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THE

FROGS OF ARISTOPHANES,

TRANSLATED BY

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THE

FROGS OF ARISTOPHANES.
PREFACE.

IT is with much diffidence that I venture to publish a translation of this singular play. Many of the quotations are from books lost to us, and many of the allusions to persons of whom no other record has survived. What probably drew peals of laughter from a ready audience has nigh baffled the abstruse researches of anxious commentators, who seem to have taken their revenge by calling one another the hardest possible names. Unable to claim any merit of research myself, I have benefited by their labours, and in the case of a disputed passage have always adopted that reading which seemed most probable. Some of the jests are certainly not very refined, but any one acquainted with the original will at once perceive how considerably they have been softened down in the translation, and in one or two instances the real meaning has been altered. I fear much of the wit has evaporated in the process.

C. C. C.
CHARACTERS.

XANTHIAS.
BACCHUS.
HERCULES.
CORPSE.
CHARON.
CHORUS OF FROGS.
CHORUS.
ÆACUS.
MAID-SERVANT OF PROSERPINE.
LANDLADIES A & B.
EURIPIDES.
ÆSCHYLUS.
PLUTO.
THE FROGS OF ARISTOPHANES.

[Enter Bacchus on foot dressed in the skin of the Nemæan Lion, and the club of Hercules in his hand. — Xanthias heavily laden on an ass.]

Xan. Say, master mine, would you that I should crack
One of those standing jokes upon the stage
Which always make the tickled audience laugh?

Ba. Say what you will, save that you are "knocked up;"
   Sink that, I pray you, it is threadbare worn——

Xan. Ought else you wish? Ba. Don't feign yourself "dead beat."

Xan. May I speak nothing funny? Ba. Pooh, man, pooh,
   Pluck up good heart and try, only beware,
   Don't let me catch you saying this. Xan. What's that?

Ba. That you must shift your pack to ease yourself.

Xan. Well, may I say, unless some person kind
   Take this tremendous burden off my back,
   Saving your presence, I shall break——good manners?

Ba. Not so, unless you wish to make me sick.

Xan. Why what the deuce am I, all this to bear,
   And yet may not repeat a single thing
   That Phrynichus and Lycis and Ameipsias
   Put in men's mouths, when on the boards they stagger
   Beneath great weights? Ba. When at the play I hear
   These stale absurdities, I go away
   Just older by a year than when I came.
THE FROGS.

Xan. Alas, poor me! whose neck is well nigh broken,
   Yet must be mum!  Ba. Now is not this too bad,
   Too glaring insolence, that I, I Baeohus,
Sprung from a hogshead, I would say, from Jove,
Do walk myself, and let this grumbling fellow
Ride on a donkey, which I hired express
To spare his delicate limbs, that he may bear
No single hardship?  Xan. Don't I bear? that's all.

Ba. How can you bear! you ride.  Xan. Now only look
   A very weighty fashion, let me tell you.

Ba. The weight you carry carries not the ass?

Xan. I should think not; not what myself I carry.

Ba. How can you carry, pray, when you yourself
   Are carried by another?  Xan. That's a puzzler.
But this I know, my shoulder's plaguy sore.

Ba. Well, since you say the ass don't profit you,
   Suppose you take your turn, and carry him.

Xan. Unhappy wretch! would I had volunteer'd
   And fought at sea, I had my freedom gain'd;
   You then might whistle, but I'd see you first
   A long way off.  Ba. You scoundrel, get you down,
   For here are we arriv'd at the first door
   Where I must stop.—Ho, porter! porter there!

Her. Who knocks so loud? the fellow raps away
   Proud as a Centaur.  Who the deuce are you?


Ba. How I him frighten'd— Xan. Lest you should go mad.

[Enter Hercules.]

Her. Ha ha! I can't help laughing—ha ha ha!
   And yet the joke's against myself, but still
I laugh—ha ha!  Ba. Good day, my worthy friend;
   I am come here to ask a boon of you.
THE FROGS.

_Her._ Ha ha!—I can’t leave off. Why, when I see
The lion’s skin thrown o’er the petticoat—
What does it mean? and how in fortune’s name
Have club and buskin in close contact come?
Where were your quarters, pray? _Ba._ I was on board
Of Cleisthenes. _Her._ And were you at the fight?

_Ba._ Marry we were, and of the enemy
We sank some twelve or thirteen ships. _Her._ You two?

_Ba._ Aye, by Apollo. _Her._ And just then I woke,
And found it all a dream. _Ba._ I was on deck,
And reading to myself th’Andromeda,
When suddenly a fond desire me seiz’d,—
Can you conceive how strong? _Her._ What, very great?

_Ba._ O not so big, about friend Molon’s size.

_Her._ What for a woman? _Ba._ No. _Her._ A boy? _Ba._ Fie, fie.

_Her._ A man? _Ba._ Ah, yes! _Her._ What, had you ought to say
To Cleisthenes? _Ba._ Come, brother, no bad jokes,
This is no laughing matter, I’m quite ill,
’Tis the passionate desire torments me so.

_Her._ What is’t, my little brother? _Ba._ How can I
Explain? well, in a riddle I’ll propound.
Pray, did you ever feel a sudden wish
For marrow pudding? _Her._ Aye, ten thousand times.

_Ba._ Do I instruct, or must I speak more plain?

_Her._ Not of the pudding, that I comprehend.

_Ba._ Well, just so great a wish tormenteth me
For my Euripides, although he’s dead,
And now no mortal shall persuade but that
I’ll go and look for him. _Her._ What, down to hell?

_Ba._ To hell, and if there be a lower depth,
Then lower still. _Her._ Mercy!—what want you there?

_Ba._ I want a clever poet, for the race
Is now extinct—all who survive are bad.

_Her._ Indeed! what, is not Iophon alive?

p 2
THE FROGS.

Ba. Well, he's the only one who's left us now,
    And, to speak truth, I have my doubts of him.

Her. But if you must a poet have, why not
    Take Sophocles before Euripides?

Ba. I want to see how Iophon gets on
    Alone, without the help of Sophocles.
    Besides, Euripides is such a fellow,
    I think I easily can him persuade
    To run away; but gentle Sophocles,
    Ever obedient to the laws above,
    Doubtless has not his nature chang'd below.

Her. And where is Agathon?  Ba. Oh, he has left us;
    A poet fair, lamented by his friends.

Her. Where has he gone?  Ba. To realms of happy rest.

Her. And where's Xenocles?  Ba. O, he be hung!
Her. What of Pythangelus?  Xan. No word of me!
    And all this time my shoulder acheth shrewdly.

Her. Sure you must have some young ones coming on,
    Composers of ten thousand tragedies,
    I'll warrant you that they can spin a yarn
    Longer, some furlongs, than Euripides.

Ba. These are but offshoots and excrescences,
    A tribe .aquacious, that degrade the art,
    Mere twitterings of the swallow, who, if once
    They get a favourable puff of wind,
    A single show in public, quick elate,
    They wing their little flight, then disappear
    For ever: you'll not find a poet craftsman,
    One who'll hit off a noble sentiment.

Her. Pray, how do you define a craftsman?  Ba. Why,
    A man who soars a lofty pitch like this:
    "The mental reservation to an oath,
    "The tongue that swears, consenting not the mind,
    "The airy hall of Jove, or foot of time."
THE FROGS.

Her. This pleases you?  Ba. Please? I rave of it.
Her. I think it trash.  I'm sure you think so too.
Ba. Think for yourself, don't try to tutor me.
Her. Well, I repeat, it seems to me sad rubbish.
Ba. Don't teach me to suck eggs!  Xan. No word of me!

Ba. But to return: this is the reason why
I have made bold to take on me your likeness;
I wish you would inform me who they were
Befriended you, in case I should require
Their aid, when you went after Cerberus:
Describe to me the harbours, bakers' shops,
The stews, the public promenades, the springs,
The roads, the towns, their customs, and the inns
Where there are fewest bugs.  Xan. No word of me!

Her. Why, you rash fellow, will you really go?
Ba. Yes, I am quite resolv'd, but tell me, do,
Which of the roads leads quickest down to Hell,
And one that's not too hot, nor yet too cold.

Her. Well, let me see, which shall I tell you first?
Aye, here is one—Get you a cord and stool,
And hang yourself.  Ba. Stop—that's suffocating.

Her. Well here's another straight and certain way,
In sooth a right well-pounded way, o'ershadow'd
By the wild thya.  Ba. Why—you hemlock mean!

Her. You've hit it.  Ba. Ah, that's plaguy cold and cheerless,
Your hands and feet get frozen very soon.

Her. Well, shall I tell you of a quick short cut?
Ba. Aye, do; to tell the truth, I'm no great walker.

Her. Get you to Ceramicus.  Ba. Well, what next?
Her. Climb up unto the top o' the tow'r.  Ba. What next?

Her. Thence you will see the torches lit below;
When the spectators to the race cry "Off!"

Ba. Bah! I should smash my skull; no, I wont go
THE FROGS.


Her. 'Tis a long journey; to a lake you'll come,
A fathomless abyss! Ba. How do I cross?

Her. An aged mariner will take you o'er
In a small boat, and for your fare you'll pay
Two oboli. Ba. Alas, how powerful
Are those two oboli all the world over!
How came they here? Her. Why Theseus introduce'd them;
And after this you'll see ten thousand snakes
And terrible wild beasts. Ba. Come, come, no tricks
On travellers, you shall not frighten me.

Her. Then a great slough of ever-flowing dung,
Wherein immer's'd lie wretches reft of hope;
Whoever wrong'd his guest, or of a child
Dishonest guardian filch'd his ward's estate,
Or struck his mother, or a father's cheek
With blow dishonour'd, or forswore his oath,
Or e'er transcrib'd a page of Morsimus.

Ba. Now, by the Gods, add to your list one more,
Whoever learnt Kinesias' pyrrhic song.

