THE TRAGEDIES OF
ÆSCHYLOS

A New Translation

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY, AND AN APPENDIX OF
RHYMED CHORAL ODES

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DEAN OF WELLS

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EUMENIDES.
The Erinyes who appeared to Orestes after the murder of Clytemnestra made his life miserable, and drove him without rest from land to land. And he, seeking to escape them, had recourse to the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi, believing that he who had sent him to do the work of vengeance would also help to free him from this wretchedness. But the Erinyes followed him there also, and took their places even within the holy shrine of the Oracle, and while Orestes knelt on the central hearth as a suppliant, they sat upon the seats there, and for very weariness fell asleep.
Dramatis Personae.

Pythian Priestess.
Apollo.
Athena.
Ghost of Clytemnestra.
Orestes.
Hermes.
Chorus of the Erinyes.
EUMENIDES.

SCENE.—The Outer Court of the Oracle at Delphi.

Inner shrine in the background, with doors leading into it.

Enter the PYTHIAN PRIESTESS.

Pyth. First, with this prayer, of all the Gods I honour
The primal seeress Earth, and Themis next,¹
Who in due order filled her mother's place,
(So runs the tale,) and in the third lot named,
With her goodwill and doing wrong to none,
Another of the Titans' offspring sat,
Earth's daughter Phoebé, and as birthday gift
She gives it up to Phébos,² and he takes
His name from Phoebé. And he, leaving then
The pool³ and rocks of Delos, having steered
To the ship-traversed shores that Pallas owns,
Came to this land and to Parnassos' seat:
And with great reverence they escort him on,
Hephæstos' sons, road-makers,⁴ turning thus

(1) The succession is, in part, accordant with that in the Theogonia of Hesiod, (vv. 116-136,) but the special characteristic of the Æschylean form of the legend is that each change is a step in a due, rightful succession, as by free gift, not accomplished (as in other narratives of the same transition) by violence and wrong.

(2) Phoebé, in the Theogonia, marries Coios, and becomes the mother of Leto, or Latona, and so the grandmother of Apollo. The "birthday gift" was commonly presented on the eighth day after birth, when the child was named. The oracle is spoken of as such a gift to Apollo, as bearing the name of Phoebos.

(3) The sacred circular pool of Delos is the crater of an extinct volcano. There Apollo was born, and thence he passed through Attica to Parnassos, to take possession of the oracle, according to one form of the myth, depriving Themis of it and slaying the dragon Python that kept guard over it.

(4) The people of Attica are thus named, either as being mythically
The wilderness to land no longer wild;
And when he comes the people honour him,
And Delphos too, chief pilot of this land.
And him Zeus sets, his mind with skill inspired,
As the fourth seer upon these sacred seats;
And Loxias is his father Zeus's prophet.
These Gods in prologue of my prayer I worship;
Pallas Pronaia too claims highest praise;
The Nymphs adore I too where stands the rock
Korykian, hollow, loved of birds and haunt
Of Gods. [And Bromios also claims this place,
Nor can I now forget it, since the time
When he, a God, with help of Bacchants warred,
And planned a death for Pentheus, like a hare's.]
Invoking Pleistos' founts, Poseidon's might,
And Zeus most High, supreme Accomplisher,
I in due order sit upon this seat
As seeress, and I pray them that they grant
To find than all my former divinations
One better still. If Hellas pilgrims sends,
Let them approach by lot, as is our law;

descended from Erichthonios the son of Hephaestos, or as artificers, who
own him as their father. The words refer to the supposed origin of the
Sacred Road from Athens to Delphi, passing through Boeotia and Phokis.
When the Athenians sent envoys to consult the oracle they were pre-
ceded by men bearing axes, in remembrance of the original pioneering
work which had been done for Apollo. The first work of active civil-
sation was thus connected with the worship of the giver of Light and
Wisdom.

