AIAS

And, therefore, there is no man strong enough,
Be he who may, this body to entomb,
But, cast forth here upon the yellow sands,
It shall be prey for birds that haunt the shore.
Therefore, I bid thee, keep from furious wrath;
For though we failed to rule him while he lived,
We surely now will master him when dead,
Wilt thou, or no, and with our hands control.
For never when he lived would he obey
The words I spake: yet 'tis a vile man's part
For one among the people not to deign
To hear his masters. Never in a state
Can laws be well administered when dread
Has ceased to act, nor can an armed host
Be rightly ruled, if no defence of fear
And awe be present. But a man should think,
Though sturdy in his frame, he yet may fall
By some small chance of ill. And know this well,
That he who has both fear and reverence
Has also safety. But where men are free
To riot proudly, and do all their will,
That State, be sure, with steady-blowing gale,
Is driving to destruction, and will fall.
For me, let seasonable awe be mine,
Nor let us think that, doing what we please,
We shall not one day pay the penalty
In things that pain. These things come on in turn;
This fellow here was mocker hot and proud;
Now I am lifted up, and charge thee there
This body not to bury, lest thou too,
By burying him, should'st need a burial.

Chor. O Menelaos, uttering maxims wise,
Do not thyself then outrage so the dead.

Teo. I cannot wonder, friends, that one who lives,
Brought up in low estate, should faults commit,
When they who deem they come of noblest stock
Such faulty words will utter in their speech.
Come, let us start afresh: and dost thou say
That thou did'st bring this man as stanch ally
To these Achæans? Did he not sail forth,
Himself his only master? Or what right
Had'st thou to rule the people that he led
Here from his home? As Sparta's king thou cam'st,
And not as ours. No greater right had'st thou
To rule o'er him than he to reign o'er thee.
Thou cam'st an under-captain, not the lord
Of all the host, that thou should'st Aias lead.
Rule those thou rules't, vent thy solemn words
On them; but I, though thou should'st say me nay,
Or e'en that other leader, I will place
This body in the tomb with all due rites,
Not fearing thy big specches. He warred not
For that thy wife, as these who take their fill
Of many labours, but to keep the oath
By which he bound himself.\(^1\) 'Twas not for thee,
For never did he value men of nought.
Come, therefore, bring more heralds with thee here;
Yea, bring the general's self. I would not care
For all thy stir while thou art . . . what thou art.

\(Chor.\) I do not like such speech in midst of ills;
\(Sharp\) words will bite, however just they be.

\(Mene.\) This archer seems to have a lofty soul.\(^2\)

\(Teu.\) E'en so; I practise no ungente craft.

\(Mene.\) Had'st thou a shield, thy boast would soar indeed.

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\(^1\) In the post-Homeric legends, Tyndareus, the father of Helena, bound all her suitors by an oath that they would, in case of calamity, come to his daughter's help.

\(^2\) In Homer, both gods and heroes use the bow without any thought of its inferiority to other weapons. Later changes in warfare had, however, thrown it into the background, and in Sparta it was used only by the Pericæi, in Athens, by the foreigners (chiefly Scythians and Thracians) who were employed as a home-police.
AIAS

Teu. With thee, full-armed, I'll match myself light-armed.
Mene. How mightily thy tongue doth school thy thought.
Teu. With right on our side we may well be proud.
Mene. That he, slaying me, should prosper, was that right? a
Teu. "Slaying thee!" 'Twere strange if thou wert dead, who liv'st.
Mene. God saves me still; in his intent I'm slain.
Teu. Saved by the Gods, put not the Gods to shame.
Mene. What? Find I fault with laws of those in heaven?
Teu. Yes, if thou stopp'st my burying of the dead.
Mene. The burial of my foes: for 'tis not well.
Teu. And when was Aias ever found thy foe?
Mene. He hated me; I him; and this thou know'st.
Teu. Yes; for 'twas thou did'st cheat with juggling votes.
Mene. That fault was with the judges, not with me.
Teu. With goodly stealth, then, thou would'st work much ill.
Mene. This speech shall bring a bitter grief to some.
Teu. Not one whit more, 'twould seem, than we shall cause.
Mene. I say but this, thou shalt not bury him.
Teu. And hear thou this, that buried he shall be.
Mene. I once did see a man full bold of speech, Who urged his sailors in a storm to sail, But not a word had he, when driven to prayer By stress of tempest, but beneath a cloak He crouched, and let each sailor tread on him; And so for thee, and those thy haughty lips, Some great storm, blowing from a tiny cloud, Shall soon, perchance; hush all thy clamorous speech.
Teu. And I have seen a man of folly full
AIAS

Who wantoned proudly in his neighbour's ills,
And then one came, in fashion like to me,
And like in mood, and looked, and spake this word:
"O man, abstain from outrage to the dead,
For if thou dost it, dearly shalt thou pay."
Such counsel did he give that wretched fool,
And now I see him; and he is, 'twould seem,
None else but thee. Do I speak parables?

Mene. I go my way, for it is sore disgrace
With words to punish, force being in our power. [Exit.

Teu. Go, then, thy way; to me 'tis worst disgrace
To hear a vain fool prating empty words.

Chor. Struggle of mighty strife there soon will be;
But thou, O Teucros, speed,
Haste, some deep pit to find,
Where he shall find a grave of dreariest gloom,
Yet one which men will hold in memory.

[Telemessa advances, with Eurysakes holding her hand.

Teu. And lo! they come at very nick of time,
And stand hard by, this hero's wife and child,
To deck the burial of the ill-starred dead.
Come hither, boy, and standing suppliantly,
Lay hand upon the father that begat thee,
And sitting in the guise of one who prays,
Hold in thy hands my locks, and hers, and thine,
A treasure of entreaty. And should one
In all our army tear thee from the dead,
May he thus base, unburied, basely die,
An exile from his home, with all his race
As utterly cut off, as I now cut
This braided lock. Take it, O boy, and keep;
Let no man move thee, hold it suppliant;
And ye stand by him, not as women found
Who should be men, but help him till I come
To bury him, though all should hinder me. [Exit.
AIAS

STROPHE I

Chor. When will it end, the last of wandering years,
That ever bring to me
The ceaseless woe of war’s unresting toils,
Through Troia, drear and wide,
The Hellenes’ shame and reproach?

ANTISTROPHE I

Would that that man had entered Heaven’s high vault,
Or Hades, man’s last home,
Who for the Hellenes stirred War’s hateful strife;
(O woes that woe beget!)
For he hath laid men low.

STROPHE II

He hath given me never to share
The joy of garlands of flowers,
Nor that of the deep, flowing cups,
Nor the dulcet notes of the flute,
Nor—curses light on his head!—
The pleasure that cometh with sleep.
Yea, from love, from love and its joys
He hath cut me off. (Ah, woe is me!)
And here I lie, cared for by none,
My locks all wet with the dews,
Keepsake of Troia the sad.

ANTISTROPHE II

Till now against terrors of night,
And sharp arrows a bulwark and stay,
Was Aias, the mighty and strong;
Now he, too, a victim is gone
To the God that ruleth in gloom;
What joy remaineth for me?
Would I were there, where the rock,
Thick-wooded and washed by the waves,
AIAS

Hangs o'er the face of the deep,
Under Sunion's broad jutting peak,
That there we might hail, once again,
Athena, the holy, the blest.¹

Enter Teucros.

Teu. Lo! I have hastened, seeing our general come,
Our Agamemnon, speeding on his way,
And plain it is he comes to speak hard words.

Enter Agamemnon.

Agam. They tell me that thou darest feaful words
To vent against us with impunity,
Thou, yes, e'en thou, of captive mistres. born;
A noble mother truly can'st thou boast,
That thou dost speak so loftily, and walk
On tip-toe proudly, who, being nought, dost strive
For him who is as nothing, and dost swear
We did not come to rule the host or fleet,
Or thee, or the Achæans; but thou say'st
That Aias sailed himself his only lord.
And are not these big words to hear from slaves?
And what was he for whom thou vaunted thus?
Where went he, or where stood, where I was not?
Had the Achæans then no men but him?
A strife full bitter for Achilles' arms
We set before the Argives then, 'twould seem,
If everywhere a Teucros call us base,
And ye are not content, though worsted quite,
To yield to what the judges have decreed
With all but one consent, but still revile
Our name, and, when defeated, strike at us

¹ The words point to what every hearer of the play must have
been familiar with. As a homeward ship rounded the point of
Sunion, the Acropolis was seen in the distance, and all on board
offered their prayers to the two national deities, Athena and
Poseidon, whose shrines stood on the promontory.
Aias

In secret guile. With such a mood as this
There can be no establishment of law,
If we shall cast off those whose right prevails,
And lead the hindmost to the foremost rank.
Nay, we must check these things. The safest men
Are not the stout, broad-shouldered, brawny ones,
But still wise thinkers everywhere prevail;
And oxen, broad of back, by smallest scouge
Are, spite of all, driven forward in the way;
And that sure spell, I see, will come ere long
On thee, unless thou somehow wisdom gain,
Who, when thy lord is gone, a powerless shade,
Art bold, with wanton insolence of speech.
Wilt thou not learn self-mastery? Wilt thou not,
Remembering what thou art by birth, when next
Thou comest, bring some free-born man with thee
Who, in thy stead, shall speak thy words to us?¹
For I, indeed, learn nothing by thy speech,
Thy barbarous accent so offends mine ear.

Chor. Would that ye both self-mastery could learn:
Better than this I cannot wish you both.

Teu. Alas! How soon the credit of the dead
Flits, and is gone, and proves but treacherous stay,
When this man, Aias, takes no count of thee,
Not e'en in poor, cheap words, for whom thou oft
Thy life exposing, strovest in the fight;
But all the past is past, and thrown aside.
O thou that speakest such a senseless speech,
Hast thou no memory, none, of that same day
When ye were shut within the bulwarks high,
Already good as dead, and he, himself,
Alone, came on to help, and freed you all,

¹ A slave, or foreigner, according to the laws of Athens and most Greek states, was not allowed to plead personally, but had to be represented by a citizen. Agamemnon taunts Teucros—as the son, not of Eurboea, the wife, but of Hesione, the concubine, of Telamon with being an alien.
Putting to flight your foes, when fire had seized
*Your ships' tall masts, and where the sailors sit,
And Hector's self was leaping o'er the trench
Right on your sailors' boats?¹ Who staved this off?
Was it not he of whom thou now dost say,
That never did he stir a foot for thee?
Nay, wrought he not in your sight noble deeds?
And yet once more, when he went forth to meet,
In single combat, Hector, casting lots,
At no man's word, the lot which he put in
Was no deserter, lump of moistened clay,²
But one full sure to be the first to leap
With nimble spring from out the crested helm;
'Twas he that did all this, and I with him,
The base-born slave, of alien mother sprung.
Thou wretch, what face hast thou to utter this?
And know'st thou not the father that begat
Thy father, Pelops, was of alien blood,
A Phrygian born of old;³ that Atreus, he
Who gave thee life, was godless in his deeds,
And placed before his brother banquet soul
Of his own children's flesh; and thou thyself
Wast born of Cretan mother, whom her sire,
Detecting with the alien, headlong cast
A prey to voiceless fishes? And dost thou,
Such as thou art, reproach me with my birth,
Such as I am, who on my father's side,

¹ Comp. Iliad, xv. 415.
² Sophocles, with a slight anachronism, brings before his Athenian audience what they were always willing to listen to, the story of the fraud by which the Dorian Cresphontes had obtained possession of Messenia.
³ In one form of the Pelops mythos, Thyestes, the brother of Atreus, was the adulterer, and Atreus drowned the adulteress. Here, however, Sophocles follows the legend which made Aeges, while yet in Crete, guilty of unchastity, and condemned by her father, Cratemus, to die by drowning. The executioner spared her, and she afterwards married Atreus.
AIAS

From Telamon am sprung, who gained the prize
Of all the host for valour, and obtained
My mother as a concubine, who claimed
A kingly birth from old Laomedon,
And whom Alcmena's son as chosen gift
Gave to my father? And should I, thus sprung
Noble, from noblest, shame my kith and kin,
Whom now, in such ill plight as this enwrapt,
Thou thrustest out unburied, and dost feel
No shame to speak it? But of this be sure,
If ye will cast him forth, ye will cast, too,
Us three around him clinging; for 'twere good,
Striving for him to die in open fight,
Much rather than for that false wife of thine,¹
Or for thy brother; wherefore look thou well
Not to my business only but thine own;
For should'st thou hurt me, thou shalt wish to be
A coward rather than wax bold on me.