Her. Next will you hear the warbling of a pipe,
And see a shining light, then myrtle groves,
Whence cull fresh chaplets happy choirs of men
And women mix'd, who loudly clap their hands.

Ba. And who be these? Her. These are the Mystic brethren.

Xan. By Jove I 'gin to think I am the ass 4
That bear the mystic implements for them;
I like not this, I'll none of it henceforth.

Her. And these will tell you all you wish to know,
For they live close to Pluto's door. And now
Farewell my brother, and success attend you.

Ba. Farewell and thanks.—You, sir, take up again
The baggage. Xan. What, before I've laid it down?

Ba. Yes, sir, at once. Xan. I pray you, master, hire
THE FROGS.

One of the gentry brought here on their biers.

_Ba._ Suppose I find none? _Xan._ Then I'll march. _Ba._ That's fair.

_Lo in the nick of time they bring a corpse._

_Hallo you there!—you, the dead man, I mean;_

_Will you this baggage take for us to Hell?_  

_Corpse._ How much is there? _Ba._ Why, this much. _Corpse._ Will you stand

_Two drachmas? _Ba._ No, be reasonable, 'tis

_A deal too much._ _Corpse._ Porters, carry me on.

_Ba._ No, stop a minute, we may strike a bargain.

_Corpse._ Put down two drachmas, or it's no good talking.

_Ba._ Come, take nine oboli. _Corpse._ Nine oboli!

_Go to—-I'd rather be alive again._  

_[Exit._

_Xan._ Zounds, what a knave!—a very parlous knave!_

_Surely he'll groan for this—Well, I'll trudge on._

_Ba._ That's a good fellow, Xanthias; see the lake_

_He told us of; now I make out the boat._

_Xan._ By Neptune, so do I; and here's old Charon.

_Ba._ Ah Charon, Charon, cheery, cheery Charon!—

_Char._ Who's bound for the retreat from strife and woe?

_Who is for Lethe's plain? who comes in hopes_

_To shear pig's wool? who for the gallows or_

_For Tænarus? _Ba._ Here, I. _Char._ Then get in quick.

_Ba._ Where think you we shall stop? not at the gallows?

_Char._ Truly I think so, looking at your face.

_Get in. _Ba._ Now tumble in my lad, look smart.

_Char._ I will not take the slave, unless indeed

_He fought at sea, and risk'd his proper bacon_

_At that famed battle of the carcasses._

_Xan._ I could not go, I had a bad ophthalmia.

_Char._ You must go round and circumvent the lake,

_And wait for us at the Auanian stone._

_Ba._ You hear? _Xan._ O yes, I hear, unhappy wretch!

_I must have met the evil eye when I_

_Left home this morning. _Char._ Sit you to the oar,
THE FROGS.

If any other passenger is coming
He must make haste—How now! what are you at?

_Ba._ What am I at? why what should I be at?
I sit down on the oar, as you commanded.

_Char._ Come, my fat friend, just you sit there. _Ba._ Look then.
_Char._ Grasp tight the oar, stretch out your hands. _Ba._ Look then.
_Char._ Come, sir, no nonsense; lean your body forward,
And pull; now then, give way, and with a will.

_Ba._ How can I row! I never row'd before—
I never went to sea—I never fought
At Salamis. _Char._ Yet light will be your task;
Once put you off from shore, and you will hear
The most delightful music. _Ba._ Pray from whom?
_Char._ The music of the frogs. _Ba._ Bid them strike up.
_Char._ Yup! yup! yup!—

CHORUS OF FROGS.

Brekekekex koax koax,
Brekekekex koax koax,
Children of the marshy lake,
Your choral melody awake,
Now let every tuneful throat
Trickling pour the dulcet note,

Koax koax,
Sing the song which most we love
In praise of Bacchus, son of Jove,
The song we sing, when hot with wine
The people crowd to Limne's shrine—

Brekekekex koax koax,

_Ba._ Dear me, this is dreary,
I'm getting quite weary,
My friends koax koax.

_C._ Brekekekex koax koax.

_Ba._ You don't seem much inclin'd
THE FROGS.

My remonstrance to mind.

C. Brekekekekex koax koax.

Ba. May the foul fiend you seize on,
And your koax infernal;
You say nothing but koax,
And that seems eternal.

C. And with reason, with reason,
Thou poor silly man,
Us the Muses admire,
Who touch the soft lyre,
And horn-crested Pan,
Who plays on the flute,
And the lord of the lute,
Great Phoebus Apollo,
He loves us indeed
On account of the reed,
Which, slender and hollow,
For him we preserve in the ponds where we breed.

Brekekekekex koax koax.

Ba. The damnable ear
Has my hands blister'd sore,
And the work is so heating,
I am horribly sweating,
Through every vein porous,
Soon my stern will join chorus
In your brekekekekex koax koax.
Now, you race philharmonic, I pray you give o'er.

C. Nay, nay, we will sing all the more.
O if ever before
On a sunshiny day,
When we'd skip and would play,
In the docks and the sedge
That skirt the lake's edge,
'Twas our wont to rejoice
In sweet strains of the voice,
Or diving and hopping,
And splashing and flopping,
Or shunning the cloud
In the mud to haunt loud,
Making the water to bubble,
Be sure now our musical efforts we'll double—

Brekekekeke koax koax.

**Ba.** Now your trick I discover,
And will make you give over.
koax koax.

**C.** Ah, then should we suffer a destiny curt.
**Ba.** Suffer indeed! why, I suffer worst,
Who am tugging away till I think I shall burst—
Brekekekeke koax koax.

**Ba.** Croak ye on—for I care not.

**C.** Yes yes, my master,
We will cry all the faster,
Our throats and our lungs we will spare not—
Brekekekeke koax koax.

**Ba.** Me you shall not defeat.

**C.** And you shall not us beat.

**Ba.** Nor you me, I repeat,
Though ready to drop
I will not once stop,
Nor all day hold my peace
Till I make you to cease
From brekekekeke koax koax.

**Ba.** I think I should have got the best of it
And made them stop their koax—Here we are!

**Char.** There, way enough—now bring to with your oar,
Get out and pay your fare. **Ba.** Two oboli.

Why Xanthias—where is Xanthias? art thou Xanthias?

**Xan.** Aye aye. **Ba.** Come hither. **Xan.** Welcome, master.
THE FROGS.

Ba. What have we here? Xan. What have we? slush and darkness.

Ba. Pray have you met with any parricides
Or any perjurers? Xan. What! have not you?

Ba. By Neptune, yes. I think I see some now. [looking to the audience.]
Well well, what next? Xan. Why, we had best jog on;
This is the place where we shall meet wild beasts,
According to his story. Ba. He be hung!
The lying rascal thought to frighten me—
Me, who am the bravest of the brave.
Of all the bragging fellows that I know,
Commend me to that Hercules.—Now I
Should only like to meet with some adventure,
That I might do some gallant feat of arms.

Xan. Ha! say you so? I think I hear a noise.


Xan. But no, it is in front. Ba. Get you in front then.

Xan. And now, by Jove, I see a monstrous beast.

Ba. What like? Xan. O horrible! most horrible!

But see, it changes, takes all kinds of shapes,
Now 'tis a bull, and now a mule, and now

Xan. No longer 'tis a woman, but a bitch.

Ba. Why this must be Empusa. Xan. Ah! her face
Glows like a coal. Ba. Has she a leg of bronze?

Xan. By Neptune, yes—the other is a donkey's.

Ba. Woe's me! where shall I fly? Xan. And where shall I?

Ba. Preserve me, my own priest, let me once more
The flagon drain, and be thy boon companion.

Xan. O! we are lost, my royal Hercules.

Ba. For goodness' sake, don't call me by that name.

Xan. Well, Bacchus then. Ba. And that is worse than t'other.

Xan. Well, never mind, come on, my noble master.

Ba. What do you mean? Xan. Be of good cheer, all's well,
And we may say as says Egelochus,
THE FROGS.

"Lull'd are the waves, I spy a calm again."

Empusa's vanish'd.  

Ba. Will you swear?  

Xan. By Jove.

Ba. Swear it again.  

Xan. I swear by Jove.  

Ba. Again.

Xan. By Jove I swear.  

Ba. Well, I grew rather pale,

But you blush'd scarlet; that's the sign of fear.

Oh, this is a sad life, and full of woes.

Now which of all the Gods shall I accuse

Of compassing my death? say, shall it be

"The airy hall of Jove, or foot of time!"  [Sound of a pipe is heard.]

Xan. Hallo!  

Ba. What is it?  

Xan. Don't you hear?  

Ba. No, what?

Xan. I hear a pipe.  

Ba. And now you mention it,

I think I smell a most mysterious smell,

As if of torches burning—Best keep quiet.

Ch. Iacchus lord, Iacchus dear,

Iacchus, O Iacchus, hear!

Xan. Why, master, these must be the mystic brethren

He told us of; they to Iacchus' sing

The song Diagonoras compos'd.  

Ba. No doubt,

But best keep quiet,—we'll hear more anon.

Ch. Iacchus, O most honour'd God,

That hous'd in costly rich abode

Here hast fix'd thy chosen home,

Iacchus, O Iacchus, come;

Gaily to the mead advance,

Lead us to the choric dance,

Thy head with myrtle blossoms crown'd,

With free and fearless footstep bound,

Teach us how with wonted state

These ancient rites to celebrate,

Rites we hold most justly dear,

Rites which we shall aye revere.

Xan. O Ceres' holy daughter, what a whiff

Came of roast pork delicious to my nostrils!

Ba. Won't you keep quiet, sirrah? you may chance
THE FROGS.

To get some tripe, and with an S before it.