(1) Delphos, the hero Eponymos (name-giving) of Delphi, was honoured
as the son of Poseidon. Hence the Priestess invokes the latter as one of
the guardian deities of the shrine.

(2) Pronaia, as having her shrine or statue in front of the temple of
Apollo.

(3) The Korykian rock in Parnassos, as in Soph., Antig., v. 1128; known
also as the "Nymphs' cavern."

(4) Bromios, a name of Dionysos, embodying the special attributes of
bountiful, half-frenzied revelry.

(5) In the legend which Euripides follows, Kitheron, not Parnassus, is
the scene of the death of Pentheus. He, it was said, opposed the wild or
frantic worship of the Pelasgic Bacchos, concealed himself that he might
behold the mysteries of the Meandros, and was torn in pieces by his mother
and two others, on whose eyes the God had cast such glamour that they
took him for a wild beast. English readers may be referred to Dean Mil-
man's translation of the Bacchanales of Euripides.

(6) Pleistos, topographically, a river flowing through the vale of Delphi
mythically the father of the nymphs of Korykos.
Eumenides.

For as the God guides I give oracles. [She passes through the door to the adyptum, and after a pause returns trembling and crouching with fear, supporting herself with her hands against the walls and columns. The door remains open, and Orestes and the Erinyes are seen in the inner sanctuary.

Dread things to tell, and dread for eyes to see,
Have sent me back again from Loxias' shrine,
*So that strength fails, nor can I nimbly move,
But run with help of hands, not speed of foot;
A woman old and terrified is nought,
A very child. Lo! into yon recess
With garlands hung I go, and there I see
Upon the central stone a God-loathed man,
Sitting as suppliant, and with hands that dripped
Blood-drops, and holding sword but newly drawn,
And branch of olive from the topmost growth,
With amallest tufts of white wool meetly wreathed;
For this I will say clearly. And a troop
Of women strange to look at sleepeith there,
Before this wanderor, seated on their stools;
Not women they, but Gorgons I must call them;

(1) At one time the Oracle had been open to questioners once in the year only, afterwards once a month. The pilgrims, after they had made their offerings, cast lots, and the doors were opened to him to whom the lot had fallen. Plutarch. Qu. Græc., p. 282.

(2) The altar of the adyptum, on the very centre, as men deemed, of the whole earth. Zeus, it was said, had sent forth two eagles at the same moment; one from the East and the other from the West, and here it was that they had met. The stone was of white marble, and the two eagles were sculptured on it. Strabo, ix. 3.

(3) The priestess dwells upon the outward tokens, which showed that the suppliant came as one whose need was specially urgent. On the ritual of supplication generally comp. Suppl., vv. 32, 348, 641, Soph., Ed. King, v. 3; Ed. Cot., vv. 469-469.

(4) Eschylus apparently follows the Theogonia of Hesiod, (I. 278,) who describes the Gorgons as three in number, daughters of Phorkys and Keto, and bearing the names of Stheno, Euryale, and Medusa. The last enters into the Perseus cycle of myths, as one of the monsters whom he conquered, with a face once beautiful, but with her hair turned to serpents by the wrath of Athens, and so dreadful to look upon that those who gazed on her were turned to stone. When Perseus had slain her, Athena placed her head in heregis, and thus became the terror of all who were foes to herself or her people. A wild legendary account of
Nor yet can I to Gorgon forms compare them:  
I have seen painted shapes that bear away  
The feast of Phineus. Wingless, though, are these,  
And swarth, and every way abominable.  
They snort with breath that none may dare approach,  
And from their eyes a loathsome humour pours,  
And such their garb as neither to the shrine  
Of Gods is meet to bring, nor mortal roof.  
Ne'er have I seen a race that owns this tribe,  
Nor is there land can boast it rears such brood,  
Unhurt and free from sorrow for its pains.  
Henceforth be it the lot of Loxias, or  
Our mighty lord, himself to deal with them:  
True prophet-healer he, and portent-seer,  
And for all others cleanser of their homes.