Enter Odyssey

Chor. Thou com'st, O King Odyssey, seasonably,
If thou art here to stop, not stir the strife.
Odys. What is it, sirs? for from afar I heard
The Atreide's clamour o'er this noble corpse.
Agam. And have we not, O King Odyssey, heard
But now most shameful language from this man?
Odys. What was it? I can much forgive a man
Who, hearing vile things, answers evil words.
Agam. Foul words he heard, for such his deeds to me.
Odys. And what was this he did that injured thee?
Agam. He says he will not leave this corpse un-
tombed,

¹ So the text stands, yet the Trojan war was waged, not for the
wife of Agamemnon, but for Helen, the wife of Menelaos. There
may, perhaps, be a taunt implied in the phrase, implying either
(1) that Agamemnon fought for Helen as if he were her husband,
or (2) that he was urged to the war by his own wife, the sister of Helen.
AIAS

But, spite of my command, will bury it.

Odys. And may I, as a friend who speaks the truth,
Row in thy boat, as welcome as before?

Agam. Speak on; or else I should be most unwise,
Who count thee, of all Argives, truest friend.

Odys. Hear then; by all the Gods, I thee entreat,
Cast not this man out so unfeelingly,
Nor leave him there unburied. Let not wrath
Prevail on thee that thou should'st hate so far
As upon right to trample. Unto me
This man of all the host was greatest foe,
Since I prevailed to gain Achilles' arms;
But, though he were so, being what he was,
I would not put so foul a shame on him,
As not to own I looked upon a man,
The best and bravest of the Argive host,
Of all that came to Troy, saving one,
Achilles' self. Most wrong 'twould therefore be
That he should suffer outrage at thy hands;
Thou would'st not trample upon him alone,
But on the laws of God. It is not right
To harm, though thou should'st chance to hate him sore,
A man of noble nature lying dead.

Agam. Art thou, Odysseus, this man's champion
found?

Odys. E'en so; I hated while 'twas right to hate.

Agam. Ought'st thou not then to trample on him
dead?

Odys. In wrongful gain, Atreides, find not joy.

Agam. Full hard this fear of God for sovereign
prince.

Odys. Not so'to honour friends who counsel well,

Agam. The noblest man should those that rule obey.

Odys. Hush! thou dost rule when worsted by thy
friends.

Agam. Remember thou to whom thou giv'st this grace.
AIAS

Odys. An énemy, but still a noble one.
Agam. What wilt thou? Dost thou a foe's corpse revere?
Odys. Far more than hatred valour weighs with me.
Agam. Fickle and wayward, natures such as thine.
Odys. Many once friends again are bitter foes.
Agam. And dost thou praise the getting friends like these?

Odys. Unbending mood I am not wont to praise.
Agam. Thou wilt this very day make cowards of us.
Odys. Nay, righteous men in all the Hellenes' eyes.
Agam. And dost thou bid me let him bury it?
Odys. I do, for I myself shall come to that.
Agam. All men are like; each labours for himself.
Odys. Whom should I work for more than for myself?
Agam. It shall be called thy work then, and not mine.
Odys. Howe'er that be, in any case thou'rt kind.
Agam. But know this well, that I would grant to thee

Far greater boon than even this thou ask'st;
But as for him, or here, or there, he still
Is hateful to me... But have thou thy will.

Chor. Who says, Odysseus, thou'rt not wise of heart,
Being what thou art, shall prove himself a fool.

Odys. And now I tell to Teucros that I stand
A friend as true as once I was a foe,
And I desire to join in burying him
Who there lies dead, to join in all the toil,
And fail in nought of all that men should pay
Of homage to the noblest men of earth.

Teu. O good Odysseus, words of praise are mine
For all thou dost, and thou hast falsified
My thoughts of thee, for thou, most hostile found
To him of all the Argives, stood'st alone
To help him with thy hands, and did'st not dare
To trample living upon him the dead,
When this brain-stricken captain of the host,  
He and his brother with him, came and sought  
To cast him out deprived of sepulture.  
Now, therefore, may the Father whose high sway  
Olympus rules, Erinnys noting guilt,  
And Justice the avenger punish them  
For foul deeds fouly, even as they wished  
To cast this man to shame unmerited.  
And thee, O son of aged Lartios,  
Loth am I now to let thee take thy share  
In burying him, lest I perchance should do  
What he, the dead, approves not. [All the rest  
Do thou do with me, and, if thou wilt bring  
Some soldiers from the host, we shall not grieve.]  
All else will I do, and for thee, know well,  
Thou show'st thyself to us as great of soul.  
Ody. I fain had joined, but if it please thee not  
That we should share, I go thy words accepting.  

Teu. Enough; already the time  
Is wearing swiftly away;  
Haste ye, some to prepare  
A deep hollowed pit for the grave,  
And some a tall tripod set  
Fit for our task, girt with fire,  
Meet for washing the dead.  
One band, let it fetch from the tent  
His breast-plate, his greaves, and his sword:  
And thou, O boy, in thy love,  
With all the strength that thou hast,  
Here, with thy hand on his side,  
Thy father's, lift him with me;  
For still the hot veins pour their stream,  
The dark, thick blood of his strength.  
But come ye, come, one and all,  
Who boast of yourselves as his friends;  
Hasten, come quick to the work,
Labouring for him who in all
Was good, and none better than he.

Chor. Men may know many things on seeing them;
But, ere they come in sight,
No man is prophet of the things that come,
To tell how he shall fare.

1430
PHILOCTETES

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Odysseus.
Neoptolemos, son of Achilles.
Philoctetes.

Hercules.
Attendant.
Sailor.

ARGUMENT.—Philoctetes, son of Pæas, king of the Malians, of Æta, in Thessaly, wooed Helena, the daughter of Tyndareus; and her father having bound him and the other suitors by an oath, to defend her in case of wrong, he joined the great expedition of the Hellenes against Troia. And as he landed at Chryse, treading rashly on the sacred ground of the nymph from whom the island took its name, he was bitten in the foot by a snake; and the wound became so noisome, and the cries of his agony so sharp, that the host could not endure his presence, and sent him in charge of Odysseus to Lemnos, and there he was left. And nine years passed away, and Achilles had died, and Hector, and Aias, and yet Troia was not taken. But the Greeks took prisoner Helenos, a son of Priam, who had the gift of prophecy, and they learnt from him that it was decreed that it should never be taken but by the son of Achilles, and with the bow of Heracles. Now, this bow was in the hands of Philoctetes, for Heracles loved him, because he found him faithful; and when he died on Æta, it was Philoctetes who climbed up the hill with him, and prepared the funeral pyre, and kindled it: therefore Heracles gave him his arrows and his bow. The Hellenes, then, first sent to Skyros to fetch Neoptolemos, the son of Achilles, and then, when he had arrived, they despatched him with Odysseus to bring Philoctetes from Lemnos.
PHILOCTETES

Scene.—The shore of Lemnos. Rocks and a Cave in the background.

Enter Odysseus, Neoptolemos, and Attendant, followed by Chorus of Sailors, who remain in the background.

Odys. Here, then, we reach this shore of sea-girt isle,
Of Lemnos, by the foot of man untrod,
Without inhabitant, where, long ago,
(O thou who growest up to man’s estate,
Sprung from a father noblest of the Greeks,
Son of Achilles, Neoptolemos,)  
I set on shore the Melian, Pœas’ son,
His foot all ulcerous with an eating sore,
Sent on this errand by the chiefs that rule;
For never were we able tranquilly
To join in incense-offerings, nor to pour
Libations, but with clamour fierce and wild
He harassed all the encampment, shouting loud,
And groaning low. What need to speak of this?
It is no time for any length of speech,
Lest he should hear of my approach, and I
Upset the whole contrivance wherewithal
I think to take him. But thy task it is
To do thine office now, and search out well
Where lies a cavern here with double mouth,
Where in the winter twofold sunny side
Is found to sit in, while in summer heat
The breeze sends slumber through the tunnelled vault;
And just below, a little to the left,
PHILOCTETES

Thou may'st perchance a stream of water see,
If still it flow there. Go, and show in silence
If he is dwelling in this self-same spot,
Or wanders elsewhere, that in all that comes
Thou may'st give heed to me, and I may speak,
And common counsels work for good from both.

Neop. [Clambering on the rocks.] O King Odysseus, no
far task thou giv'st;
For such a cave, methinks, I see hard by.

Odys. Above thee or below? for this I see not.

Neop. *Here, just above; yet footprint there is none.

Odys. Look to it lest he chance to sleep within.

Neop. I see an empty cave untenanted.

Odys. *Are there no household luxuries within?

Neop. Some leaves pressed down as for some dweller's
use.

Odys. Is all else empty? nought beneath the roof?

Neop. A simple cup of wood, the common work
Of some poor craftsman, and this tinder stuff.

Odys. His precious store it is thou tell'st me of.

Neop. [Starting back.] Ah! . . . And here, too, these
rags are set to dry,
Full of some foul and sickening noisomeness.

Odys. Clearly the man is dwelling in this spot,
And is not distant. How could one so worn
With that old evil in his foot go far?
But either he is gone in search of food,
Or knows perchance some herb medicinal;
And therefore send this man to act the scout,
Lest he should come upon me unawares,
For he would rather seize on me than take
All other Argives.

[Exit Attendant.

Neop. He is gone to watch
The path. If aught thou needest, speak again.

Odys. Now should'st thou prove thyself, Achilles'
son,
PHILOCTETES

Stout-hearted for the task for which thou cam’st,
Not in thy body only, but if thou
Should’st hear strange things, by thee unknown till now,
Still give thy help, as subaltern to me.

Neoptolemos. What dost thou bid me?

Ulysses. Thou must cheat and trick
The heart of Philoctetes with thy words;
And when he asks thee who and what thou art,
Say thou’rt Achilles’ son, (that hide thou not,)
And that thou sailest homeward, leaving there
The Achaeans’ armament; with bitter hate
Hating them all, who having sent to beg
Thy coming with their prayers, as having this
Their only way to capture Ilion’s towers,
Then did not deign to grant thee, seeking them
With special claims, our great Achilles’ arms,
But gave them to Odysseus. What thou wilt
Say thou against me to the utmost ill:
In this thou wilt not grieve me; but if thou
Wilt not do this, on all the Argive host
Thou wilt bring sorrow; for, unless we get
His bow and arrows, it will not be thine
To sack the plain of Dardanos. And how
I cannot have, and thou may’st have access
To him both safe and trustworthy, learn thus;
For thou hast sailed as bound by oath to none,
Not by constraint, nor with the earlier host,
But none of all these things can I deny;
So, if he sees me while he holds his bow,
I perish, and shall cause thy death as well.
But this one piece of craft thou needs must work,

1 For the suitors of Helen, who followed Agamemnon because of the oath with which her father Tyndareus had bound them, it would have been disgraceful to leave the army. Neoptolemos was under no such obligations, and this would give a probability to this story which, with any other of the host, would be wanting.
PHILOCTETES

That thou may'st steal those arms invincible.
I know, O boy, thy nature is not apt
To speak such things, nor evil guile devise;
But sweet it is to gain the conqueror's prize;
Therefore be bold. Hereafter, once again,
We will appear in sight of all as just.
But now for one short day give me thyself,
And cast off shame, and then, in time to come,
Be honoured, as of all men most devout.

_Neop._ The things, O son of Lartios, which I grieve
To hear in words, those same I hate to do.
I was not born to act with evil arts,
Nor I myself, nor, as they say, my sire.
Prepared am I to take the man by force,
And not by fraud: for he with one weak foot
Will fail in strength to master force like ours;
And yet, being sent thy colleague, I am loth
To get the name of traitor; but I wish,
O king, to miss my mark in acting well,
Rather than conquer, acting evilly.

_Odys._ O son of noble sire, I, too, when young,
Had a slow tongue and ready-working hand;
But now, by long experience, I have found
Not deeds, but words prevail at last with men.

_Neop._ But what is all thou biddest me say but lies?
_Odys._ I bid thee Philoctetes take with guile.
_Neop._ And why by guile, when suasion might succeed?
_Odys._ He will not hearken, and by force thou can'st not.
_Neop._ Has he so dread a strength whereeto he trusts?
_Odys._ His darts unerring, bringing swiftest death.
_Neop._ Is it not safe, then, e'en to speak with him?
_Odys._ Not so, unless, as I repeat, in guile.
_Neop._ Dost thou not count it base to utter lies?
_Odys._ Not so, when falsehood brings deliverance.
_Neop._ But with what face can one such falsehoods
    speak?
PHILOCTETES

Odys. When acts bring gain, it is not well to shrink.
Neop. What gain for me that he should come to Troia?
Odys. This bow and this alone shall Troia take.
Neop. Am I not destined, as thou said'st, to take it?
Odys. Nor thou from these, nor these from thee apart.
Neop. If so it stands, then we must hunt for them.
Odys. So doing thou shalt gain two gifts of price.
Neop. What are they? Learning them I shall not shrink.