Ch. Toss on high the torches bright,
Gleaming ruddy through the night.
Thou com'st, Iacchus, from afar
Shedding glory, like some star
On the robe of Evening sparkling,
And the mead, but lately darkling,
Kindling at thy shouted name,
Glows a sea of living flame.
Lo, old men at sight of thee
Forget their cares and misery,
Smitten with a sacred rage
They shake off the sloth of age.
But thou, O thou, in form and face
Radiant with immortal grace,
Marshal thou upon the plain
Thy chosen ones, thy youthful train,
Flush'd with joy and ripe for pleasure,
Lead them to the choric measure.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Away, away! he had best not stay, but far hence let him flee,
The cold of heart, who hath no part in our chaste mystery,
Who does refuse, when holds the Muse her sports, to gladly greet her,
Nor can rehearse thy Bacchic verse, Cratinus, great bull-eater,
Who loves to harp, at words to carp of fellow-citizen,
Nor will compose the feud of foes, nor loves his brother men,
But still is rife for broil and strife, and seeks his private greed,
Or of the state a magistrate is basely brib'd and fee'd,
If one there be, by land or sea, who his sworn trust betrays,
At Aegina 8 Thorycion—like the tricks of office plays,
Who merchandise and war supplies to Epidaurus sends,
Or on the sea the enemy with secret aid befriends,
I warn him off, who dares to scoff at rites of Hecate;
THE FROGS.

Whoe'er may judge it fit to grudge the bard his hard-earn'd fee,
I warn him twice, I warn him thrice, to leave our social throng;
But you, my friends, until night ends, lift high the festive song.

SEMI-CORUS.

Blithely now our band advancing
On the flow'ry fields is dancing,
Full of jests and quips and fun,
For our holiest rites are done.
Stay a-while—the hymn upraise
To our guardian Goddess praise,
Our own dear Goddess, who will guard us still
Let Thorycion plot and fume an he will—

SEMI-CORUS.

Again, again, another strain, for we must now salute
In fashion other Great Ceres' mother, who gives us corn and fruit.

SEMI-CORUS.

Ceres, mistress of our revel,
Shield us from all harm and evil;
Bid me still, devoid of care,
In thy genial banquet share;
Bid me still, without alloy,
Quaff the brimming cup of joy.

SEMI-CORUS.

On the youthful God now call,
Bid him grace our festival.
Great Iacchus, hither haste,
And the honied banquet taste,
Shew us how, without fatigue,
The road t' accomplish, many a league
Although it be; with jest and laughter
Lead us on, we'll follow after.
THE FROGS.

Sweet Iacchus, deign to be
Of our joyous company.

ONE OF THE CHORUS.
Look here at this cloak, it is tatter’d and torn,
And look here at this sandal, in holes it is worn;
This was done, O Iacchus, in honour of thee;
Then join, sweet Iacchus, O join company.—
I tell you, just now, I took a sly glance
At a pretty companion, next me in the dance,
Her zone it had snapp’d, and all loose was her vest,
So I caught a nice peep of her young budding breast.

Xan. Well, I for my part like good fellowship,
And I should not object to take a turn
With that young damsel.  *Ba.* Nor in truth should I.

CHORUS.
Archedemus 10 now jeer,
In his full seventh year,
No pretence to a voice has the upstart outlandish,
Yet he gives himself airs,
And those poor folks upstairs,
Who fancy they live, does he fawn on and blandish.
And Cleisthenes—hark!
O’er his friend stiff and stark
Rends his rump with his claws, full of sorrow and rage,
For Sebinus, that beast,—
Callias last, but not least,
In a lion’s skin drest, who went battle to wage.

*Ba.* My friends, can you tell
Where one Pluto does dwell?
Two strangers are we, who this country explore—

Ch. Why, then, my good sir,
From this spot do not stir,
For know that you stand at his very house-door.
THE FROGS.

_Ba._ Come, come, take up your traps. _Xan._ Why, what means this? Have we Jove's Corinth stow'd away inside?

**SEMI-CHORUS.**

Let us form in a ring,
Let us dance, let us sing,
On the flowery mead
Lightly tread, lightly tread,
With maidens and dames,
Come and feed the chaste flames
That through the long night
On the altar burn bright.

**SEMI-CHORUS.**

Away, yes away,
To the meads painted gay
With flowers there blooming,
The soft air perfuming,
There form we our chorus,
Kind Fates watching o'er us,
For us only the sun
His full glory puts on;
For us only is lighted
More brilliant the sky,
Freemen, strangers, united
By mystical tie.

_Ba._ Now how ought I to knock? pray tell me how?
How do the natives of this country knock?
_Xan._ Come, don't waste time, but just you try the door,
And do remember that you now support
Th' Herculean character. _Ba._ Ho! porter, porter!
_Wake up._ _Æac._ Who is it? _Ba._ Hercules the strong.

_Æac._ O impious, daring, and most shameless wretch,
O villain, double villain, damn'd arch-villain,
'Twas you who came before, and stole my dog,  
Poor Cerberus! you seiz'd him, gagg'd, and then  
Ran off with him—but now we have you fast,  
Fast as black Styx, and rock of Acheron  
Dripping with gore of criminals, can hold you;  
The hounds of Cocytus we'll set on you;  
Her hundred heads shall the Echidna rear,  
And tear your entrails; the Tartesian Fury  
Shall fasten on your loins, and lap your blood;  
Your kidneys shall be given this night for supper  
To the Tithrassian Gorgons. I'll go fetch them.  

**Xan.** What have you done? **Ba.** Done it: I could not help it.  
Call on your Gods. **Xan.** O most contemptible!  
Will you not hence, before some stranger sees  
Your shameful plight? **Ba.** O! I am very ill;  
Get out the sponge, and place it next my heart.  

**Xan.** Here. **Ba.** Please apply it. **Xan.** Where? O golden Gods!  
Is't there you have your heart? **Ba.** Poor flutt'ring thing,  
It sunk through fright right down below my stomach.  

**Xan.** 'Mid Gods and men you surely are the pink  
Of cowardice. **Ba.** A coward? I? how so?  
Did I not ask the sponge of you? a coward  
Would not have acted thus. **Xan.** What would he do?  

**Ba.** He would have lain down flat, and smelt unpleasant—  
I stood upright and boldly wip'd myself.  

**Xan.** A manly act, by Neptune. **Ba.** Faith, I think so.  
But tell me, don't you feel at all afraid  
At his fierce menace? **Xan.** Pshaw! I heed him not.  

**Ba.** Well, just suppose, you are so lion-hearted,  
That we change parts; take you my club and skin,  
And I will be the servant. **Xan.** As you please,  
Only be quick about it; I consent.  
Now look upon the Xanthian Hercules,  
And see if he will prove poltroon like you.
THE FROGS.

_Ba._ I think you'll be more like his whipping-boy,
The scapegrace slave that acts his character
At Melite: here, change, I'll take the pack.

_[Enter female servant of Proserpine._

_Serv._ O dearest Hercules, art thou arriv'd?
When heard my mistress you were come, she sent
And bade them bake new bread, and to dish up
Two or three marrow puddings; and an ox
Is to be roasted whole, and they prepare
Some pastry and light comfits:—pray come in.

_Xan._ I am most sensible of all her kindness.
_Serv._ By Phœbus, I am not to let you go
Out of my sight; and I forgot to say
She had put down to roast some ortolans;
And there are cheesecakes for dessert, and wine
Of the best quality; so pray come in
With me. _Xan._ I shall be charm'd. _Ba._ You speak in jest;
I shall not let you go. _Serv._ There is besides
A fair musician who will play to you
Upon the lute, and also dancing girls
Some two or three. _Xan._ How say you? dancing girls?

_Serv._ Yes, very pretty ones, new come of age.
_Enter; the cook is just about to take
The spits from 'fore the fire—the table's spread._

_Xan._ Go you along, and tell the dancing girls
I'll pay them first a visit: follow, slave,
Bring on my baggage. _Ba._ Stop, you fellow, stop;
You don't suppose that I in earnest was
When I in fun let you be Hercules.
No nonsense, Xanthias; reassume your pack.

_Xan._ What? sure you don't intend to take away
Your own free gift! _Ba._ I don't intend, but do it.
Strip off the hide. _Xan._ I call the Gods to witness!
THE FROGS.

Ba. What Gods, forsooth! are you so mad to think
That you, a serf and mortal, could pass off
For great Alemena's son? Xan. Well, never mind,
No, never mind, I say; may the time come
When you again my help require—that's all. [they change again.]

CHORUS.

This is truly the part
Of a man shrewd and smart,
Who has travell'd, I think, and don't let his wits sleep:
You are no stupid block,
To stand still like a stock,
But when the boat heels, you the weather side keep.

Ba. It were too good a jest,
To let my slave, drest
Like a prince, go to court, and carouse as my proxy.
Just my feelings suppose,
If right under my nose
I saw the young scamp kiss and toy with his doxy;
Or if, after dining,
At full length reclining,
He coolly me bade for the chamber-pot go,
With a hint to be quick,
Or he'd give me a kick,
Or knock out my front teeth with a backhanded blow.

[Enter Landladies A. and B.]

Landlady A. Why, Plathane, good Plathane, look here!
Behold the thief, that came unto our inn
And eat eleven loaves. Landlady B. By Jove, 'tis he Himself. Xan. Some one is in for squalls, I think.

L. A. And twenty plates of beef, each charg'd at half
An obolus. Xan. Some one will catch it now.

L. A. Item, A quantity of garlic. Ba. Sure

C. 2
THE FROGS.

You joke, good woman;—I don't understand.

L.A. What! do you think, because you buskins wear,
I do not recognise you? L. B. I've not yet
Mention'd the pickled fish this wretch devour'd;
And the new cheese he bolted, jar and all.
Then, when I shew'd the bill, and payment ask'd,
He look'd straight in my face, and gave a belch.

Xan. Ah, his old tricks, 'tis his way everywhere.

L. B. Then like a madman did he draw his sword.

Xan. Dear, dear! poor woman! L. B. We so frighten'd were,
We ran upstairs for shelter; he at once
Took to his heels, and carried off our rugs.

Xan. Ah, his old tricks:—but did you take no steps?

