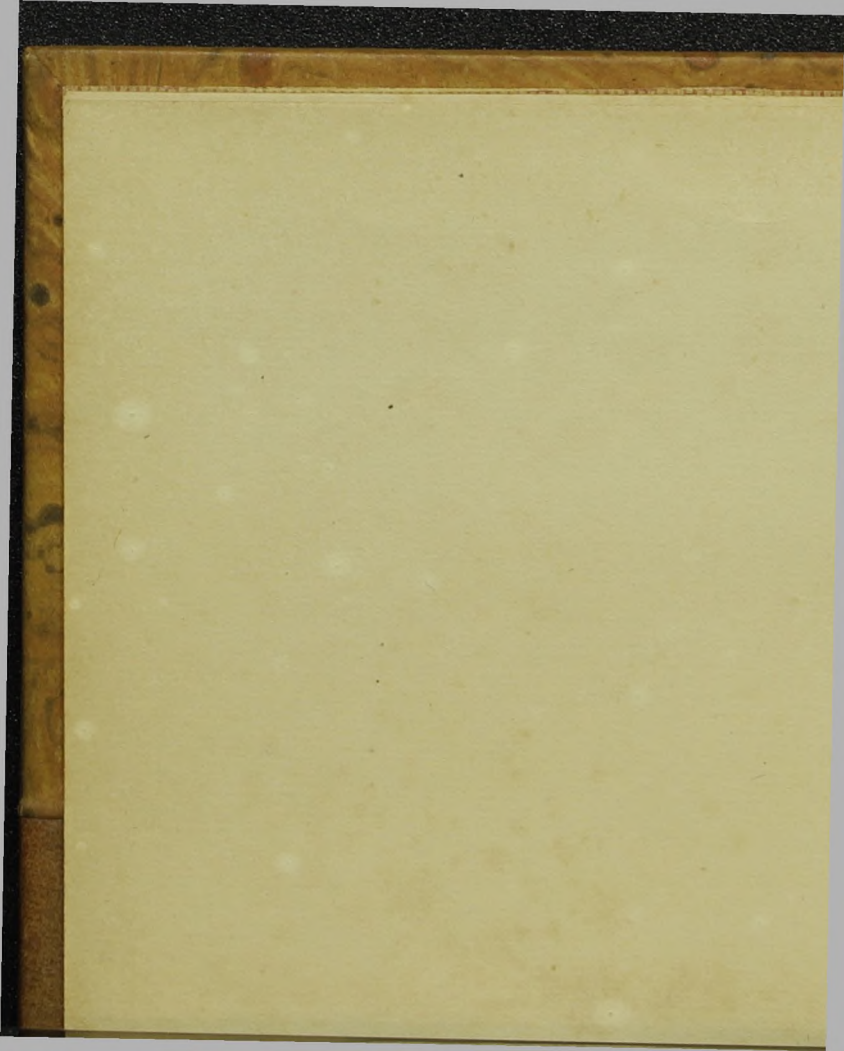
O Zeus, dost thou hear it, how spurned I am?—
 What outrage I suffer of yonder abhorred [1405
 Child-murderess, yonder tigress-dam?
 Yet out of mine helplessness, out of my shame,
 I bewail my belovèd, I call to record
 High heaven, I bid God witness the word, 1410
 That my sons thou hast slain, and withholdest me
 That mine hands may not touch them, nor bury
 their clay!
 Would God I had gotten them never, this day
 To behold them destroyed of thee!

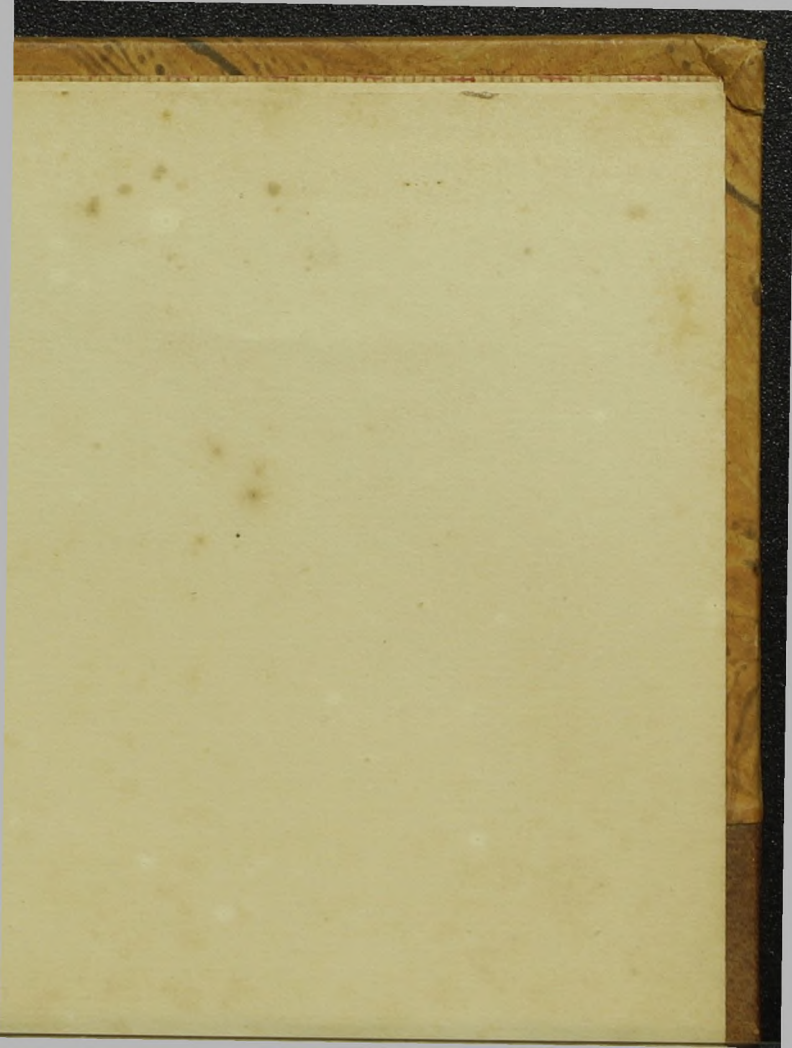
CHORUS.

All dooms be of Zeus in Olympus; 'tis his to reveal
 them. 1415
 Manifold things unhopèd-for the Gods to accomplish-
 ment bring.
 And the things that we looked for, the Gods deign not
 to fulfil them;
 And the paths undiscerned of our eyes, the Gods unseal
 them.
 So fell this marvellous thing.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*]









090
W3662