Odys. Thou shalt be known at once as wise and good.
Neop. Come, then, I'll do it, casting off all shame. 180
Odys. Rememb'rest thou the counsel that I gave?
Neop. Be sure of that, when I have once agreed.
Odys. Do thou, then, here abiding, wait for him,
And I will go, lest I be seen with thee,
And send our scout to yon ship back again.
And if ye seem to me to linger long,
The self-same man will I send back, in guise
Of seaman's dress, his form disguising so
That he may come unknown; and thou, my son,
When he speaks craftily, do thou receive
The things that profit in each word he drops:
Now to the ship I go, and trust to thee;
And Hermes, God of Guile, who sends us on,
And Victory, e'en Athena Polias, 1
Who saves me ever, lead us on to win.

Chorus advances.

STROPHÉ I

Chor. What, what is meet, my prince,
For me, a stranger in a land that's strange,
To utter or conceal,
With one so prone to look suspiciously?

1 The form of the invocation connected itself with the sanctuaries
of Athens. Besides the temple built to her as Athena Polias, there
was a statue of her in the Acropolis in the character of Victory.
PHILOCTETES

Tell me, I pray; his art
All other art and counsel still excels,
Whose hands the sceptre wield
That Zeus assigns from heaven to them that rule; 140
And thou, my son, hast gained
This glory of the old ancestral past;
Tell me, then, tell, I pray,
What service 'tis our work to do for thee.

NEOP. Now, it may be, thou dost wish
To see the place where he lies
Far off. Take courage, and look;
But when he appears who went forth,
Wayfarer dread from his home,
Then come thou at my beck,
And strive to render thy help
As each present need may demand.

ANTISTROPHE I

CHOR. Thou tell'st, O my king,
Of what has been full long a care to us,
To watch that eye of thine
For thine especial need; but tell, I pray,
What kind of home is his,
And in what spot he now may chance to be.
'Tis not unmeet to know,
Lest he should fall upon me unawares
What place, what seat has he,
What path, or near, or far, does he now tread?

NEOP. Thou seest this dwelling with its double
door,
Its chamber in the rock.

CHOR. And where is that poor sufferer absent now?

NEOP. To me it is plain that he treads
This path near, hunting for food.
For this is the fashion of life,
So rumour runs, that he leads,
PHILOCTETES

With swift darts shooting the game,
Wretched, and wretchedly fed,
And that here none wendeth his way,
As friend and healer of ills.

STROPE II

Chor. I pity him, for one,
Thinking how he, with none to care for him,
Seeing no face of friend,
Ever, poor wretch, in dreary loneliness,
Suffers from sore disease,
And wanders on in sore perplexity
At every urgent need.
Oh, how, yea, how can he his sorrows bear?
*O handiwork of Gods!
O wretched men, who miss their life's true mean!

ANTISTROPE II

He, born of ancient house,
And falling short of none of all the line,
Now stript of all the things
That make up life, lies here, apart from all,
With dappled deer, or beasts
With shaggy manes, still dwelling in his pain,
In hunger fierce, with grief
That none can heal; and Echo far and wide,
With ever-babbling cry,
Repeats his wail of bitter, loud lament.

Neop. I wonder at none of these things;
If I err not, they come from a God,
From Chryse, ruthless of soul,
And now the woes that he bears,
With none to care for him near,
From some God needs must they come,

1 In one form of the legend, Chryse was enamoured of Philoctetes, and, failing to gain his love, cursed him, and caused the serpent to avenge her.
PHILOCTETES

That he may not Troia destroy
With darts of Gods none can resist,
Ere the time run on to its close,
When, as they say, it is doomed
To be by those weapons subdued.

Chor. Hush, hush, O boy!

Neop. What is this?

Chor. The sounds of step we heard,
As of some man who drags his weary way,
Or here or there around;
There falls, ah yes, there falls, upon my ears
Clear sound of one who creeps,
Slow and reluctant, on the well-worn track.
It is not hid from me

That bitter cry that cometh from afar,
Wearing man's strength away;

For very clearly comes his wailing cry,
But now, O boy, 'tis time . . . .

Neop. For what?

Chor. For thoughts and counsels new,

For lo! the man is not far off, but near;
No note of reed-pipe his,
As shepherd roaming idly through the fields,
But stumbling, for sheer pain,
He utters a lament that travels far,
Or seeing this our ship
Lying anchored in the bay inhospitable;
For sharp and dread his cry.

Enter PHILOCTETES in worn and tattered raiment.

Phil. Ho, there, my friends!

Who are ye that have come to this our shore,
And by what chance? for neither is it safe
To anchor in, nor yet inhabited.
What may I guess your country and your race?
Your outward guise and dress of Hellas speak,
PHILOCTETES

To me most dear, and yet I fain would hear
Your speech; and draw not back from me in dread,
As fearing this my wild and savage look,
But pity one unhappy, left alone,
Thus helpless, friendless, worn with many ills.
Speak, if it be ye come to me as friends:
Nay, answer me, it is not meet that I
Should fail of this from you, nor ye from me.

Neop. Know this then first, O stranger, that we come,
Of Hellas all; for this thou seek’st to know.

Phil. O dear-loved sound! Ah me! what joy it is
After long years to hear a voice like thine!
What led thee hither, what need brought thee here?
Whither thy voyage, what blest wind bore thee on?
Tell all, that I may know thee who thou art.

Neop. By birth I came from sea-girt Skyros’ isle,
And I sail homeward, I, Achilles’ son,
Named Neoptolemus. Now know’st thou all.

Phil. O son of dearest father, much-loved land,
Thou darling boy of Lycomedes old,
Whence sailing, whither bound, hast thou steered hither?

Neop. At present I from Ilion make my voyage.

Phil. What say’st thou? Thou was surely not with us
A sailor when the fleet to Ilion came?

Neop. What? Didst thou, too, share that great enter-
prise?

Phil. And know’st thou not, O boy, whom thou dost see?

Neop. How can I know a man I ne’er beheld?

Phil. And didst thou never hear my name, nor fame
Of these my ills, in which I pined away?

Neop. Know that I nothing know of what thou ask’st.

Phil. O crushed with many woes, and of the Gods
Hated am I, of whom, in this my woe,
No rumour travelled homeward, nor went forth

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PHILOCTETES

Through any clime of Hellas! But the men
Who cast me out in scorn of holiest laws
Laugh in their sleeve, and this my sore disease
Still grows apace, and passes into worse.
My son, O boy that call'st Achilles sire,
Lo! I am he, of whom perchance thou heard'st,
That I possess the arms of Heracles,
The son of Pæas, Philoctetes, whom
Our generals twain and Kephallen's king
Basely cast forth thus desolate, worn out
Through fierce disease, with bite of murderous snake,
Fierce bite, sore smitten; and with that, O boy,
Thus desolate they left me, when they touched
From sea-girt Chryse in their armament;
And when they saw me, tired and tempest-worn,
Asleep in vaulted cave upon the shore,
Gladly they went, and left me, giving me
Some wretched rags that might a beggar suit,
And some small store of food they chanced to have.
And thou, my son, what kind of waking-up
Think'st thou I had, when I arose from sleep,
And found them gone—what bitter tears I wept.
What groans of woe I uttered? when I saw
The ships all gone, with which till then I sailed,
And no man on the spot to give me aid,
Nor help me struggling with my sore disease;
And, looking all around, I nothing found
But pain and torment, and of this, my son,
Full plenteous store. And so the years went on,
Month after month, and in this lowly cell
I needs must wait—upon myself. My bow
Found what my hunger needed, striking down
The swift-winged doves, but whatsoever the dart,

1 Kephallen is named, rather than Ithaca, as implying a greater scorn, the Kephallenians being of ill repute both as traders and as pirates.
Philoctetes

Sent from the string, might hit, to that poor I
Must wend my way, and drag my wretched foot,
Even to that; and if I wanted drink,
Or, when the frost was out in winter time,
Had need to cleave my firewood, this poor I
Crept out, and fetched. And then no fire had I,
But rubbing stone with stone I brought to light,
Not without toil, the spark deep hid within;
And this e'en now preserves me; for a cell
To dwell in, if one has but fire, provides
All that I need, except release from pain.
And now, my son, learn thou this island's tale:
No sailor here approaches willingly,
For neither is there harbour, nor a town,
Where sailing he may profit gain, or lodge.
No men of prudence make their voyage here;
Yet some, perchance, may come against their will;
(Such things will happen in the lapse of years;)
And these, my son, when they do come, in words
Show pity on me, and perchance they give
Some food in their compassion, and some clothes;
But none is willing, when I mention that,
To take me safely home, but here poor I
Wear out my life, for nine long years and more,
In hunger and distress this eating sore
Still nursing. Such the deeds th' Atreidæ did,
And great Odysseus. May the Olympian Gods
Give them to bear like recompense for this!

Chor. I seem, O Pœas' son, to pity thee
As much as any stranger that has come.

Neop. And I myself am witness to thy words,
And know that they are true, for I have found
The Atreidæ and the great Odysseus base.

Phil. What! Hast thou too a grudge against those
vile ones,
The Atreidæ, that thy wrongs have stirred thy rage?
PHILOCTETES

Neop. Would it were mine some day to glut my rage! That Sparta and Mykenæ both might know, that Skyros, too, is mother of brave men.

Phil. Well said, O boy! And what offence has caused
This mighty wrath with which thou comest here?

Neop. I'll tell thee, Pezas' son, though scarce I can, What I endured of outrage at their hands; For when the Fates decreed Achilles' death, . . .

Phil. Ah me! Speak nothing further till I learn This first; and is the son of Peleus dead?

Neop. Dead is he, not by any man shot down, But by a God,—by Phoebos, as they say.1

Phil. Well, noble He that slew, and he that fell; And I, my son, am much in doubt, if first To ask thy sufferings, or to mourn for him.

Neop. Thine own misfortunes are enough, I trow; Thou need'st not sorrow o'er thy neighbour's lot.

Phil. Thou sayest well, and therefore tell again That business in the which they outraged thee.

Neop. There came for me in ship all gaily decked, High-born Odysseus, and my father's friend,2 Who reared his youth, and said, or true or false, That since my father's death none else but me Might take the Towers. And so with words like these, O stranger, no long time they kept me there From sailing quickly; chiefly in my love, My longing love for him who lay there dead, That I might see him yet unsepulchred, For never had I known him. Next to this, Promise full fair there was that I should go, And take the Towers that over Troia hang.

1 "As they say;" for the arrow, though guided by Apollo, was shot by Paris.

2 Phoenix, who, as the legend ran, went with Odysseus to Skyros to fetch the son of Achilles.
And as I sailed our second morning's voyage,
With prospering oar Sigeion's shore I reached,
Full bitter to me; and forthwith the host,
All standing round, with one voice greeted me,
E'en as I landed, swearing that they saw
Achilles who was gone, alive again;
He then lay there, and I, poor hapless boy,
Wept over him, and not long after went
To those Atreidæ as my friends, (for so
'Twas meet to think them,) and of them I asked
My father's arms, and all things else of his.
And they spake out, ah me! a shameless speech:
"O offspring of Achilles, all the rest
That was thy father's it is thine to choose;
But of those arms another now is lord,
Laertes' son." And I with many a tear
Rise up in hot displeasure, and I say,
In my fierce wrath, "O wretch! and have ye dared
To give my arms, before ye learnt my mind,
To any but to me?" And then there spake
Odysseus, for he chanced to stand hard by,
"Yea, boy; most justly have they given them me,
For I, being with him, saved both him and them."
And I, being angry, hurled all evil words
Straight in his teeth, and nothing left unsaid,
Should he deprive me of those arms of mine.
And he at this point, though not prone to wrath,
Stung to the quick, thus answered what he heard:
"Thou wast not where we were, but stood'st aloof
Where thou should'st not; and since thou speak'st to
us,
So bold of tongue, with these thou ne'er shalt sail
To Skyros back." And hearing words like these,
And foul reproaches, now I homeward sail,
Out of mine own rights cheated by a man
Base-born, Odysseus, basest of the base.
PHILOCTETES

And yet I blame not him so much as those
Who reign supreme; for all a city hangs,
And all an army, on the men that rule;
And they who wax unruly in their deeds
Come to be base through mood of those that guide.
Now my whole tale is told, and he who hates
The Atreidæ, may he be my friend and God's!

Chor. O Goddess Earth, that reignest on the hills,¹
Giver of food to all;
Mother of Zeus himself,
Who dwelllest where the full Pactolos rolls²
Its streams o'er golden sands;
There also, dreaded Mother, I invoked thee,
When all the scorn of the Atreidæ fell
On him who standeth here,
When they his father's weapons gave away
(O Holy One, who sittest on thy car,
On lions fierce that slay the mighty bulls!)
To Lartios' son a glory and a prize.