L. A. But now my patron Cleon will I call.

L. B. Aye, do, and if you meet Hyperbolus,
Fetch him for me;—we'll grind the wretch to powder.

L. A. Detested mouth! how gladly with a stone
Would I those gums bemaull that ate my cheer!

L. B. O, I could throw him in the deepest pit.

L. A. And I should like to take a scythe, and slice
The throat that swallow'd my good things:—but soon
Will Cleon come, and serve him out for all.

Ba. Now may I die, but, Xanthias, I do love you.

Xan. I know, I know; but stop, no more of that;
I won't be Hercules again. Ba. Now list,
My little Xanthias. Xan. What! you can't suppose
That I, a serf and mortal, could pass off
For great Alcmena's son? Ba. I know full well
That you are angry, and you have good cause.
Beat me; I'll not reply a word to you:
But if again I e'er deprive you of
Your dress, may I be cut off root and branch!
May I myself, my wife, my children perish,
And blar-ey'd Archedemus, all together!
THE FROGS.

_Xan._ Well, I accept the oath, and on these terms
I will consent to do it: let us change.

CHORUS.

Now again 'tis your turn,
Like the God, to look stern;
The business is black, but put on a good face.
Things look ill at present,
But if any thing pleasant
Turn up, then I guess you'll resume your old place.

_Xan._ You say very well,
And his tricks right you spell,
In such case no doubt he would try to supplant me;
But I am not afraid,
Like my master dismay'd,
These bullies and bugbears shall not easy daunt me.

_Enter Æacus._

Æac._ Bind this dog-stealer, that I may inflict
Due punishment. _Ba._ Some one will catch it now.
_Xan._ Get out—go to the devil—don't come here.
Æac._ What, you shew fight? O monstrous! _Ditylas,
Skeblias, and Pardocas, come quick, and fight
This ruffian. _Ba._ Hard and cruel, is it not,
To beat a man, because he merely stole
Another's goods? _Xan._ 'Tis quite unnatural.
Æac._ O, very hard! _Xan._ Now may I die, if e'er
I came before, or stole a thing of yours
Worth a hair's value: and to prove it plain,
I'll fairly act and handsomely with you.13
Here, take this slave of mine, and torture him,
And if you find I ever did you wrong,
I'll give you leave to take me too, and kill me.
Æac. How may I torture him? Xan. How! every way;
    Tie him up to a ladder, flog him well,
    Flay him alive, twist him, pour vinegar
    Into his nostrils, pile up loads of bricks
    And squeeze him to a mummy; and in fine,
    Each sep'rate mode of torture try but this,—
    Don't beat him with a leek or turnip-top.

Æac. A truly liberal offer! only if
    I chance to maim him, you'll come down on me
    For compensation. Xan. No, in faith, not I.
    Take him away, and freely torture him.

Æac. No, I will do it here; before your eyes
    Shall he confess. Come, sir, put down your pack,
    And strip—and see you tell no lies. Ba. Avaunt!
    I warn you, wretch! lay not an impious hand
    On an immortal God. Æac. What do you say?

Ba. I say that I am Bacchus, son of Jove,
    And he my slave. Æac. You hear? Xan. I hear, and say,
    So much more reason that he should be scourg'd.
    Why, if he is a God, he will not feel.

Ba. And you pretend you are a God yourself:
    Come then, take your fair share of blows with me.

Xan. Agreed, agreed! whichever of us two
    You first see wince, or utt'ring cry of pain,
    You may be sure that he is not the God.

Æac. Well, God or not, you are an honest fellow,
    Straight to the point you come. Now strip you both.

Xan. How will you fairly judge? Æac. O, easily;
    I'll give you blow and blow alternate. Xan. Good!
    Now mark you well, and see if I do wince.

Æac. Why, I have struck! Xan. No, I felt nothing. Æac. No?
    Well, so it seems: and now for him. Ba. When, when?

Æac. Why, I have struck! Ba. Pooh, pooh, I should have sneez'd.

Æac. 'Tis odd: and now for him again. Xan. Be quick.
THE FROGS.

I-attatai! Ἀεας. Ha, ha! what's attatai?
You are in pain? Χαν. O no, I only mus'd
Of the Herculean games at Diome.

Ἀεας. A holy man!—and now again for you.
Ἀεας. But your eyes fill with tears. Ban. Because I smell
Some onions. Ἀεας. And you nothing felt? Ban. O no!
Ἀεας. Well, in that case, I must try him once more.
Χαν. Ah me! Ἀεας. What is it? Χαν. Please pull out this thorn.
Ἀεας. O, that is all!—it is your turn again.
Ban. Pythian Apollo, lord of Delos' isle.
Χαν. He caught it then; did you not hear him groan?
Ban. Not I,—I was but quoting to myself
A verse of Hipponax which I remember'd.
Χαν. O you do nothing, hit him in the guts.
Ἀεας. That's good advice! have at your belly, sir.
Ban. Neptune! Χαν. O then he felt it, I am sure.
Ban. That by the Ἑgean
Wave-wash'd promontory
Dost abide, and controller
The ocean's realm hoary.
Ἀεας. I swear by Ceres that I can't discover
Which of you is the God: but come you in,
Pluto and Proserpine will soon find out,
For they are Gods themselves. Ban. You speak good sense;
I only wish that you had thought of that
Before you gave me those confounded blows.

CHORUS.

Gentle muse, inspire my song;
When the crowd the forum throng,
Wisdom, teach them how to shun
The counsels dark of Cleophon,
THE FROGS.

On whose lips, whence issue lies,
The Thracian\textsuperscript{15} swallow chiding cries.
Sad as her sister Philomel,
Does she his coming doom foretell.
Although the voices well balance'd be,
He shall not 'scape his destiny\textsuperscript{16}.

[Enter Xanthias and Æacus.]

Æac. By Jupiter, our guardian God, I swear,
Your master is a right true gentleman.

Xan. In course he is a right true gentleman,
He's nothing else to do but whore and drink.

Æac. Nay, but I mean he never hit you once,
Although detected in the bare-fac'd lie,
That you, a slave, had feign'd yourself the master.

Xan. Hit me, indeed! I'd like to see him do it.
He would have smarted for't. Æac. Well, this you did
Like a true serving-man. O, I rejoice
When I act thus. Xan. And how rejoice you, pray?

Æac. Myself I liken to an officer,
Inspector of most solemn mysteries,
When I my master curse behind his back.

Xan. How do you feel, when, being soundly thrash'd,
You run fresh from your beating out of doors,
And grumble there? Æac. Then am I pleas'd. Xan. And why,
You silly fellow, why? Æac. O, I don't know.

Xan. Ancestral Jove, a pretty varlet this!
And when you listen to your master's talk?

Æac. I go nigh mad. Xan. And when you this repeat
To folks abroad? Æac. I almost swoon with joy.

Xan. Phæbus Apollo! give me thy right hand,
Let me it kiss, and kiss thou me again,
But stay; by Jupiter I conjure thee—
THE FROGS.

That Jupiter who once was whipp’d like us—
What does this row and awful tumult mean?

Æac. O, ’tis Euripides and Æschylus.

Xan. Indeed! Æac. Great, great, the business being stirr’d,
A fierce contention reigns among the dead.

Xan. Explain. Æac. There is a custom here below,
Touching all arts of great and fair repute,
That he who’s reckon’d captain of his craft
Should in th’ assembly have, as president,
The chair next Pluto— Xan. Well, I understand.

Æac. Until there come some wiser in the art
Than he, and then must he give up. Xan. And how
Does this give trouble unto Æschylus?

Æac. Why, he possess’d the chair of tragedy,
As the superior in that line. Xan. And now —?

Æac. Why, when Euripides came here below,
He soon held forth to all the cut-purse knaves,
Pickpockets, burglars, parricides, of whom,
To speak the truth, there is an ample crowd
In hell: these giving careful ear unto
His fetches, reasonings, and arguments,
Became enamour’d, and went raving mad.
They hail’d him wisest: quick elate at this,
He seiz’d upon the chair where Æschylus
Was wont to sit. Xan. And was he not kick’d out?

Æac. No, no, the crowd cried out to have a ring,
And trial make which was the better man.

Xan. The crowd of rascals! Æac. Aye, they cried so loud,
They made the welkin vibrate with their noise.

Xan. Had Æschylus no backers on his side?

Æac. Yes, a small party, but the most select.

Xan. And Pluto, how is he prepar’d to act?

Æac. O, he declares that they may have the fight.

Xan. How came it Sophocles claim’d not the throne?
Æac. Not he, by Jove, but he kiss’d Æschylus
When he arriv’d, put his right hand in his,
And waiv’d his own pretensions to the chair.
Now he’s about, so says Cleidemides,
To act as second; and if Æschylus
Prevail, he will retire, if not, himself
The lists will enter with Euripides.

Xan. Will it be soon? Æac. Almost directly, then
   . A terrible commotion will there be,
   When poesy is by the pound retail’d.

Xan. Why, what the deuce, will they weigh poetry?
Æac. Aye, that they will, yard-measures too they’ll bring,
   And cubit-rules for words, then plaster them,
   As they make bricks, in squares and oblong shapes,
   With compasses to draw diameters,
   Wedges to boot: Euripides declares
   That word by word he’ll test each tragedy.

Xan. I should not think that Æschylus was much
   Inclin’d to play the civil. Æac. No, he bent
   A low’ring look, like to an angry bull.

Xan. And who’s the judge? Æac. Faith, that was hard; you’ll find
   A scarcity of learned men below.
   Why, Æschylus did not th’Athenians suit.

Xan. Perhaps he thought them most a blackguard set.
Æac. He held they were a race too frivolous
   To judge of the poetic nature: so
Upon your master they for umpire fix’d,
For he has much experience in the art.
But let us jog; when masters are in haste,
We slaves, you know, don’t always come best off.

CHORUS 17.

See, the bard of mind vivid is with anger quite livid,
   The eyes in his head are like fireballs glaring;
THE FROGS.

His fury in vain will he try to restrain,
When he catches a sight of his rival him daring.

Now his phrases high-prancing, with crests gaily dancing,
Come forth to contend in their war-array splendid,
With the nice sentenceittings, and the subtle hair-splittings,
In order of battle right cunningly blended.

The long hair on his forehead, like a mane bristling horrid,
One pours forth, contracting his eyebrow defiant,
His words rolling thunder, hindrance cleaving asunder,
As through the rent forest careers the storm-giant.

Then his shrewd adversary, a critic full wary,
And wielding the glibbest, most practis’d of tongues,
Will attempt a detection and minutest dissection
Of the diction sonorous, sorely tasking the lungs.

_Eur._ I will not yield the chair, don’t think it; I
   Do boast myself superior in the art.
_Ba._ Why art thou silent, _Æschylus?_ thou hear’st?
_Eur._ Nay, first with solemn face will he revolve
   Unto himself those monstrous sentences,
   Like nothing human, which, in ev’ry play
   Of his, his characters are wont to hatch.
_Ba._ Come, my good sir, don’t blow your horn too loud.
_Eur._ I know him well, and long my mind’s made up.
   He is a man of wild and headlong speech,
   No curb puts he upon his tongue, but vents
   Discourse bombastic, unprounounceable.
_Æsch._ Child of the rustic Goddess, say’st thou so?
   Dar’st thou say this to me! thou chatter-box,
   Beggar-compounder, tatterdemalion’s mate,
   Thou shalt repent it. _Ba._ Softly, _Æschylus,
Don't suffer anger thus to vex your reins.

Æsch. I will not cease before I make it plain,
This crippli-lose'ēl's friend's impertinence.

Ba. An ewe, black ewe, bring, boys, and sacrifice 18,
Here's the typhoon will burst on us anon.

Æsch. Thou ballad-monger, thou collector vile
Of Cretic ditties, that presum't to bring
Incestuous marriages into the art!

Ba. Restraining yourself, most valued Æschylus:
And you, you rogue Euripides, look out;
Out of this hailstorm quick, if you are wise,
Remove yourself; lest with some stunning word
Your pate he hit, and knock clean out of it
All recollection of your Telephus.
And don't give way to anger, Æschylus,
But argue gently, gently state your case;
Convinc'd, or be convinc'd: it is not fit
Nor proper that two poets should abuse
Each other like she-baker-prentices.
But you are so impetuous,—catch a spark,
You blaze and roar like ilex-wood on fire.

Eur. I am prepar'd, and do not shrink from it,
To bring to open proof my words, my strains,
The very sinews of a tragedy.
By Jove, by Peleus, and by Æolus,
I this do swear, by Meleager too,
And loftier oath, by my own Telephus.

Ba. And what wish you to do? Speak, Æschylus.

Æsch. I have no wish to join in battle here;
The combat will not be on equal terms.

It did not die with me, as his has done
With him; he has his stock at hand: but still,
If so it please you, I'll encounter him.
THE FROGS.

Ba. 'Tis well: now flame and incense mix, ye two,
And I myself will offer up a prayer
That I may judge this action worthily:
And you your voices to the Muses raise.

CHORUS.
Hear, ye Muses, virgin nine,
Daughters of Jupiter divine,
Ye who with your piercing ken
Scan the secret thoughts of men,
When for contest keen inclin'd
They closely grapple, mind with mind;
Hither from your mount descend,
And to each the weapons lend
Wherewithal he's wont to fight,
To him the epithets of might,
To him nice quirks and quillets, fine
As sands that in the hour-glass shine.
Vast the quarrel, great the prize,
In ardour either champion vies.

Ba. Now pray you both before you do begin.
Æsch. Ceres, that didst of yore my mind inspire,
O make me worthy of thy mysteries!

Ba. Now you too take and offer incense. Eur. Aye,
But I have other gods to whom I pray.

Ba. What! do you mean to say, you counterfeit,

Ba. Well, pray away to your own private Gods.

Eur. Thou air, from whence my vital sustenance
I draw, thou organ of my tongue, thou mind,
And, O ye nostrils, wherewithal I smell,
Grant me to conquer with the words I choose!
THE FROGS.

CHORUS.
Earnestly do we desire
To hear these sages rous’d to ire.
Now no puny war is waging,
Now no tyro minds engaging.
We look for something neatly pointed,
Well put together, dovetail-jointed,
From the former; then the latter,
As a furious tempest raging,
All his rival’s flimsy matter
Like chaff before the wind will scatter.

_Ba._ Well, now be quick, don’t stand stock-still, but speak.

See your discourse be witty, nowise stale.

_Eur._ Well, of myself and my poetic merits
I will make mention last: but firstly, him
I’ll prove a gross impostor and a cheat.
He took the clowns that Phrynichus had rear’d
In hand; with these the public he deceiv’d.
First, a veil’d character he’d forward put,
Achilles, or a Niobe perhaps,
Or some one else; he never shew’d the face,—
A mere lay-figure in a tragedy,
A dummy, that ne’er spoke a syllable.

_Ba._ Aye, aye? _Eur_. And then the chorus bellow’d out
Four long successive cantos: all this time
Strict silence kept the proper characters.

_Ba._ And I delighted in their silence; more
It pleas’d me than your talkers nowadays.

_Eur._ You were a fool then. _Ba_. Well, perhaps I was.
Why did he this? _Eur_. Out of pure arrogance;
He lik’d to keep the audience in suspense,
Waiting to hear what Niobe would say.

_Ba._ Ah villain! how did he impose on me!
Why do you yawn impatient? _Eur._ Him I wish
Full to convict. When he had trifled thus,
And the play was nigh over, then at last
Would he rap out some dozen thund’ring words,
With eyebrows, looks, and hideous visages
Unknown unto the public. _Æsch._ Woe is me,
Unhappy! _Ba._ Hush! _Eur._ Yet nothing spoke he plain——

_Ba._ Don’t gnash your teeth. _Eur._ But something of Scamander,
Or trenches, or reclining on their shields
Wyverns, in shining mail of beaten brass,
A team of runaway neck-breaking words,
Not easy, faith, to drive in harness. _Ba._ Jove!
Oft have I lain awake at night in bed;
Musing upon the tawny hippociff,
What sort of bird it was. _Æsch._ Why, frequently
’Tis us’d as figure-head unto our ships.

_Ba._ Well, I had always thought it was Eryxias,
Philoxenus’s son. _Eur._ But why at all
A dragon in the drama introduce?

Æsch._ Detested wretch! what introduc’d not you?

_Eur._ Not hippociffins, sir, nor yet stag-goats,
Creatures you see on Persian hangings wrought.
When from your hands I first receiv’d the art,
And took her for my patient, she, poor thing,
Was sadly swollen with plethoric words
And tumid phrases: soon I brought her down
To something like condition, for I gave
Most potent purgatives, discourses, scraps
Of minstrelsy, and versicles, in pills,
And then prescrib’d a liquid draught of song,
A mild decoction strain’d from books; and next,
Her now exhausted nature to support,
Us'd monodies, dash'd with Cephisophon.
Nor did I pounce upon, and to myself
Appropriate, whatsoever turn'd up first
In a chance-medley; but, deliberate,
Would he expound to me the scheme entire
Of his own play. Ba. Much better than your own.

Eur. Then from the op'ning words I ne'er allow'd
An idle character; my woman talk'd,
Or if it was a slave, 'twas all the same,
Or master, maiden, or old woman. Æsch. Aye,
And doing this did you not merit death?

Eur. Nay, by Apollo, but so prov'd myself
True friend unto the people. Ba. Never mind,
There's no occasion to discuss that point.

Eur. Well, these I taught to speak. Æsch. To this I say,
'Twere better you had burst yourself in twain.

Eur. Subtle refinements introductory
I taught, to think, to see, to understand,
To plot, to warp, intrigue, and to suspect
All things soever. Æsch. That you did, I own.

Eur. Domestic objects I did not despise,
Nor keep that out of sight with which we have
Daily acquaintance; and by these I would
Be tested, for I was not wont to swagger,
Fright'ning the audience out of half their wits,
Bringing fierce knights and Memnon's on the stage,
Their horses' trappings deck'd with jingling bells.
'Tis easy to discern between us two
By looking to our different pupils; his
You know, Phormisius and Megenetus,
Whisker'd-lance-trumpeters, a sneering set
Of bearded-braggadocio-bully-boys.
Now turn to mine, behold them—Cleitophon,
And my dear dainty friend Theramenes.
THE FROGS.

Ba. Theramenes, a clever fellow, that,
    If in a scrape he gets, soon wriggles out,—
    "I spell me with a kappa, not a chi;
    No Chian, but a Kian at your service."

Eur. By arts such as these,
    That admonish and please,
    Taught I men to be wise,
    Since true wisdom lies
    In making them strive
    At home well to live.
    Now closely they look
    To a business affair,
    Saying, "Who this has took?
    What is this? how? and where?"

Ba. Each Athenian, 'tis true,
    Now instructed by you,
    When he enters his halls
    To his servants loud bawls,
    Hallo! where's the pot
    Which last summer I got?
    Who has broken the dish?
    And the head of the fish——
    Why here's a sad coil,
    With the garlic and oil
    I bought yestreen to sup;
    Who has dar'd eat them up?

Chorus. These things you behold,
    O Achilles the bold.
    But now 'tis your turn,
    Though with fury you burn
    At his hard accusation,
    Yet restrain indignation;
    When the tempest prevails,
    Take a reef in your sails,
So your bark o'er the tide
Smoothly, safely shall glide.
Now of bards thou the first,
Whom our Hellas has nurst,
That of fable and story,
The weak props of the stage,
With thy genius' bright glory
Didst embellish the page.
Like a fountain upspringing let thine eloquence burst.

Æsch. I am indignant at the bare idea
Of arguing with this fellow: but lest he
Pretend that I was silent not from choice
But from necessity, now answer me,
What in a poet should we most admire?
Eur. Why, cleverness, and giving good advice;
In that, we make men better citizens.