Phil. 'Twould seem that you have hither sailed, my friends,
With sorrow's friendship-token, and with mine
Your voice accords, so that I see these deeds
Are by the Atreidæ and Odysseus done:
For well I know that he with that glib tongue
Leaves no base speech or subtlety untouched,
From which nought right shall in the issue spring.
At this I marvel not, but much to think
The elder Aias should have seen and borne it

Neopt. He was not living, friend. Had he but lived,
I had not then been plundered of these things.

¹ The Goddess, Earth (Ga) is here, as in the later form of Greek mythology, identified (1) with Cretan Rhea, the mother of Zeus, and (2) with the Phrygian Kybele, riding on her lions, the Goddess of the land where the Atreidæ had done their wrong.
² The Pactolos flowed from Mount Tmolos, the head-quarters of the worship of Kybele.
PHILOCTETES

Phil. What say'st thou? Is he also dead and gone?
Neop. Think thou of him as seeing light no more.
Phil. Ah, wretched me! That son to Tydeus born,
That child of Sisyphos that Lartios bought, ¹
They will not die;—for they ought not to live.
Neop. Not dead are they, be sure: but, lo! they live,
And now are mighty in the Argives' host.
Phil. And what of that old worthy, my good friend,
Nestor of Pylos; for he still was wont
With his wise counsels to restrain their ill.
Neop. He, too, fares badly, since Antilochos,
His dear-loved son, has left him and is dead.
Phil. Ah, me! These two that thou hast told me of,
Were those whose deaths I least had wished to hear.
Fie on it! fie! and whither can one look,
When these men die and here Odysseus lives,
Who ought in their stead to be named a corpse?
Neop. A crafty foe is he, yet craftiest schemes,
O Philoctetes, oft a hindrance find.
Phil. Now tell me, by the Gods, and where is he,
Patroclos, whom thy father loved so well?
Neop. He too is dead, and I, in one short speech,
Will tell thee this, that war ne'er wills to take
One scoundrel soul, but evermore the good.
Phil. I bear thee witness, and for that same reason
I'll ask thee now of one of little worth,
But open-mouthed and crafty, how he fares.
Neop. And who is this thou speak'st of but Odys-
seus?
Phil. I mean not him, but one, Thersites named,
Who never was content to speak but once,
When no man asked him,—know'st thou if he lives?
Neop. I saw him not, but heard that still he lived.
Phil. Well may he live, for nothing bad will die,

¹ See note on Aias, 188.
PHILOCTETES

So well the Gods do fence it round about;
And still they joy to turn from Hades back
The cunning and the crafty, while they send
The just and good below. What thoughts can I
Of such things form, how offer praise, when still,
Praising the Gods, I find the Gods are base?

Neop. I, O thou son of sire whom Æta knows,
I, for the future, with a far-off glance
At Ilion and the Atreidæ, stand on guard;
And where the worse o’erpowers the better man,
And good things perish, and the coward wins,
These men, and such as these, I ne’er will love;
But rocky Skyros shall in times to come¹
Suffice for me to take mine ease at home.
Now to my ship I go. And thou, O son
Of Æneas, fare thee well, good luck be thine,
And may the Gods release thee from thy pain,
As thou desirest! Now then let us start;
When God fair weather gives us, then we sail.

Phil. And do ye start already?

Neop. Yes; the time
Bids us our voyage think near, and not far off.

Phil. By thy dear sire and mother, I, my son,
Implore thee as a suppliant, by all else
To these most dear, thus lonely leave me not,
Abandoned to these evils which thou seest,
With which thou hearest that I still abide;
But think of me as thrown on you by chance:
Right well I know how noisome such a freight;
Yet still do thou endure it. Noble souls
Still find the base is hateful, and the good
Is full of glory. And for thee, my son,
Leaving me here comes shame that is not good;

¹ The proverbial poverty and insignificance of the island gave
the resolve of Neoptolemos a special emphasis. "Even Skyros,
poor as it is."
PHILOCTETES

But doing what I ask thee thou shalt have
Thy meed of greatest honour, should I reach
Alive and well the shores of Æta's land.

Come, come! The trouble lasts not one whole day:
Take heart; receive me; put me where thou wilt,
In hold, or stern, or stem, where least of all
I should molest my fellow-passengers.

Ah, by great Zeus, the suppliant's God, consent;
I pray thee, hearken. On my knees I beg,
Lame though I be and powerless in my limbs.

Nay, leave me not thus desolate, away
From every human footstep. Bring me safe,
Or to my home, or where Chalkodon holds

His seat in fair Eubœa: thence the sail
To Æta and the ridge of Trachis steep,
And fair Spercheios is not far from me,
That thou may'st shew me to my father dear,
Of whom long since I've feared that he perchance

Has passed away. For many messages
I sent to him by those who hither came,
Yea, suppliant prayers that he would hither send,
Himself to fetch me home. But either he

Is dead, or else, as happens oft with men
Who errands take, they holding me, 'twould seem,
In slight account, pushed on their homeward voyage.

But now, for here I come to thee as one
At once my escort and my messenger,
Be thou my helper, my deliverer thou,
Seeing all things full of fear and perilous chance,

Or to fare well, or fall in evil case;
And one that's free from sorrow should look out
For coming dangers, and, when most at ease,

1 Chalkodon, son of Abas, had been the ally of Heracles: so
Philoctetes might therefore naturally look for a welcome from him.
In Athenian legends, Elephenor, the son of Chalkodon, was the
friend of Theseus.
PHILOCTETES

Should then keep wariest watch upon his life,
Lest unawares he perish utterly.
   Chor. Have pity, O my prince, for he hath told
       Of sorrows which, I pray
       No friend of mine may know.
But if, O prince, the Atreidæ, rough and fierce,
   Thou hastest in thy soul,
I, reckoning on the profit-side for him
The evil they have done, would take him home,
   And on my good ship swift
Make for the haven which his heart desires,
Escaping thus the righteous wrath of Gods.
   Neop. Take heed lest thou be very pliant now,
But when thou hast thy fill of that foul pest,
   Should'st show no more at one with these thy words.
   Chor. Far be that from me! Thou shalt ne'er have cause
With that reproach to vilify my name.
   Neop. Right shameful were it I more loth should seem
Than thou to help a stranger in his need:
   But, if it please you, let us sail at once.
And let him too be quick to start with us;
   Our ship will take him, will not say him nay.
This only pray I, that the Gods may bring us
From this land safe to where we seek to sail.
   Phil. O day best loved by me, and man most dear,
And ye, my sailor friends, how best may I
Show in my acts the grateful love I feel?
Come, let us go, my son, and bid farewell
To that my homeless home, that thou may'st learn
What way I lived, and how I was by nature
Full stout of heart. Another man, I trow,
Would hardly even bear with glance of eye,
To look on such a sight. But I have learnt,
Through sheer constraint, to acquiesce in ills.
   Chor. [To Neoptolemos.] Stop; let us learn. Two
   men draw near, the one
HILOCTETES

A sailor from thy ship, the other seems
A stranger. Ask of them, and then go in.

Entr. Attendant, disguised as a trader, and a Sailor.

Att. Son of Achilles, this my shipmate here,
Who with two others o'er the ship kept watch,
To me did tell where thou might'st chance to be;
For so met him, not intending it,
But to the self-same harbour brought by chance.
For I, owner of my little boat,
Was making home from Ilion to the shores
Of Persethos, where the grapes grow fair;¹
And when I heard that all those sailors there
Had sailed with thee, I deemed it well to wait
Silent no longer, but to tell thee all,
And thus to sail with what my news deserves:
For that I know'st naught of what concerns thee much,
The new plans which the Argives form for thee;
Nor are they plans alone, but of a truth
Are being done, no longer tarrying.

Neopt. I owe thee thanks for this thy forethought, friend,
And will be not base those thanks will last.
But tell me what thou mean'st, that I may know
What new device thou from the Argives bring'st.

Att. They with good show of ships pursue thee now,
The aged Phœnix and great Theseus' sons.

Neopt. By force to bring me back, or by their words?

Att. I know not; what I heard, I come to tell.

Neopt. And can it be that Phœnix and his mates
Take such good speed for those Atreidæ's sake?

Att. Know that this is being done and lingers not.

Neopt. How was it then Odysseus did not come,

¹ Persethos, almost as famous as Chios for its wine, would
   turn out to be one of the chief sources of supply for the Hellenes who
   were besieging Troia. In the time of Demosthenes, its produce
   was exported as far as Pontus.
PHILOCTETES

A volunteer, self-summoned? Did he fear?

Attend. He and the son of Tydeus went their way 570
To seek another, when I started forth.

Neop. And who was this for whom Odysseus sailed?

Attend. There was a man, ... but tell me first who this
I see may be, and what thou say'st, speak low.

Neop. This, friend, is Philoctetes, known to fame.

Attend. Ask me no more, but with thine utmost speed
Hasten thy way, and from this island sail.

Phil. What saith he, boy, and why with darkling words
Does he, that sailor, traffic in my life?

Neop. I know not what he says, but all he speaks 580
He must speak out to thee, and me, and these.

Attend. O son of great Achilles, charge me not
Before the host with saying things I ought not;
For I, doing them good service, (far at least
As poor man can), get good return for it.

Neop. I am the Atreidæ's foe, and this man here
Is my best friend, because he hates them too;
And thou, who comest as a friend to me,
Should'st not hide from us aught of what thou heard'st.

Attend. Take heed, O boy.

Neop. Long since I'm on the watch.

Attend. I'll hold thee guilty.

Neop. Hold, but tell thy tale. 590

Attend. That will I tell. It is to bring this man
Those twain, whose names thou knowest, Tydeus' son
And great Odysseus, sail, by oath fast bound
That they will either bring him back, with words
Persuading him, or else with force and arms;
And all the Achæans heard Odysseus speak
This clearly out. More confident was he
That he should do it than the other was.

Neop. And for what cause, so long a time elapsed,
Did those Atreidæ turn to seek this man
Whom for so long they had in exile left?
PHILOCTETES

Whence came this yearning? Can it be the power
And vengeance of the Gods who wrong requite?

*Attend.* All this, for thou perchance hast heard it not,
I now will tell. A certain noble seer,
A son of Priam, Helenos his name,
There was, whom this man, going forth alone
By night (I mean Odysseus, full of craft,
On whom all words of shame and baseness fall)
As prisoner took, and where the Achæans meet
As goodly spoil displayed him. And he then,
Both all the rest to them did prophesy,
And that they should not take the Towers that hang
O’er Troïa, till, with words persuading him,
They fetched the man who in this island dwells.
And when Laertes’ offspring heard the seer
Say this, he straightway promised he would bring
This man, and to the Achæans show him there,
And that he thought to do it with his will,
But, will or nill, to bring him: and he gave
Full leave to any man to take his head
If he should fail. And now, boy, thou hast heard
All that I know, and I must counsel speed
For thee and him, and any man thou lov’st.

*Phil.* Ah, woe is me! Did he, that utter mischief,
Swear to persuade me, and to bring me back
To those Achæans? Just as soon would I
Be moved, when dead, from Hades to return
To light of day, as that man’s father did.¹

*Attend.* Of this I know not. To my ship I go,
And now God send you all his choicest gifts. [Exit

*Phil.* And is it not, boy, dreadful that this man,
The son of Lartios, should expect to bring me

¹ Sisyphos, who is spoken of as the real father of Odysseus, had,
it was said, begged Persephone to allow him to return to the world
of the living that he might punish his wife, Merope, for leaving him
unburied, and then refused to go back again to Hades.
PHILOCTETES

With glozing words, and show me from his ship
To all the crowd of Argives? Nay, not so:
For rather would I listen to the voice
Of that dread viper which my soul most hates,
That made me thus disabled. But his soul
Will say all, dare all, and I know full well
That he will come. But now, boy, let us go,
That a wide sea may part us from the ship
Odysseus sails in. Oft hath timely haste,
When toil hath ceased, brought slumber and repose.

Neop. Were it not well, when this head-wind shall cease,
Then to sail on, for now 'tis in our teeth?

Phil. 'Tis all fair sailing when thou flee'st from ill.

Neop. *I know it, but the wind retards them too.

Phil. There is no wind retards the pirate's work,

When time is come for theft and plundering.

Neop. Well, if it please thee, let us go, but first
Take what thou needest and desirest most.

Phil. Some things there are I need, though small the
choice.

Neop. What is there which thou find'st not on my ship?

Phil. A herb there is with which I mostly lull
My wound's sharp pain, and make it bearable.

Neop. Well, bring it out. What else desirest thou?

Phil. If from my quiver aught has chanced to drop
Through my neglect, that no man find it here.

Neop. Is this that thou dost bear the far-famed bow?

Phil. This, and none other hold I in my hands.

Neop. And may I have a nearer view of it,
And hold it, and salute it, as a God?