Æsch. If you have done just the reverse of this,
And have, in lieu of honest noble men,
Held up to imitation and applause
A base adulterous tribe, what penalty,
Think you, you merit? Ba. Death: don't ask him twice.

Æsch. Consider now what kind of men from me
You did receive: they were a genrous race,
Standing four cubits in their sandals, not
Runaway rascals, hucksters, arrant knaves,
Scum of the earth, but breathing sword and spear,
Whitecrested morions, hauberks, corslets, greaves,
And sevenfolded souls. Ba. Look out!—he'll crush
Us 'neath his helmet-foundry sure as fate.

Eur. And what have you to make men noble taught?
Ba. Speak, Æschylus; though angry, don't maintain
That haughty silence. Æsch. I compos'd a play
Instinct with Mars. Eu. What's that? Æs. The Seven'gainst Thebes.
Why, not a man did see that play but went
THE FROGS.

Away ennobled in his soul, and felt
Himself a warrior. Ba. This was badly done,
You made the Thebans manlier in the fray.
You should be beat for this. Æsch. And had not you
Athenians too the opportunity?
Ye were not apt for lessons such as this.
And next The Persians I brought out; at least
Unto my countrymen did I inspire
The wish to overcome the enemy,
Seeing I sang that glorious feat of arms.

Ba. Well, I rejoiced when I did hear the death
Of old Darius, and the Chorus kept
Wringing their hands incessant, and pour’d forth
Shrill shrieks of lamentation, ai! ai! ai!

Æsch. These are the themes that poets should adopt.
Consider now from the world’s early prime
How useful to their fellow men have been
True noble poets. Orpheus first of all
Bade us restrain from slaughter of our kind;
Museus taught the cures to pestilence;
Then Hesiod told the culture of the earth,
The circling seasons and their varied fruits.
And why, I ask, did godlike Homer reap
Immortal honour? was it not because
He sang in noble stave the arm’d array,
The valiant exploits, glitt’ring panoply
Of heroes? Ba. Nathless Pantaloes did not
Turn out a pupil promising of his.
Why, lately, when he had to give his show,
His helmet first upon his brow he donn’d,
And then a swinging horse-tail tied to it.

Æsch. Many well-taught could I enumerate:
Among them Lamachus; hence I myself
Did take some hints about Patroclus and
Courageous Teucer, for I wish'd to shew
To these the model of a citizen,
A man aye ready at his country's need
Whene'er he hear the clarion's warning call.
I took not Phaedra, Sthenoea—whores.
No man can say in any play of mine
A woman falls in love.  Eur. 'Tis true; no spark
Of Venus' flame e'er cours'd within your veins.

Æsch. Granted; but she has influenc'd you and yours
Much to your mischief. Ba. Undeniably.
The blow which you did aim at other men,
Seeking their wives, upon yourself recoil'd. 21

Eur. How has my Sthenoea harm'd the state?

Æsch. Why, noble ladies, wives of noble men,
You've caus'd themselves to poison, brought to shame.
By your Bellerophs. Eur. Is it not true—
The story of my Phaedra?  Æsch. Yes, 'tis true,
But what of that? a poet should conceal
Disgraceful histories, not publish them
To all the world: a pedagogue is he
That schooleth children, poets grown up men
And sentiments of honour we should teach.

Eur. And so, because you tell us of the heights
Of Lyceabettus, or the sacred cliffs
Of white Parnassus, this, forsooth, you say,
This sentiments of honour is to teach!
Methinks such teacher might just condescend
To speak in human phraseology.

Æsch. Pest on thee, scurvy jester! this I mean—
Great minds should speak in corresponding terms.
I would not have a demigod use words
Like one of us, or wear such common clothes;
But when I gave to these fine words, fine clothes,
You shew'd your spite at this.  Eurip. Indeed! how so?
THE FROGS.

Æsch. Princes you made to go about in rags,
    That they might raise compassion. Eur. And did this
Do harm? Æsch. Aye, not a soul, however rich,
Would fill the office of a trierarch,
But hawk'd his spurious poverty in rags.

Ba. By Ceres, yes, and underneath those rags
Would wear a costly tunic! when he thus
Had gull'd mankind, he'd to the market jaunt,
And order a prime turbot for his dinner.

Æsch. What with your stuff and nonsense, all the schools
Of manly exercise deserted are,
The rising generation mincing struts
Abroad, in morals thoroughly corrupt,
Conceited chatt'ring boys: the sailors too
The point must argue with their officers.
Why, in the good old times, when I was living,
Their stock of knowledge was compris'd in this—
To ask at mess for larger rations, or
Sing out their "Ryppapæ". Ba. Or run ashore
And rob a purse, or such-like harmless jokes;
But now they are sea-lawyers every one,
And when you bid them pull, they do demur.

Æsch. Is not his guilt flagrant,
    Who the stage doth defile
With whore, pimp, and vagrant,
    And such characters vile?
And, O most indecorous,
His women before us
Are in temples made mothers,
And they live with their brothers
As live husband and wife,
Saying, life is not life.
To this trash it is due,
    That our city is cram'm'd
THE FROGS.

With a monkey-like crew,
That deserve to be damn'd.
At home these are lurking,
When abroad they should fight,
And, their own duty shirking,
The poor people excite.
Woe for manhood! not one
At the last Attic games,
Was in fit state to run
At the race of the flames. 32

_Prose._

_Jove! I near split with laughing_
At a fat paunchy fellow,
Who his wine had been quaffing
Till he got very mellow:
He was last in the races,
Making horrid grimaces.
At Ceramicus they like
A good practical joke;
So his buttocks they strike,
And his side-bones they poke,
And they push him and cuff,
Till the wretch, in his fright,
Gave such a terrible puff,
That it put out his light.

_Chorus._ Right bravely indeed
Does the contest proceed,
And fierce is the rattle
And the din of the battle.
The one presses hard
As determin'd to kill,
While his foe on his guard
Stands and parries with skill.
But to it unshrinking,
Let not the war slack,
THE FROGS.

New devices of thinking,
   All resources ransack.
Your strength again measure,
   Ye are nigh of a match,
And the audience with pleasure
   Will the changing fight watch.
Feel no hesitation
   That they won't understand,
Vast strides education
   Now has made through the land.

_Eur._ Now to thy prologue I attention draw;—
   That first ingredient in the tragedy
   Of a good poet I'll proceed to test:
   In op'ning of a plot was he obscure?

_Ba._ Which will you test? _Eur._ O, there are plenty; first,
   That of Orestes please repeat to us.

_Ba._ Now silence every one! Speak, _Æschylus._

_Æsch._ "Mercury, God of earth, that watchest o'er
   This my paternal kingdom, O be thou
   To me a suppliant, guardian and ally,
   Who to this land arrive, and am return'd."

_Ba._ Can you find any fault? _Eur._ Yes, twelve or more.

_Ba._ Indeed! Why, he has only said four lines.

_Eur._ Each single one of them has twenty faults.

_Ba._ I warn you to keep quiet, _Æschylus—_
   At present you have only spoke four lines—
   If not, you'll soon run up a pretty score.

_Æsch._ Shall I keep quiet for this fellow's threats?

_Ba._ Yes, if you follow my advice. _Eur._ I'll prove
   That his mistakes are huge as is the space
   'Twixt heav'n and earth. _Æsch._ You see! _Ba._ Well, as you will.

_Æsch._ How say you that I err? _Eur._ Repeat again.

_Æsch._ "Mercury, God of earth, that watchest o'er
   This my paternal kingdom, O be thou—"
THE FROGS.

Eur. It is not Orestes speaking at the grave
Of his dead father! Ἀσχ. I dispute not that.

Eur. Well, seeing that his father died a death
Of violence, slain by a woman’s hand,
Caught in the toils prepar’d by secret craft,
How can he say that Mercury kept watch?

Ba. He does not mean the crafty Mercury,
But him of Eriunium, God of luck.
And this he shews quite plain, when he declares
He has obtain’d his father’s heritage.

Eur. Why, this is worse than ever; if he had
Obtain’d his father’s earthly heritage,
He must—— Ba. Be a grave-robber, ’twould have been
Flat burglary. Ἀσχ. Bacchus, your jokes smell rank,
I trust your wine’s less musty than your wit.

Ba. Ha, ha! proceed——And you look out for blots.

Ἀσχ. “To me a suppliant, guardian and ally,
Who to this land arrive, and am return’d.”

Eur. Here, Ἀσχylus has said the same thing twice.

Ba. How twice! Eur. Yes, mark the phrases he employs,
“Who to this land arrive, and am return’d,”
“Arrive, and am return’d,” are just the same.

Ba. As if a man unto his neighbour said,
Lend me a cask, and, if you please, a barrel.

Ἔσχ. Not so, thou chatt’ring witling, but it is
A well-discriminating use of words.
A man is said to come unto a land
To whom there’s no restriction in the way;
An exile both arrives and does return.

Ba. Well turn’d, by Phæbus! Now, Euripides.

Eur. But I deny Orestes home return’d,
For he came secretly, without the leave
Of the then-ruling powers. Ba. Masterly hit!
But what he means I don’t quite understand.
THE FROGS.

Eur. And now go on. Ba. Yes, Æschylus, go on,—
Keep you a bright look out for any faults.
Æsch. "Here at his tomb do I my sire entreat
To hear and listen." Eur. Stop! another blunder,—
"To hear and listen" clearly the same thing.
Ba. Tut, you wiseacre! Do you not perceive
He's speaking to the dead? on whom three 23 times
We call, nor, after all, ourselves make heard.
Æsch. And how made you your prologues? Eur. You shall hear;
If ever I the same word mention twice,
Or any one can find in all my plays
An useless expletive, I'll give him leave
To spit into my face. Ba. Well, let us hear.
Eur. "At first was Ædipus a prosp'rous man."
Æsch. That I deny; he was an ill-starr'd wretch,
Whom, e'en before his birth, Apollo said
To slay his father was predestinate;
Aye, e'en before he was begotten! how
Could he at first have been a prosp'rous man?
Ba. Aye, afterwards most wretched he became.
Æsch. No, not a bit of it; he never had
A single check in his career of woe;
And that I'll prove. Directly he was born,
On a cold winter's day, he was expos'd
Upon a potsher'd, lest he should grow up
To be his father's murderer; and next,
Limping and lame, stumbling on Polybus,
He finish'd him; and afterwards, though young,
He an old woman married, who turn'd out
To be his mother: as a summing up
To all the rest, himself put out his eyes.
Ba. He had been truly blest, if he had serv'd
The last campaign with Erasinides. 24
Eur. You jest; my prologues are quite excellent.
THE FROGS.

Æsch. You think so, do you? I don't wish to carp
At every single word, but, by the Gods,
Your prologue I'll demolish utterly
With a pint-bottle. Eur. What! you mean to say,
With a pint-bottle you'll demolish mine!
Æsch. With one pint-bottle, neither more nor less.
As you compose, 'tis easy to fit on
A sheepskin, and pint-bottle, and a pouch
To your iambics; I can give you proof.
Eur. "Ægyptus, so the common rumour runs,
With fifty children in a long-oar'd boat,
Landing near Argos"—Æsch. His pint-bottle lost!
Eur. Curse the pint-bottle! shall he not rue this?
Ba. Give us another prologue; let me judge.
Eur. "Bacchus, who, clad in skins of dappled fawn
Begirt by thyrsus-bearing votaries,
In the pine forests of Parnassus bounds,
Weaving light dances"—Æsch. His pint-bottle lost!
Ba. Again has his pint-bottle hit us hard.
Eur. Well, never mind, 'twill be impossible
To tack his damn'd pint-bottle on to this,—
"No man existed, altogether blest,
Born 'neath fair auspices he liv'd not long,
Or else misfavour'd"—Æsch. His pint-bottle lost!
From that pint-bottle blows an awful blast.
Eur. By Ceres, I won't think of giving in:
This time I will be fairly rid of it.
Ba. Proceed; but mind—'ware the pint-bottle, 'ware.
Eur. "Cadmus, Agenor's son, behind him left
The town of Sidon"—Æsch. His pint-bottle lost!
Ba. Buy his pint-bottle, man, buy it outright;
It will be money well laid out; or else
'Twill spoil your prologues.  *Eur.* What! I buy of him?  
*Ba.* You'll do so, if you value my advice.  
*Eur.* Not so; for I have many prologues left,  
Where his confounded bottle can't come in.  
"To Pisa Pelops, son of Tantalus,  
Borne on swift coursers"— *Æsch.* His pint-bottle lost!  
*Ba.* See, with his bottle he has capp'd your verse.  
Come, *Æschylus*, sell him your bottle, fix  
Your price with him, and for an obolus  
You can a new one purchase, spick and span.  
*Eur.* Not yet, by Jove; I still have plenty left.  
"From the land *Æneus*"— *Æsch.* His pint-bottle lost!  
*Eur.* Nay, that's foul play, let me complete the line,—  
"From the land *Æneus* reap'd a plenteous crop,  
The first-fruits off'ring"— *Æsch.* His pint-bottle lost!  
*Ba.* What! was it stolen from him, when engag'd  
At his devotions! monstrous sacrilege!  
*Eur.* Ne'er mind, good friend, but let him speak to this—  
"Great Jupiter the voice of truth declares"—  
*Ba.* It is no good, he will confound you straight  
With "His pint-bottle lost!" it comes quite apt  
To all your prologues, and as natural  
To them as warts to certain persons' eyes.  
Yes, give it up, and have your fling at him.  
*Eur.* Him will I prove to be extremely bad:  
The pith and the quintessence now I'll give  
Of all his strains, for they are most diffuse,  
But I'll concentrate them, and bring them all  
Unto one head.  *Ba.* And I'll the tally keep,  
And check them off as they come trooping in.  
*Eur* "O Phthian Achilles, hear'st thou not sounds of slaughter,  
Wilt thou not come to our burthensome aid?  
We adore thee, O Hermes, who dwell by the water,  
Thou comest not yet to our burthensome aid."
THE FROGS.

_Ba._ A brace of burthens for you, _Æschylus._

_Eur._ "Atrides, far ruler, of the Greeks chieftain glorious,
    Thou comest not yet to our burthensome aid."

_Ba._ Hark, there he goes, with burthen number third!

_Eur._ "I sing the emprize of great captains victorious,
    Why comest thou not to our burthensome aid?"

_Ba._ O royal Jupiter, this is too much,
    A murrain on your burthens! I must go
    And have a bath, my kidneys ache quite sore
    Beneath th' infliction of those burthens four.

_Eur._ Nay, stop a minute, I'll rehearse to you
    Another distich of his rumbling verse,
    The metre fram'd on the strict bardic rule.

_Ba._ Well, say your say, but no more burthens, mind.       [ry,

_Eur._ "Th' Achaean reign of sceptres twain, the flower of Grecian chival-
    With a phlattothrattophlattothrat. [is nigh,
    The hell-hound dire, with fiendish ire, the dread remorseless Sphinx
    With a phlattothrattophlattothrat. [in the sky,
    With spear and brand, and vengeful hand, the valiant bird swoops
    With a phlattothrattophlattothrat.

    A feast of blood to give her brood, and still her famish'd eaglets cry,
    With a phlattothrattophlattothrat. [eye,
    While Ajax, lord of his good sword, surveys them with undaunted
    With a phlattothrattophlattothrat."

_Ba._ Why, where the deuce got you your phlattothrat?

    From Marathon 23? is it a Persian word?
    Or fag end of a water-carrier's song?
    About its very length the rope that draws
    Their buckets from the well. _Æsch._ Nay, I receiv'd
    A subject fair, and then improv'd on it,
    And left it fashion'd fairer from my hands.
    I did disdain to crop the selfsame flowers
    In the bright Muses' field, as Phrynichus.
    This fellow here all kinds of harlotry
Stoops to adopt, Meletus' drinking catches,
And Carian ditties, dirges, dancing-jigs,
Jumbled together: but I'll shew you quick—
Hallo! a lyre let some one fetch me!—bah,
What need a lyre? I had forgot: are not,
Muse of Euripides, two scallop shells
Rattled together music good enough?
Come, listen, Muse, one of your own sweet strains
Will I recite. Ba. Has not his lady Muse
Play'd tricks as bad as naughty Sappho? oh?
Æsch. "Haleyon songsters, ye that roam
By the sad sea's restless wave,
And in pearly drops of foam
Your pinions' shining plumage lave,—
Spiders, that beneath the roof
In the corner of a room,
Whose fingers weave as fine a woof
As shuttle singing through the loom,—
Where the dolphin gladly leaping,
Rous'd by music from his sleep,
Gambols round the dark prows sweeping
The crystal bosom of the deep,—
Sing the honours of the vine,
When the luscious grape doth redden,
And the briskly circling wine
Man's sense of woe a while may deaden,
Throw, O child, thy arms about me."
Thou seest this foot? Ba. 'Aye, plain enough.
Æsch. And this thou seest too? Ba. Do not doubt me.
Æsch. Well, this is just the paltry stuff
Which he sings, yet dares impute
To my compositions blame,
And his own lyre to prostitute
To lewd Cyrene's deeds of shame.
THE FROGS.

What do you conceive of such?—
I'll treat you to another touch.

"Blackbrow'd night from pit of gloom,
What fearful shape in sable stole
Send'st thou herald of my doom?
Is't a soul, yet not a soul?
See, the phantom dire advances,
At its aspect reason fails,
Death, O, death is in its glances,
It has long tremendous nails.
Trim, ye slaves, my lamp with oil;
From the stream in brazen chalice
Water bring, then let it boil,
And so disarm the spectre's malice.
God of Ocean! now the warning
I understand, who dares to mock?
Glyce did go out this morning,
She has absconded with my cock.
Mountain nymphs, pursue her! sitting
At my work, of coming sorrow
All unconscious, I was knitting,
To sell—'tis market-day to-morrow.
My cock, my cock, with swift wings cleaving
The firmament, has fled, has fled!
Grief, bitter grief, his mistress leaving,
Tears, idle tears, perforce I shed.
Ida's children, sons of Crete,
Grasp your bows and quivers sounding,
Stir your legs, in motion fleet,
The robber's lurking place surrounding.
Great Diana, huntress fair,
Set your hounds on Glyce's track,
Jove-born Hecate, a pair
Of candles light, seek, bring her back."
THE FROGS.

Ba. Give over now the strain. Æsch. I've had enough.
Suppose we take him to the weighing-stand,
Which shall decide on our respective claims,
For that will test the weight of what we say.
Ba. Well, be it so, if needs be I must weigh
Th' accomplishments of poets like to you,
As though they were so many pounds of cheese.
Now stand close by the balance. Æs. & Eur. Here we are!
Ba. Well, now let each begin—a verse recite,
And do not stop until I shall call out.
Eur. & Æs. We're ready. Ba. Well then, speak into the scales.
Eur. Would that the Argive bark had never wing'd.
Æsch. Stream of Spercheius, haunts of grazing kine——
Ba. Stop! stop! the scale of Æschylus descends,
Yours kicks the beam. Eur. And what's the cause of this?
Ba. Because he introduce'd a stream; and so
His words he moisten'd, as a merchant rogue
Does wet his wool to make it heavier weigh.
Eur. Well then, let each stand by and try again.
Eur. Persuasion has no other shrine save speech.
Æsch. Death is the only God that won't take bribes——
Ba. Stop! Now you see his scale again goes down;
He puts in death, the heaviest of all ills.
Eur. And I persuasion, a well chosen word.
Ba. Persuasion's but light ware, without much sense.
Come, try and get some ponderous thumping phrase
That will at once the business do for you.
Eur. What like? advise me, prithee, what to say.
Ba. "A main Achilles threw, four and a deuce."——
But talk you on, this contest sadly lags.
Eur. Heavy with iron was the club he seiz'd.
Æsch. Chariot on chariot, course on course was pild.
Ba. See! he has got the best again. Eur. How so?
THE FROGS.