Phil. Thou shalt have this, my son, and if aught else
Of mine shall please thee, that too shall be thine.

Neop. I wish and long, and yet my wish stands thus;
I fain would, were it right; if not, refuse.

Phil. Thou askest but thy due, and it is right,

My son, who only giv'st me to behold
PHILOCTETES

The light of day, and yon Ætæan shore,
My aged father, and my friends,—whose arm,
When I was trodden down, has raised me up
Above my foes. Take heart: it shall be thine
To touch them, yea, and give them back to me,
And boast that thou, alone of all that live,
Hast, for thy virtue’s sake, laid hands on them:
For I too gained them by good deeds I did.

Neop. I grieve not now to see thee as a friend,
And take thee with me, for a man that knows,
Receiving good, to render good again,
Would be a friend worth more than land or goods;
Go thou within.

Phil. And I will take thee too:
My ailment makes me crave to have thy help.

[Exeunt into the cavern.

STROPHÉ I

Chor. I know the tale, though these eyes saw it not,
Of him who came too near
The marriage-bed of Zeus,
*How him, a prisoner bound on whirling wheel,
The son of Kronos smote, omnipotent;¹
But never have I seen or heard of one
Of mortal men that met
A gloomier fate than his,
Who having done no wrong to life or goods,
But just among the just,
Was brought thus low, in doom dishonourable:
And wonder holds my soul,
How he, still hearing in his loneliness
The dashing of the breakers on the shore,

¹ Ixion’s guilt, in the old Greek legends, was, first, that of treacherous murder, and then, when Zeus had compassion upon the madness and misery that followed, the crime here referred to, for which Zeus bound him for ever to a fiery, never-resting wheel in Tartaros.
PHILOCTETES

Endured still to live
A life all lamentable;

ANTISTROPHE I

Where he alone was neighbour to himself,
Powerless to move a limb,
And having on this isle
No habitant, companion in his grief,
With whom to wail his sharp and bleeding pain,
In echoing burst of lamentation loud,
With none to stanch or soothe
(When such ill came on him)
The scalding blood that oozed from cankering sore
Of that envenomed foot,
With healing herbs, or fetch them from the earth
That giveth food to all;
But ever like a child without its nurse,
Now here, now there, he dragged his writhing limbs,
Wending his way for ease,
When the pain respite gave:

STROPHE II

Never from out the lap of sacred earth
The seed-corn gathering,
Nor aught that we, who live by work, enjoy,
But only what perchance
He gained, the pangs of hunger to appease,
With those swift-winged darts
That travelled straight and far.
O soul deep plunged in woe,
Who never, in the space of ten long years,
Did know the wine-cup’s joy,
But still did go, where eager glance might guide,
To drink of standing pool;

ANTISTROPHE II

But now, thou, meeting one from heroes sprung,
PHILOCTETES

Shalt end in being great,
And prosper well after those woes of thine;
Who now, the long months passed,
Art borne in ship that travels o'er the waves
To that thy father's home,
Where wander Malia's nympha,
And by Spercheios' banks,
Where he who bore the brazen shield, though man,\(^1\)
Draws near, a God, to Gods,
Bright with the fire that flashes from the sky,
High above Æta's slopes.

Enter PHILOCTETES and NEOPTOLEMOS from the cavern.

Neop. Come, if thou wilt. But why, without a cause,
Stand'st thou so silent and astonished?
Phil. [Groaning heavily.] Ah! ah! ah!
Neop. What means this cry?
Phil. 'Tis nought, my son; go on.
Neop. Art thou in pain from onset of disease?
Phil. Not so, not so; I think 'tis easier now.
Ye Gods! ye Gods!
Neop. Why groan'st thou thus, and callest on the Gods?
Phil. That they may come with power to soothe and save.
Ah! ah! ah! [Groaning in agony.]
Neop. What ails thee? Wilt thou thus thy silence keep,
And wilt not tell? 'Tis clear some ill is on thee.
Phil. I perish, O my son, and cannot hide
The evil from thee? Oh, it darts, it darts.
O misery! O miserable me!

\(^1\) The man who bore the brazen shield is, of course, Heracles, the friend of Philoctetes, from whom, though as yet neither he nor the Chorus dream of it, his deliverance is at last to come.
PHILOCTETES

I perish, O my son; it eats me up.

[Gasps with suppressed agony.

Oh! by the Gods, my son, if thou hast there
A sword at hand, smite thou this foot of mine,
And lop it off at once. Care not for life:
Come, boy, be quick. . . . .

Neop. And what new sudden grief
Is this for which thou mak’st this wailing and lament?

Phil. Thou know’st, my son.

Neop. What is’t?

Phil. Thou knowest, boy.

Neop. What is it? I know not.

Phil. How can it be
Thou dost not know it well? Ah me! Ah me!

[Gasping, as before.

Neop. Sore is the growing weight of thy disease.

Phil. Yea, sore beyond all words: nay, pity me.

Neop. What shall I do then?

Phil. Do not in thy fear
Desert me, for it now is come, perchance,
*After long time, retreating when ’tis sated.

Neop. Ah! miserable one, most miserable,
All worn with many woes, dost thou then wish
That I should hold thee, touch thee?

Phil. Nay, not so:
But take my bow and arrows, which but now
Thou asked’st for, and keep them till the force
Of the sharp pain be spent; yea, guard them well,
For slumber takes me, when this evil ends;
Nor can it cease before: but thou must leave me
To sleep in peace: and should they come meanwhile,
Of whom we heard, by all the Gods I charge thee,
Nor with thy will, nor yet against it, give
These things to them, by any art entrapped,
Lest thou should’st deal destruction on thyself,
And me, who am thy suppliant.
PHILOCTETES

Neop. Take good heart,
If forethought can avail. To none but thee
And me shall they be given. Hand them me,
And good luck come with them!

Phil. [Giving his bow and arrows to Neoptolemos.]
Lo there, my son!

Receive thou them, but first adore the Power
Whose name is Jealousy, that they may prove
To thee less full of trouble than they were
To me, and him who owned them ere I owned.

Neop. So be it, O ye Gods, to both of us;
And may we have a fair and prosperous voyage
Where God thinks right, and these our ships are bound.

Phil. I fear, O boy, lest all thy prayers be vain;
For now the dark blood, oozing from the depths,
Drops once again, and I await a change.

Ah! ah! ah me!
Fie on thee, foot, what evil wilt thou work?
It creeps, it comes again on me. Ah me!
O miserable me! Ye know it now:
Flee ye not from me—flee ye not, I pray!
O Kephallenian friend, would God this pain
Might fasten on thy breast, and pierce thee through!
Ah me! Once more, ah me! Ye generals twain,—
Thou, Agamemnon, Menelaos, thou,—
Would God ye both might bear this fell disease,
As long a time as I! Woe, woe is me!
O Death! O Death! why com'st thou not to me,
Thus summoned day by day continually?
And thou my son, brave boy, come, cast me in,
Consume me in this Lemnian fire, dear boy,
By me so oft invoked. I too of old,

1 The "Lemnian fire" is that of the volcano Mosychlos, which had become the type-instance of burning mountains to the Athenians after the conquest of the island by Miltiades. In what follows, Philoctetes refers to his kindling the funeral pyre of Heracles on Mount Oeta.
PHILOCTETES

For these his arms which now thou cherishest,
Thought meet to do this for the son of Zeus.
What say'st thou, boy? what say'st thou? Why not
speak?
Where go thy thoughts now?
Neop. Troubled sore long since,
Lamenting thy misfortunes.

Phil. Nay, O boy,
Be of good cheer. It comes upon me sharply,
And quickly goes away. Nay, leave me not,
I pray thee, here alone.
Neop. Fear not; we'll stay.
Phil. And wilt thou stay?

Neop. Deem that beyond all doubt. 

Phil. I do not care to bind thee by an oath.
Neop. I may not go from hence apart from thee.
Phil. Give me thy hand as pledge.

Neop. I give it thee
As pledge of our remaining.

Phil. [Starting in agony.] Take me there,
There, there, I say.
Neop. But whither meanest thou?

Phil. Above. . . .

Neop. [Laying hold on PHILOCTETES.] Why ravest thou,
and why dost gaze
Upon yon vault above us?

Phil. Let me go,
I tell thee; let me go!

Neop. Where shall I leave thee?
Phil. Leave me, I say, a while.

Neop. It may not be.
Phil. If thou but touch me, thou wilt work my
death.

Neop. [Releasing him.] And I will let thee go, if thou,
indeed,
Art calmer now.
PHILOCTETES

Phil. [Throwing himself on the ground.] O Earth, receive me here,
Just as I am, half-dead. This sore disease
No longer lets me hold myself upright. [Falls asleep.]
Neop. Sleep, so `twould seem, would make the man its own
In no long time; for, lo! his head droops back,
And drops of sweat from all his body fall,
And the dark vein from out his instep breaks,
Bursting with blood. But let us leave him here
In peace, that he may fall on sleep at last.

STROPHE

Chor. Come, blowing softly, Sleep, that know'st not pain,
Sleep, ignorant of grief,
Come softly, surely, kingly Sleep, and bless;
Keep still before his eyes
*The band of light which lies upon them now.
Come, come, thou healing one:
And thou, my son, take heed
How thou or stand or stir,
And what new counsels lie before us now;
Thou see'st him: wherefore, then,
Do we delay to act?
Occasion guiding counsel, in all things,
If used at once, gains prize of victory.

Neop. [In an altered tone, as if chanting an oracle.] He, indeed, heareth nought, and well I see that all vainly,
Sailing off without him, we gain the spoil of his weapons.
[His are the glory and crown, him the God bade us bring with us; And sore disgrace will it be, false boasting of task-work unfinished.

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PHILOCTETES

ANTISTROPHE

Chor. For this, my son, God’s will shall well provide;
But what thou speak’st again
Speak gently, O my son, speak gently now
With ’bated breath, speak low.
To all whom pain and sickness make their own,
Sleep is but sleepless still,
And quick to glance and see.
But now, with all thy power,
Look thou to that, to that, all secretly,
See how thou best may’st work.
Thou know’st well whom I serve;
And if thy measures be the same as his,
*Then men of judgment look for troubles sore.

EPODE

The time is come, my son, the time is come
All sightless, void of help,
The man in darkness lies,
(Right sound is sleep beneath the burning sun,)
And stirs nor hand, nor foot, nor any limb,
But seems like one in Hades stretched full length.
Look to it well, and think if thou dost speak
The things that suit the time.
Far as my mind can grasp,
The toil that brings no fear holds highest place.
Neop. I bid you hush, nor lose your wits in fear;
The man has oped his eyes, and lifts his head.
Phil. [Waking.] O light that follow’st sleep! O help, my thoughts
Had never dared to hope for from these strangers!
For never had I dreamt, O boy, that thou
With such true pity would’st endure to bear
All these my sorrows, and remain, and help.
The Atreidæ ne’er had heart to bear with them,
As well as thou hast borne. Brave generals they!
PHILOCTETES

But thou, my son, who art of noble heart,
And sprung from noble-hearted ones, hast made
But light of all, though every sense be filled
With stench and shrieks. And now, since respite seems
At hand, and some refreshment after pain,
Do thou, my son, upraise me, steady me,
That when the pain shall leave me, we may make
Straight for the ship, and tarry not to sail.

Neopt. Right glad am I to see, beyond all hopes,
That thou dost live and breathe, as free from pain;
For, measured by the nature of thine ills,
Thy symptoms were of one who breathes no more.
But now rise up, or, if it please thee best,
These men shall bear thee, nor will grudge their toil,
Since this seems right to thee and me to do.

Phil. I thank thee, boy. Do thou, as thou dost say,
Upraise me; but for these men, let them be,
Lest they too soon be sickened with the stench;
To dwell with me on board is bad enough.

Neopt. So shall it be; but rise, and lean on me.

[Philoctetes rises, with the help of Neoptolemos,
and walks, leaning on his arm.

Phil. Be not afraid; long use will keep me straight.
Neopt. [Suddenly starting.] O heavens! what now re-
mains for me to do?

Phil. What ails thee, O my son? What words are
these?

Neopt. I know not how to speak my sore distress.
Phil. Distress from what? Speak not such words,
my son.

Neopt. And yet in that calamity I stand.
Phil. It cannot be my wound’s foul noisomeness.
Hath made thee loth to take me in thy ship?
Neopt. All things are noisome when a man deserts
His own true self, and does what is not meet.
Phil. But thou, at least, nor doest aught nor say’st,
PHILOCTETES

Unworthy of thy father's soul, when thou
Dost help a man right honest.

Neop. I shall seem
Basest of men. Long since this tortured me.

Phil. Not from thy deeds, but from thy words I shrink.

Neop. What shall I do, O Zeus! Once more be found
A villain, hiding things I should not hide,
And speaking words most shameful?

Phil. This man seems
Unless my judgment errs, about to sail,
Betraying and deserting me.

Neop. Not so;
'Tis not deserting thee that tortures me,
But lest I take thee to thine own distress.

Phil. What means this, boy? I do not grasp thy scope.

Neop. I will hide nought. Thou must to Troia sail,
To those Atreidæ and the Argive host.

Phil. Ah me! what say'st thou?

Neop. Groan not till thou know.

Phil. What knowledge? What mean'st thou to do
with me?

Neop. To save thee from this evil first, and then
With thee to go and ravage Troia's plains.

Phil. And dost thou think, indeed, to do all this?

Neop. A stern necessity compels; and thou,
Hear me, and be not angry.

Phil. I am lost,
Ah me! betrayed. What hast thou done to me,
O stranger? Give me back my bow again.

Neop. That may not be. To list to those that rule
Both with the right, and mine own good accords.

Phil. Thou fire, thou utter mischief, masterpiece
Of craft most hateful, how thou treated'st me,
Yea, how deceived'st! Art thou not ashamed,
Thou wretch, to look on me thy suppliant,
Fleeing to thee for succour? Taking these,
PHILOCTETES

My arrows, thou dost rob me of my life;
Restore them, I beseech thee, I implore,
Restore them, O my son. By all the Gods
Thy fathers worshipped, rob me not of life.
Ah, wretched me! He does not answer me,
But looks away as one who will not yield.
O creeks! O cliffs out-jutting in the deep!
O all ye haunts of beasts that roam the hills,
O rocks that go sheer down, to you I wail,
(No other do I know to whom to speak,)
To you who were my old familiar friends,
The things this son of great Achilles does;
Swearing that he would take me to my home
He takes me off to Troia; giving me
His right hand as a pledge, he keeps my bow,
The bow of Heracles, the son of Zeus,
And fain would show me to the Argive host.
He takes me off by force, as though I were
In my full strength, and knows not that he slays
A dead, cold corpse, a very vapour’s shade,
A phantom worthless. Never, were I strong,
Had he o’erpowered me; even as I am
He had not caught me but by fraud; but now
I have been tricked most vilely. What comes next?
What must I do? . . . Nay, give them back to me.
Be thyself once again. . . . What sayest thou?
Thou’rt silent . . . I, poor I, am now as nought.
O cave with double opening, once again
I enter thee stript bare, my means of life
Torn from me. I shall waste away alone
In this my dwelling, slaying with this bow
Nor wingèd bird, nor beast that roams the hills;
But I myself, alas, shall give a meal
To those who gave me mine, and whom I chased
Now shall chase me; and I, in misery,
Shall pay in death the penalty of death.
PHILOCTETES

By me inflicted; and all this is done
By one who seemed to know no evil thought:
Destruction seize thee. . . . Nay, not yet, till I
Have learnt if thou wilt once more change thy mood;
If not, then may’st thou perish miserably!

Chor. [To Neoptolemos.] What shall we do? It rests
with thee, O prince,
To bid us sail, or with his words comply.

Neop. Not for the first time now, but long ago
Has a strange pity seized me for this man.

Phil. Have mercy on me, boy, by all the Gods,
And do not shame thyself by tricking me.

Neop. What shall I do? Ah, would I ne’er had left
My Skyros! so great evils press on me.

Phil. Thou art not base thyself, but from the base
Learning foul evil, thou, ’twould seem, did’st come:
Now leaving it to those whom it befits,
Sail on thy way . . . but first give back my arms.

Neop. [To Chorus.] What shall we do, friends?

Enter Odysseus, suddenly appearing from behind.

Odys. Wretch, what doest thou?
Wilt not go back, and give the bow to me?

Phil. Ah! Who is this? Do I Odysseus hear?

Odys. Know well, it is Odysseus that stands here?

Phil. Woe! woe! I am entrapped, I am undone;
And was it he who snared me, filched mine arms?

Odys. I and none other. I avow the deed.

Phil. [To Neoptolemos.] Dear boy, restore it; give
me back my bow.

Odys. That he shall not do, even though he wish;
Thou too go’st with them, or these men shall force thee.

Phil. What? me? thou basest and all-daring one;
And shall they force me?

Odys. Yea, unless thou go
Of thine own will.

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PHILOCTETES

Phil. O land of Lemnos’ isle,
O mightiest Fire by great Hephaestos wrought,
Can it be borne this man should bear me off
By force from thy dominions?

Odys. Zeus, ’tis Zeus,
Know thou this well, that rules this land—that Zeus
Who wills these things; I but his servant am.

Phil. O hateful wretch, what bold device is this?
Sheltering thyself behind the Gods, thou mak’st
The Gods as liars.

Odys. Nay, not so, but true;
At any rate this journey thou must go.

Phil. No, that I will not.

Odys. Yes, thou shalt: obey!

Phil. Ah, miserable me! ’Tis clear our sire
Begat us not as freemen, but as slaves.

Odys. Nay, nay, not so, but equal with the best,
With whom thou too must Troia take and sack,
And raze it to the ground.

Phil. [Rushing to a projecting point of the cliff.] That
ne’er shall be,
Not though I needs must suffer every ill,
While yet this beetling crag is left to me.

Odys. What wilt thou do?

Phil. From this rock throw myself,
And dash my head upon the rock below.

Odys. [To the Sailors.] Quick, hold him fast. Prevent
his doing it.

[Sailors seize Philoctetes, and bind his
hands behind his back.]

Phil. O hands! What shame ye suffer, lacking now
The bow-string that ye loved so well, and thus
Made prisoners by this man! O thou, whose soul

1 The "fire" is again that of the volcano, which was believed to
come from the forge at which Hephaestos laboured in the heart of
the mountain.
PHILOCTETES

Has never known a generous, healthy thought,
How hast thou tricked me, ta'en me in a snare,
Putting this boy I knew not, as thy blind,
Unmeet for thee, for me of meetest mood,
Who nothing knew except to do his task:
And, clearly, now he grieves, sore vexed at heart,
At all his faults, at all my sufferings,
But thy base soul, that ever peeps and spies
Through chinks and crannies, taught him but too well,
Guileless and all unwilling as he was,
The subtlety of fraud. And now thou think'st,
O wretch, to bind and take me from these shores,
Where thou did'st cast me forth, in friendless case,
Lonely and homeless, dead to all that live.
Perdition seize thee! That I oft have prayed,
But since the Gods grant nought that pleases me,
Thou laugh'st and liv'st, and I am vexed at heart
At this same thing, that I live on in woe
With many evils, flouted at by thee,
And those two chiefs, the Atreidæ whom thou serv'st:
And yet thou sailed'st with them by constraint,
By tricks fast bound, while me, poor wretch, (who sailed
With seven good ships, of mine own will,) they cast,
(So thou say'st, but they say the deed was thine,)
Dishonoured forth. And now why take ye me?
Why drag me off? What aim have ye in this?
I, who am nothing, long since dead to you,
Yea, am I not, O thou abhorred of Gods,
Lame, and ill-savoured? How, if I should sail,
Could ye unto the Gods burn sacrifice,
Or pour libation? 'Twas on that pretence
Ye cast me forth. Perdition seize you all!
And it shall seize you, seeing ye have wronged
Him who stands here, if yet the Gods regard
Or, right, or truth. And full assured am I
They do regard them. For ye ne'er had come
PHILOCTETES

On this your errand for a wretch like me,
Unless the pricks of heaven-sent yearning for him
Had spurred you on. But, O my fatherland,
And all ye Gods who look on me, avenge,
Avenge me on them all in time to come,
If ye have pity on me. Piteously
As now I live, if I could see them smitten,
I then should deem my long disease was healed.

Chor. Sore vexed is he; sore words the stranger speaks,
Not yielding, O Odysseus, to his ills.

Odys. I might say much in answer to his words,
If there were time. Now this one word I speak:
Where men like this are wanted, such am I;
But when the time for good and just men calls,
Thou could'st not find a godlier man than me.
In every case it is my bent to win;
Except with thee. To thee of mine own will
I yield the victory. Ho, leave him there!
Lay no hand on him, let him here remain.
With these thy arms we have no need of thee:
Teucros is with us, skilled in this thine art;
And I, too, boast that I, not less than thou,
This bow can handle, with my hand shoot straight;
What need we thee? In Lemnos walk at will;
And let us go. And they perchance will give
As prize to me what rightly thou might'st claim.

Phil. Ah me! And what shall I, unhappy, do?
And wilt thou then among the Argives go,
Equipped with my arms?

Odys. Speak thou not a word
To me, who stand in very act to go.

Phil. And thou, Achilles' son, shall I remain
Without a word from thee? Dost thou thus go?

Odys. [To NEOPOLEMOS.] Go thou, and look not on
him, lest, though noble,
Thou ruin our success.
PHILOCTETES

Phil. [To Chorus.] And will ye leave,
O strangers, will ye leave me, pitying not? 1070

Chor. [To PHILOCTETES.] This youth is our com-
mander, and whate'er
He speaks to thee, the same we also say.

Neop. [To Chorus, pointing to ODYSSEUS.] I shall be
told, I know, by our chief here,
That I am piteous and of melting mood;
Yet, spite of this, remain, if so he will,
At least a while, until the sailors put
Our sailing gear in order, and we have made
Due prayers unto the Gods. So he, [pointing to PHILOC-
TETES] perchance,
Meantime may cherish better thoughts of us.
Now then, let us depart, and ye, be quick,
When we shall call you, to proceed with us. 1080

[Exeunt NEOPTOLEMOS and ODYSSEUS.

STROPHE 1

Phil. O cave of hollow rock,
Now hot, now icy cold,
And I was doomed, ah me!
To leave thee never more;
But e'en in death thou still wilt be to me
My one true helping friend.
O woe, woe, woe!
O home most full of grief,
My grief, me miserable!
What now shall come to me
As day succeeds to day?
Whence shall I, in my woe,
Find hope of food to live?
Ah, now the swift-winged birds
*Will soar in loftiest flight,
*High through the whistling wind;
For I am powerless.
PHILOCTETES

Chor. Thou, thou thyself, O man of many woes,
    Hast brought them on thyself;
It is not from a Power above thine own
    This ill fate falls on thee,
Since thou, when wisdom was at hand, didst choose,
Thy better genius scorned, to praise the worse. 1100

ANTISTROPHE I

Phil. O miserable me!
    Outraged with foulest wrong,
Who for the years to come
    In woe, no helper near,
Shall henceforth, dwelling here, consume away,
        (Ah me! ah me!)
Gaining no food for life
From those my swift-winged darts,
With firm hands grasping them;
But unsuspected words
Of guileful mind deceived;
Would I might see the man
Whose heart devised these things,
Bearing these pains of mine
As long as I have borne!

Chor. Fate was it, fate that cometh of the Gods,
    Not guile, that brought thee thus
Within my power; on others launch thy curse,
    Baleful, and fraught with ill.
This is the care that I have most at heart,
    That thou should'st not true friendship thrust aside.

STROPHE II

Phil. Ah, woe is me! he sits,
    Where the shore is white with waves,
And laughs within himself,
And tosses in his hands
What fed my wretched life,
By none else borne till now.
PHILOCTETES

O bow, of me beloved,
Torn from my loving grasp,
Surely, if thou can'st feel,
Thou lookest piteously
On me, the bosom friend of Heracles,
Who never more shall bend thee as of old;
But now thou changest hands,
Art wielded by a man of many wiles,
And seest foul deceits,
A man thou needs must loathe and execrate,
Ten thousand plots from shameful deeds upspringing,
*Such as none else contrived.

Chor. 'Tis a man's part to say that good is right,
But having said it out,
Not to thrust forth his carping grief in speech.
He was but one, by many set to work,
And yielding to their will,
Hath wrought a common good for all his friends.