_Ba._ Two chariots and two corses popp’d he in;
    A hundred men of Egypt 26 won’t lift those.

Æsch. No longer word by word will I contend,
    But get you straight into the scales, yourself,
    Your wife, your children, and Cephisophon,
    With all your books; I on the other hand
    Will only speak two words of mine, and beat you.

_Ba._ My friends, I do not like to judge between
    These two, for I feel friendly unto both;
    One I hold wise, the other pleases me.

_Pl._ Then will you nothing do for which you came?

_Ba._ But if I judge? _Pl._ Then take the one you choose,
    And go; you will not then have come in vain.

_Ba._ That’s fair; I thank you: listen to me now.
    I came here for a poet. _Eur._ Yes, what for?

_Ba._ Why, that the city, by his counsels sav’d,
    May act her choric shows in peace; which-e’er
    Of you prescribe the fittest remedy,
    Him will I take, methinks. Come, tell me first
    What think you each of Alcibiades? 27
    The lab’ring city heaves with anxious throes.

_Eur._ What are her sentiments concerning him?

_Ba._ That’s a hard question; as she all at once
    Fondly regrets and hates, and wants him back.
    But what think you of him?—I wish to know.

_Eur._ I hate that citizen, by nature slow
    To help his native land, but swift to harm,
    Full of resources for his private weal,
    Deficient in expedients for the state.

_Ba._ Well said, by Neptune! What do you conceive?

Æsch. ’Tis hazardous to rear a lion’s cub
    At home; yet if you do, then break him in.

_Ba._ Now this is puzzling; one has spoken well,
    The other honestly. I’ll try again.
THE FROGS.

Will you both be so good as to expound
What scheme you have to save the city with?

Eur. Suppose Cinesias be a pair of wings,
You clap him on Cleocritus's back,
Then let them sail in air right out to sea.

Ba. 'Twould be a curious sight, no doubt; but in
The name of common sense what does it mean?

Eur. Why, don't you see? there is a naval fight;
Above they hover, and squirt vitriol down
Into the eyelids of the enemy—
Well, well I know, and I could speak. Ba. Pray speak.

Eur. When we what faithless is do faithful hold,
And what is faithful faithless— Ba. Really, now
I cannot comprehend: for goodness' sake,
Less learnedly and rather plainer talk.

Eur. Should we distrust those citizens in whom
We now place confidence, and counsel ask
Of them whose counsel we have slighted long,
Haply we yet may be preserv'd; for how,
If acting as we do we fare so ill,
Doing the converse, shall we not improve?

Ba. A very Palamedes! Did you this
Yourself discover, or Cephisophon?

Eur. Nay, it was I myself; but I confess
The vitriol was Cephisophon's idea.

Ba. And what say you? Æsch. What think you of the men
The city now employs for ministers?
Think you that they are honourable men?

Ba. Why, you surprise me; she detests such men.

Æsch. What! she delights in rascals? Ba. No, not that
Exactly, but perforce employs she them.

Æsch. O, who can hope to save a state like this,
That blows both hot and cold? Ba. Try, I implore,
That she resume her once proud attitude.
Æsch. There will I speak, but here I do not choose.
Ba. Nay, hence a message of good tidings send.
Æsch. Bid them consider, then, all hostile land
Their own, and their own land as hostile ground,
Their army's march to be on ocean's wave,
That their true strength consists in ships, and lack
Of their forc'd revenue to be true strength 39.
Ba. Well said; for, as it is, the money goes
In lawyers' fees. Pl. I pray you now decide.
Ba. Now presently shall judgment be, for I'll
Choose him to whom my secret soul inclines.
Eur. Remember now the Gods whom you invok'd
Your oath to sanction, and take me your friend.
Ba. My tongue did swear 39, but I choose Æschylus.
That Æschylus has conquer'd: pray, why not?
Eur. And dar'st thou look me in the face, who dost
This most disgraceful deed? Ba. Disgraceful! how
Can that be, if the public don't so think?
Eur. Ah, cruel! wilt neglect me now I'm dead?
Ba. Why, who can tell if death is not to live?
To breathe the air, to sup? and sleep itself
A good warm blanket? Pl. Come, I pray, within,
That I may feast you two before you go.
Ba. Some sense in that! I come with greatest pleasure.

CHORUS.

Thrice blest the man to whom high heav'n,
Its choicest gift, has wisdom giv'n;
His task it is to educate,
By counsel to instruct the state;
Dear to his kinsmen and his friends,
To lead them on to noble ends
By noble means. O, we rejoice
THE FROGS.

The arbiter of thee made choice,
And not of him who sought to please
The shallow sophist Socrates: 31
Despising in his inmost heart
The highest attributes of art,
In envious gibes and cavils trading,
All that is great and good degrading.

Pl. Farewell, my Æschylus, farewell,
And happiness aye with thee dwell.
Endeavour to preserve our city,
And her senseless scions school;
Athens numbers, more's the pity,
'Mid her children many a fool.
To Cleophon this message give,
Nicomachus, and all that set,
Whose time is up, no more to live,
But come to me. If they forget,
By Jove, I'll fetch them; first my brand
Imprint, that honest men may know them,
Then I'll tie them foot and hand,
Down to my lowest region throw them.

Æsch. This thy pleasure shall be done,
And do thou give up my throne
To Sophocles to keep for me;
He will preserve it faithfully
Till I return; but O, do thou
Remember this my last petition—
Never this wicked man allow,
This vile fomenter of sedition,
To place his worthless person in it,
Although it be but for a minute.

Pl. Let your flick'ring torches brighten,
Like reeling stars through night's domain,
THE FROGS.

The poet on his path-way lighten,
Salute him with a parting strain.

CHORUS.

Yes, joy to the bard unto daylight returning,
Escort him, ye Gods subterranean, and elves,
May peace to our city bring back arts and learning,
   Let Cleophon's friends fight it out by themselves!
NOTES.

1 Slaves were sometimes allowed thus to gain their freedom, though great jealousy of them existed. Thucydides briefly relates a startling anecdote of 2000 slaves at Sparta, who had distinguished themselves in the war, being presented with their freedom, invited to a banquet on the occasion, and murdered.

2 Ἐπίς, properly a vegetable pudding.

3 Here were held the Παναθήναια, games at which were run races, the competitors carrying torches. A scene perhaps not unlike the "senza moccili" of a Roman carnival.

4 An ass carried the sacred vessels used in the mysteries, from Athens to Eleusis.

5 Temenus, now Cape Matapan; supposed by the ancients to be the entrance to Hades.

6 Πέρι τῶν κραῖων. One of the most disputed passages in the book; but it probably refers to Arginusae, after which victory the Athenian commanders were impeached and condemned for not having paid proper funeral honours to their slain. The ophthalmia mentioned in the next line was probably a current excuse for not serving.

7 The contrast is amusing between the ideal Iacchus, the ἀραίως θεός, and the fat Silenus-like Bacchus brought on the stage, the butt of the piece.

8 I have given the proper pronunciation to Αἰγίνα, as it is still called by the Greeks.

9 Πάλλη ἄδος, the long straight road from Athens to Eleusis. Throughout these choruses perpetual allusion is made to the Eleusinian mysteries, between
which and the fancied state of the dead inhabitants of Elysium a vague connection seems hinted at.

10 Archedemus was a foreigner, who, after seven years’ residence, wished to be inscribed in a φράρα or ward, and thereby acquire the full privileges of an Athenian citizen, viz. the power of voting and speaking. Aristophanes therefore compares him to a child δὲ ὁκ ἡφυεν φράρας (curiales), punning on the latter word for φρασμέα, dentes qui ad loquendum sunt utiles.

11 Ἡ Δάκι Κόραθος, said to be a proverb for constant repetition.

12 Cleon the celebrated demagogue was the object of Aristophanes’ peculiar aversion; he therefore selects him as a first-rate bully in hell.

13 The ridiculous custom of allowing slaves to be tortured, in order from their silence or confession to prove their masters’ innocence or guilt, is here glanced at.

14 IO and Iattatai, related to be habitual exclamations of the spectators at the Herculean and Equestrian games.

15 Cleophon was of Thracian origin by his mother.

16 When the votes were equal, a prisoner was acquitted. I have here omitted a large part of the chorus which had no direct bearing on the play, but contains references to the state of political parties in Athens.

17 In the original, the style of Æschylus is imitated in this chorus.

18 The custom of sailors before a storm.

19 More properly, I imagine, painted figures on the ships, as the Chinese junks appear to be ornamented.

20 Æschylum vituperat Bacchus quod in Septem ad Thebas dramate Thebanos fortiores Argivis exhibuerit; sed alio sensu verba ista accipit Æschylus inde occasionem sumens Athenienses carpendi ob neglectum bellicarum artium studium. Brunck. Not. in Ranas.

21 The Scholiast here gives some scandal of the 500th century B. C.

22 See note 3.

23 At funerals they thrice invoked the dead—three was a mystic number—ter injecto pulvere. Horace.

24 Erasimides was one of the commanders at Arginusæ, see note 6.

25 Æschylus fought and highly distinguished himself at Marathon.

26 I presume the Egyptians were capable of carrying great weights, and perhaps the word became almost equivalent to porter, as Gallegos in Spain.

27 Then in exile.

28 In text ἡφυεν διδακας, having vinegar cruetas.

29 This was the advice of Pericles, to abandon their land to the inroads of
the enemy, and to trust entirely to their naval supremacy. The tribute raised by Athens from other states, on the original ground of maintaining a navy to repel Persian invasion, was a great source of complaint against her, and the main cause of the Peloponnesian war.

30 The last answers of Bacchus to Euripides are quotations and parodies from his own works.

31 It is almost needless to observe, that the estimate formed by Aristophanes both of Euripides and of Socrates is most unjust.
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