ANTISTROPHE 11

Phil. O all ye winged game,
And tribes of bright-eyed deer,
Who on these high lawns fed,
No more from this my home
Will ye allure me forth.
I wield not in my hands
The strength I had of old
(Ah me!) from those my darts;
Full carelessly this place
Is barred against you now,
No longer fearful; come ye, now 'tis well
That ye in turn should glut your ravenous maw
With this my spotted flesh.
Soon I shall end my life; for whence can I
Find means withal to live?
Who thus can feed upon the empty winds,
PHILOCTETES

Gaining no more what earth brings forth to men,
   The giver of their life?
   Chor. Ah, by the Gods, if thou dost still regard
      A true friend's claim on thee,
Draw near to him who draweth near to thee
With every word of friendliness; but know,
   Know well, it rests with thee
   To 'scape from this thy grief.
   Sad is't to feed that woe,
And, yet unschooled, to bear the thousand ills
   That with it company.
   Phil. Again, again thou hintest at a grief
      That vexed me sore long since;
Thou best of all that ever tarried here,
Why did'st thou lay me low? why work my doom?
   Chor. Why speak'st thou thus?
   Phil. In that thou thought'st to take me once again
      To Troas, which I hate.
   Chor. This seems to me far better.
   Phil. Leave me; leave.
   Chor. Welcome, right welcome are the things thou
      say'st.
And we desire to do them. Let us go,
Come, let us go, and each his own set place
Take in our ship.
   Phil. By Zeus, who hears
The prayers of those that curse, go not, I pray.
   Chor. Be calm, be calm.
   Phil. O friends, by all the Gods,
I pray you tarry.
   Chor. Why this eager cry?
   Phil. Ah me! ah me! O God, O God, I die,
      Die in my misery!
O foot, O foot, what shall I do with thee
   Henceforth in this my woe?
O friends, come back, and tarry once again.
PHILOCTETES

Chor. What should we come to do
With any hope of altered purpose here,
Other than that thou showed'st to us before?
Phil. Ye must not be too wroth
That one so tempest-tost with stormy grief
Should speak against his better, truer thoughts.
Chor. Come, then, poor sufferer, as we bid thee come.
Phil. Never, yea, nevermore, be sure of that;
Not though the fiery thunderbolt that falls
With sudden blaze of light,
Should burn me with its dreaded lightning-flash.
Yea, perish Ilion; with it perish there
Those that could dare cast forth this foot of mine.
But oh, my friends, grant me at least one prayer.
Chor. What is 't thou askest?
Phil. Give me but a sword,
If thou hast one, or axe, or any weapon.
Chor. What deed of prowess wilt thou work with them?
Phil. I will strike off my head, and lop my limbs;
My soul thirsts eagerly for blood, for blood.
Chor. But why is this?
Phil. Lo, I my father seek.
Chor. Where wilt thou go?
Phil. To Hades, for he lives
No longer in this light.
O city, city of my fathers, fain,
All wretched though I be,
Fain would I see thee still!
I who thy sacred stream
Did leave to help my foes the Danai;
And now I am as nought.
Chor. Long since had I been making for my ship,
Had I not seen Odysseus drawing nigh,
And, coming with him, great Achilles' son.

[PHILOCTETES retires into his cave.]

1 The "sacred stream" is the Spercheios. Comp. I. 726.
PHILOCTETES

Enter Neoptolemos, followed by Odysseus.

Odys. Wilt thou not tell me why so quick thou speed'st,

Turning thy steps upon a backward way?

Neop. I go to undo the wrongs I did before.

Odys. Thou speakest strangely. And what wrong was there?

Neop. That I, obeying thee and all the host . . . .

Odys. What did'st thou do that was not right for thee?

Neop. I tricked a man with shameful fraud and guile.

Odys. Think what he was. What fancy strange is this?

Neop. 'Tis no strange fancy, but to Pæas' son . . . .

Odys. What wilt thou do? A fear comes over me.

Neop. From whom I took this bow, to him again . . . .

Odys. O Zeus, what now? Thou wilt not give it him?

Neop. Yea, for I gained it basely, not of right.

Odys. By all the Gods, dost thou say this to mock me?

Neop. If it be mockery but to speak the truth.

Odys. Son of Achilles, what is this thou say'st?

Neop. Shall I then twice or thrice repeat the words?

Odys. I had not wished to hear them even once.

Neop. Know, thou hast heard whate'er I had to say. 1240

Odys. There is one, yea, there is, will stop thy deed.

Neop. What say'st thou? Who shall stop my doing it?

Odys. The whole Achæan host, and I with them.

Neop. Wise though thou be, thou dost not wisely speak.

Odys. Thou neither speakest wise things nor devisest.

Neop. If they be just, then are they more than wise.

Odys. And how can it be just to cast away

That which my counsels gave thee?

Neop. Having sinned

A shameful sin, I now would make amends.
PHILOCTETES

Odys. And fear'st thou not the Achæan host, doing this?

Neop. My cause being just, I share not that thy fear;

[Odysseus prepares to attack Neoptolemos.]

Nor will I yield to this thy violence.

Odys. Not with the Troïans, then, I fight, but thee.

Neop. What must be, let it.

Odys. [Laying hand on his sword.] Ha! And dost thou see

My right hand grasp the hilt?

Neop. [Drawing his sword.] See then that I
Can do the same as thou, in act, not threat.

Odys. I then will let thee go, but to the host I will tell this, and they shall punish thee.

Neop. Thou 'rt wise in time; and should'st thou keep that mind,

Thou may'st perchance thy foot keep out of harm.  

[Odysseus retires.]

Ho, Philoctetes! Ho there, Pœas' son,
Come forth, and leave this rocky roof of thine.

Phil. What noise of shouting make ye at my cave?

Why call ye me? What want ye, strangers, here?
Alas, 'tis something evil. Are ye come To bring fresh evils upon evils on me?

Neop. Be of good cheer, and list to what I speak.

Phil. Nay, but I fear: 'twas by fair words before That I fared foully, by thy words deceived.

Neop. And is repentance, then, impossible?

Phil. Such wast thou then, when thou did'st steal my bow,

Faithful in words, within all treacherous.

Neop. But not so now: I wish to hear from thee, Whether thy mind is fixed to tarry here, Or sail with us.

Phil. Stop, stop; not one word more:

All that thou speakest will be said in vain.
PHILOCTETES

Neop. Is this thy mind?

Phil. Yet stronger than I speak.

Neop. I would that thou had'st hearkened to my words;
But if I chance to speak unseasonably,
I hold my peace.

Phil. Thou wilt say all in vain,
For never shalt thou turn my mind to thee,
Who, taking from me that which gave me life,
Did'st basely rob me of it, and now com'st,
And givest me thy counsel, basest son
Of noblest father. May ye perish all,
And chiefly the Atreidae; after them,
Laertes' son and thou!

Neop. [Holding out the bow.] Curse thou no more,
But from my hand receive these weapons back.

Phil. How say'st thou? Are we tricked a second
time?

Neop. No, by the holy might of highest Zeus!

Phil. O words most welcome, if they be but true!

Neop. Our acts shall make them clear; do thou put
forth
Thy right hand, and be master of thine arms.

[As he is giving the bow, ODYSSEUS appears
from behind.

Odys. That I forbid, the Gods my witnesses,
In name of the Atreidae, and the host.

Phil. Whose voice, my son, was that? What? Did I
hear
Odysseus speak?

Odys. E'en so, thou see'st him near,
Who by main force will bear thee off to Troy,
Whether Achilles' son shall please or no.

Phil. [Bending his bow.] But to thy cost, if this dart
does not miss.

Neop. [Staying his arm.] Oh, by the Gods, I pray thee
shoot it not!
PHILOCTETES

Phil. Let loose my hand, I pray thee, dearest boy.
Neop. I will not let thee go.
Phil. Fie on thee! Why
Did'st hinder me from slaying with my dart
A man I hate, my bitter enemy?

[Odysseus steals away.

Neop. That were not good for me, nor yet for thee.
Phil. Know this then, that the chief of all the host
The Achæans' lying heralds, they are cowards
In brunt of fight, though overbold of speech.
Neop. Well, be it so. But thou hast now thy bow,
And hast no cause for wrath or blaming me.
Phil. I own it. Thou, dear boy, hast shown the stock
From which thou springest, not from Sisyphos,
But from Achilles, who alive was held
Of highest fame, and is so with the dead.
Neop. It gives me joy to hear thee praise my father,
Praising me also; but what now I wish
Hear thou, I pray thee. Mortals needs must bear
The chances which the Gods on high shall give;
But those who fall upon self-chosen ills,
As thou hast fallen, they have little claim
To pardon or compassion. Thou art fierce,
And wilt not list to one who counsels thee;
And if one give advice in pure good will,
Thou hatest him, and deemest him a foe.
Yet I will speak, invoking holy Zeus,
The guardian of all oaths. Be sure of this,
And write it in the tablets of thy mind,
Thy pain has come to thee by heaven-sent chance,
In that thou cam'st too near to Chryse's guard,
The serpent who in secret keeps his watch
Over the unroofed precincts of her shrine;
And know that thou shalt find no respite here
From this thy sore disease, while yet yon sun.
PHILOCTETES

Rises on this side, sets again on that,
Until thou journey of thine own free will
To Troïa's plains, and meeting there with those
Who call Asclepios father, shalt be healed
Of thy disease, and shalt with these thy darts,
And with my help, lay low its ancient Towers.
And I will tell thee how I know these things
Stand thus ordained; for we a prophet have,
Taken from Troïa, noblest seer of all,
And Helenos his name, who clearly saith
That these things so must be; and further yet,
That it is doomed, this very harvest tide,
That Troïa should be taken utterly;
And should he prove false prophet, in our hands
He placed his life. And since thou knowest this,
Of thy free will consent; for great the gain,
Being judged the noblest one of Hellenes all,
To find skilled hands to heal thee, and to gain,
Sacking loud-wailing Troïa, highest praise.

Phil. O hateful life, why, why detain'st thou me
In day's clear light, and dost not let me go
To Hades dark? Ah me! what shall I do?
How shall I prove distrustful to his words,
Who gives me counsel out of kindly, thought?
Yet must I yield? And how shall I, ill-starred,
Do this, and then look up? From whom shall I
Hear greeting kind? How will ye, O mine eyes,
That watch all varying chances of my life,
How will ye bear to see me living on
With those Atreidæ who have ruined me,
Or with that vilest son of Lartios?
It is not now the sorrow of the past
That chiefly gnaws, but what I seem to see
With prophet's glance I yet am doomed to bear

1 The two sons of Asclepios, Machaon and Podaleirios, appear in the Iliad (ii. 731) as the great surgeons of the Hellenic army.
PHILOCTETES

From these same foes; for those whose soul becomes 1806
Mother of evil, them it trains to be
Evil in all things. And 'tis this that moves
My wonder at thee; for 'twas meet that thou
Should'st ne'er to Troia come thyself, and next
Should'st keep us from them who so outraged thee,
And robbed thee of thy father's treasured arms,
[And slighting Aias, to Odysseus gave them ;]
*And art thou their ally, and wilt constrain
Me to their will? Nay, nay, not so, my son;
But, as thou warest, send me to my home,
While thou, in Skyros tarrying, leavest them,
Evil of heart, to die an evil death.
And thus wilt thou gain double thanks from me,
And double from my father, nor wilt seem,
Helping the base, to be as base thyself.

Neop. Thou speakest what shows fair, and yet I wish
That thou should'st trust the Gods, and these my
words,
And sail from these shores, I thy friend with thee.

Phil. What! with this wretched foot to Troia's
plains,
And Atreus' son, my bitterest foe of all?

Neop. Nay, but to those who 'll free thy ulcerous foot
From pain, and save thee from thy sore disease.

Phil. What mean'st thou, friend, who givest counsel
strange?

Neop. That which I see works best for both of us.

Phil. Hast thou no awe of Gods, who say'st such
words!

Neop. What cause of shame is there in gaining
good?

Phil. And speak'st thou of the Atreidæ's good, or
mine?

Neop. Thine, for I am thy friend, and such my
speech.
PHILOCTETES

Phil. How so, when thou would'st give me to my foes?
Neop. Learn thou, my friend, to be less rash in ills.
Phil. I know thou wilt destroy me with these words.
Neop. Nay, nay, not so; thou dost not understand.
Phil. Do I not know the Atreidæ cast me forth?
Neop. But if they save, who cast thee forth, look to it.
Phil. Ne'er with my will shall I on Troïa look.
Neop. What then remains, if we, with all our words,
Still fail to move thee? Easiest course it were
For me to cease from speaking, and that thou
Should'st live, as now, without deliverance.
Phil. Leave me to suffer what I suffer must;
But what thou swarest, thy right hand as pledge,
To lead me to my home, that do, my son,
And linger not, nor further mention make
Of Troïa to me. I have had my fill
Of wailing and lament.
Neop. If this thy will,
Come, let us go.
Phil. Now speak'st thou noble words.
Neop. Plant thy foot firm.
Phil. With what small strength I have.
Neop. How shall I 'scape the Achæans' blame?
Phil. Despise it.
Neop. And what if they shall lay my country waste?
Phil. I shall be there.
Neop. What would thy help avail?
Phil. With these the darts of Heracles.
Neop. What then?
Phil. I will restrain their coming.
Neop. On then, take
Thy farewell of this island.

HERACLES appears, descending from the sky, in glory.
Hera. Nay, not yet;
PHILOCTETES

Not till thou hear our words,
Thou son of Pœas old;
Own that thou hear'st the voice of Heracles
And look'st upon his face.
Lo, for thy sake I come,
Leaving my heavenly home,
To tell thee of the thoughts of Zeus on high,
And to close up the way
On which thou journeyst now.
List thou to these my words:
And first my own life's chances I will tell,
The labours I endured, through which I passed
And gained immortal greatness as thou see'st:
And this, be sure, shall be thy destined lot,
After these woes to live a noble life;
And going with this youth to Troia's town,
First thou shalt repose find from thy sore plague,
And for thy valour chosen from the host,
Shalt with my arrows take away the life
Of Paris, who was cause of all these ills,
And shalt sack Troia, and shalt send its spoils
To thine own dwelling (gaining highest prize
Of valour in the army) by the plains
Of Æta, where thy father Pœas dwells.
And all the spoils thou gainest in this war,
As true thank-offerings for these darts of mine,
Lay thou upon my grave. And now [To Neoptolemos]
to thee,
Achilles' son, I this declare;—nor thou,
Apart from him, nor he apart from thee,
May Troia take. But ye, as lions twain
That roam together, guard thou him, he thee.
And I will send, [To Philoctetes] as healer of thy
wounds,
Asclepios to Ilion. Yet once more
By this my bow must it be captured. Then,
PHILOCTETES

(Give heed to this,) when ye the land lay waste,
Shew all religious reverence to the Gods;
For all things else our father Zeus counts less:
[Religion e'en in death abides with men;
Die they or live, it does not pass away.]

Phil. O thou, who utterest voice,
By me long yearned for,
Who now at length art seen,
I will not to thy words rebellious prove.

Neop. I too give my assent.

Hera. Delay not now to act;
For time and wind press on,
And speed you on your way.

Phil. Come, then, I leave this isle,
And speak my parting words.
Farewell, O roof, long time
My one true guard and friend;
And ye, O nymphs that sport
In waters or in fields;
Strong roar of waves that break
On jutting promontory,
Where oft my head was wet,
(Though hid in far recess,)
With blasts of stormy South;
And oft the mount that bears
The name of Hermes gave
Its hollow, loud lament,
Echoing my stormy woe;
And now, ye streams and fount,
Lykian, where haunt the wolves,
We leave you, leave you now,
Who ne'er had dreamt of this.

Farewell, O Lemnos, girt by waters round,
With fair breeze send me on

1 Hermes, as one of the Cabeiri, the special deities of Lemnos and Imbros.
PHILOCTETES

Right well, that none may blame,
Where Fate, the mighty, leads,
Counsel of friends, and God,
Who worketh this in might invincible.

Chor. On then, with one accord,
To the sea Nymphs offering our prayer,
That they come as helpers and friends,
In the voyage of the homeward bound.

1470
FRAGMENTS

11
Hast thou done fearful evil? Thou must bear
Evil as fearful; and the holy light
Of righteousness shines clearly.

12
Kings wisdom gain, consorting with the wise.

13
Man is but breath and shadow, nothing more.

14
The mightiest and the wisest in their minds
Thou may'st see like to him who standeth here,
Giving good counsel to a man distressed;
But when God's will shall send the scourge on one
Who lived till then as fortune's favourite,
All his fine phrases vanish utterly.

35
'Neath every stone there lies a scorpion hid.

58
Hark! some one cries.... Or do I vainly call?
The man who fears hears noise on every side.

59
Be sure, no lie can ever reach old age.

1 The numerals refer to Dindorf's Edition.
FRAGMENTS

A maiden too, and one of Argive race,
Whose glory lies in fewest words or none.

Short speech becomes the wise of heart and good
To parents who begat and bore and bred.

Be of good cheer, O lady: dangers oft,
Though blowing dreams by night, are lulled by day.

None cleave to life so fondly as the old.

Life, O my son, is sweetest boon of all:
It is not given to men to taste death twice.

*The living should not glory o’er the dead,
As knowing well that he himself must die.

How all men seek to shun the tyrant’s face!

A soul with good intent and purpose just
Discerns far more than lecturer can teach.

Much wisdom often goes with fewest words.

A man whose whole delight is still to talk
Knows not how much he vexes all his friends.
FRAGMENTS

If thou art noble, as thou say'st thyself,
Tell me from whence thou'rt sprung. No speech can stain
What comes of noble nature, nobly born.

Thy speech is worthy, not too harshly said;
A noble stock that bears the test of proof,
Will still gain fair repute beyond all blame.

Who can count man's prosperity as great,
Or small and lowly, or of no account?
None of all this continues in one stay.

Strange is it that the godless, who have sprung
From evil-doers, should fare prosperously,
While good men, born of noble stock, should be
By adverse fortune vexed. It was ill done
For the Gods thus to order lives of men.
What ought to be is this, that godly souls
Should from the Gods gain some clear recompense,
And the unjust pay some clear penalty;
So none would prosper who are base of soul.

Then does men's life become one vast disease,
When once they seek their ills by ills to cure.

Not easy is it to resist the just.

Deceit is base, unfit for noble souls,
FRAGMENTS

A righteous tongue has with it mightiest strength.

Hush, boy! for silence brings a thousand gains.

Why tell'st thou thy tale of many words? Superfluous speech is irksome everywhere.

In some things be not anxious to inquire: Far better is it oft to leave them hid.

I know not how to answer to these things. When good men by the base Are overcome in strife, What city could endure such deeds as this?

No one, I trow; yet take good heed to this, Lest it be better, e'en by godless deeds, To triumph over foes than as a slave To yield obedience.

Cease thou. Enough for me the name of son Of such a father, if indeed I 'm his: And if I be not, small the injury; Repute oft triumphs o'er the truth itself.

The bastard is as strong as lawful sons; Goodness still claims a rank legitimate.

Riches gain friends, gain honours,—further still, Gain highest sovereignty for those who sit
FRAGMENTS

In low estate. The rich have no men does; And if they have, these still conceal their hate. A wondrous power has wealth to wind its way Or on plain ground, or heights that none may tread, Where one that's poor, although twere close at hand Would fail to gain the thing his heart desires. The form unsightly and of no esteem It makes both wise of speech and fair to see: It only has the power of joy or grief, It only knows the art of hiding ill.

A pleasant ill is this disease of love, And twere not ill to sketch its likeness thus: When sharp cold spreads through all the æther clear, And children seize a crystal icicle, At first they firmly hold their new-found joy; But in the end the melting mass nor cares To slip away, nor is it good to keep: So those that love, the self-same strong desire Now leads to action, now to idleness.

What virtue gains alone abides with us.

The hearts of good men are not quickly bowed.

Still where the right of free, true speech is gone, And the worse counsel in a state prevails, Blunders make shipwreck of security.

And how can I, a mortal, fight with fate That comes from heaven, when danger presses hard, And hope helps not?
FRAGMENTS

206
Since age is on thee, keep
its fair repute.
from evil speech.

209
The tongue is held in honour by such men
As reckon words of more account than deeds.

235
Come, let us quickly go: it cannot be
That any blame should fall on righteous haste.

236
It brings some pain, I know, but one must try,
As best one may, to bear the ills of life.
Needs must we find some healing from these things.

237
Some pleasure is there found even in words,
When with them comes forgetfulness of ills.

238
Though I be old, yet with advance of age
Comes reason's growth, and skill to counsel well.

239
There stretcheth by the sea
A fair Euboean shore, and o'er it creeps
The vine of Boscos, each day's growth complete.
In morning brightness all the land is green
With tendrils fair and spreading. Noontide comes,
And then the unripe cluster forms apace:
The day declines, and purple grow the grapes;
At eve the whole bright vintage is brought in,
And the mixed wine poured out.
FRAGMENTS

255
I own it true. Right well the proverb runs,
That smallest things make known a man’s true bent.

284
Therefore conceal thou nothing. Time that sees
And heareth all things bringeth all to light.

288
No good e’er comes of leisure purposeless;
And Heaven ne’er helps the men who will not act.

298
’Tis only in God’s garden men may reap
True joy and blessing.

302
Chance never helps the men who do not work.

304
He who neglects the Muses in his youth
Has wasted all the past, and lost true life
For all the future.

311
A mortal man should think things fit for men.

321
This is most grievous, when it might be ours
To set things straight, and we by our own act
Will bring fresh woe and trouble on our heads.

322
But he who dares to look at danger straight,
His speech is clear, his spirit falters not.
FRAGMENTS

323
It is not good to lie; but when the truth
Brings on a man destruction terrible,
He may be pardoned though not good his speech.

325
And wonder not, O prince, that thus I cling
So close to gain; for they whose life is 'ng
Still cleave to profit with their might and main,
And men count all things else as less than wealth;
And though there be that praise a life kept free
From all disease, to me no poor man seems
In that blest state, but sick continually.

326
The noblest life is that of righteousnesse,
The best, one free from sicknesse.
To have each day the fill of

Now in the gates Æneas, Godd oth.
Is seen, and on his shoulders warrure,
Who lets his byssine mannae fall in bolds
On back where smote the fierst tue.
And gaters round him
Beyond all hope, the mult. draws near
Of Phrygians who would fain be emigrants.

343
But little count we make of toil gone by.

358
For those who fare but ill 'tis very sweet
E'en for a moment to forget their ills.

359
None has no sorrow; happiest who has least.
FRAGMENTS

379
He \( \ddagger \) 'twas that taught the Argive army first
To build their walls, and found inventions strange
Of measures, weights, and numbers; he the first
To plan the ten that upward rise from one,
And from the tens to fifties pass, and so
From thence to thousands. He alone devised
The army's beacon-lights and nightly watch,
And signals of the morning, and made clear
What he did not devise. He brought to sight
The measures and the motions of the stars,
And all their order, and the heavenly signs,
And for the men who guide their ships on sea,
The Great Bear's chain and the Dog's cold setting.

Did he not \( \ddagger \) lay the nine from them;
And, with God's help, discover pastimes wise,
As they sail through toiling toil at sea—
Draughts, and one too, at best for idleness?

419
But when our elder the soul
made more to shun blame and run against the Gods.

434
The aged man becomes a child again.

436
'Tis better not to be than vilely live.

498
War ever takes our young men in its net.

\( \ddagger \) Palamedes.
FRAGMENTS

499
A weary life is that the sailors lead,
To whom no gift from Heaven or Fortune sent
Could offer worthy recompense. Poor souls,
Adventuring traffic far on slender chance,
They save, or gain, or lose all utterly.

500
All evil things are found in length of years;
Sense gone, work useless, thoughts and counsels vain.

501
If men by tears could heal their several ills,
And by their weeping bring the dead to life,
Then gold would be of far less price than tears.

512
Greedy of gain is every barbarous tribe.

513
Be not afraid: speak thou the truth, and then
Thou shalt not fail.

514
What man soe'er, in troubles waxing wroth,
Will use a cure that's worse than the disease,
Is no physician skilled to deal with grief.

517
I by myself am nought; yea, oftentimes
So look I upon all our womankind,
That we are nothing. Young, we lead a life
Of all most joyous, in our father's house,
For want of knowledge is our kindly nurse;
But when we come to marriageable years,
Then are we pushed and bartered for away.
FRAGMENTS

From household gods and from our parents dear—
Some unto alien husbands, some to men
Of stranger race, and some to homes full strange,
Or full of turmoil: and when one night binds us,
We needs must bear, and think of it as right.

518

Among mankind we all are born alike
Of father and of mother. None excels
Another in his nature, but the fate
Of evil chance holds some of us, and some
Good fortune favours, and necessity
Holds some in bondage.

520

Praise no man much until thou see his death.

535

Within the tablets of thy mind write this
That I have said to thee.

563

Well, well, what greater joy could’st thou receive
Than touching land, and then, beneath a roof,
With slumbering mind to hear the pelting storm?

572

We should not speak of one that prospers well
As happy, till his life have run its course,
And reached its goal. An evil spirit’s gift
In shortest time has oft laid low the state
Of one full rich in great prosperity,
When the change comes, and so the Gods appoint.

582

No one who sins against his will is base.
FRAGMENTS

585
Tell not to many what Fate sends on thee: 'Tis comelier far in silence to lament.

588
I mourn for those my locks as young mare doth, Who, caught by shepherds, in the stable stands, And with rough hands has all her chestnut mane Cropped off, and then is led in meadow fair, Which clear streams water, and when thus she sees Her likeness, with her hair thus fouly cropped, Ah, one hard-hearted well might pity her, Crouching in shame, as maddened with disgrace, Mourning and weeping o'er the mane that's gone.

606
Ne'er can a state be well and safely ruled, In which all justice and all purity Are trampled under foot, and brawling knave With cruel goad drives the poor state to death.

607
Not mortal men alone does Love assail, No, nor yet women, but it leaves its stamp Upon the souls of Gods, and passes on To mighty ocean. Zeus omnipotent Is powerless to avert it, and submits And yields full willingly.

608
No greater evil can a man endure Than a bad wife, nor find a greater good Than one both good and wise; and each man speaks As judging by the experience of his life.

609
Forgive me, and be silent, patiently;