Enter APOLLO from the inner adytum, attended by HERMES.

Apol. [To ORESTES.] Nay, I'll not fail thee, but as close at hand  
Will guard thee to the end, or though far off,  
Will not prove yielding to thine adversaries;  
And now thou see'st these fierce ones captive ta'en,  
These loathly maidens fallen fast in sleep.  
Hoary and ancient virgins they, with whom  
Nor God, nor man, nor beast, holds intercourse.  
They owe their birth to evils; for they dwell  
In evil darkness, yea in Tartaros  
Beneath the earth, and are the hate and dread  
Of all mankind, and of Olympian Gods.  
Yet fly thou, fly, and be not faint of heart;

them meets us in the Prom. Bound, v. 812. As works of art, the Gorgon images are traceable to the earliest or Cyclic period.

1 Here also we have a reference to a familiar subject of early Greek art, probably to some painting familiar to an Athenian and ence. The name of Phineus indicates that the monstrous forms spoken of are those of the Harpies, birds with women's faces, or women with birds' wings, who were sent to vex the blind seer for his cruelty to the children of his first marriage. Comp. Soph. Antig., v. 973. In the Æneid they appear (III. 225) as dwelling in the Strophades, and harassing Æneas and his companions.
For they will chase thee over mainland wide,
As thou dost tread the soil by wanderers tracked,
And o'er the ocean, and by sea-girt towns;
And fail thou not before the time, as brooding
O'er this great toil. But go to Pallas' city,
And sit, and clasp her ancient image there;
And there with judges of these things, and words
Strong to appease, will we a means devise
To free thee from these ills for evermore;
For I urged thee to take thy mother's life.

Orest. Thou know'st, O king Apollo, not to wrong;
And since thou know'st, learn also not to slight:
Thy strength gives full security for act.

Apol. Remember, let no fear o'ercome thy soul;
And [To HERMES.] thou, my brother, of one father born,
My Hermes, guard him; true to that thy name,
Be thou his Guide, true shepherd of this man,
Who comes to me as suppliant: Zeus himself
*Reveres this reverence e'en to outcasts due,
When it to mortals comes with guidance good.²

[Exit ORESTES led by HERMES. APOLLO retires
within the adytum. The Ghost of CLYTEM-
NESTRA rises from the ground.

Clytem. What ho! Sleep on! What need of sleepers
now?

And I am put by you to foul disgrace
Among the other dead, nor fails reproach
Among the shades that I a murderess am;
And so in shame I wander, and I tell you
That at their hands I bear worst form of blano.
And much as I have borne from nearest kin,
Yet not one God is stirred to wrath for me,

(1) The old image of Pallas, carved in olive-wood, as distinguished from later sculpture.
(2) The early code of hospitality bound the host, who as such had once received a guest under the shelter of his roof, not to desert though he might discover afterwards that he had been guilty of great crimes, but to escort him safely to the boundary of his territory. Thus Apollo, as the host with whom Orestes had taken refuge, sends Hermes, the escort God, to guide and defend him on his way to Athens.
Though done to death by matricidal hands.
See ye these heart-wounds, whence and how they came?
Yea, when it sleeps, the mind is bright with eyes; 1
But in the day it is man's lot to lack
All true discernment. Many a gift of mine
Have ye lapped up, libations pure from wine, 2
And soothing rites that shut out drunken mirth;
And I dread banquets of the night would offer
On altar-hearth, at hour no God might share.
And lo! all this is trampled under foot.
He is escaped, and flees, like fawn, away;
And even from the midst of all your toils
Has nimbly slipped, and draws wide mouth at you.
Hear ye; for I have spoken for my life:
Give heed, ye dark, earth-dwelling Goddesses,
I, Clytemnestra's phantom, call on you.

[The Erinnyes moan in their sleep.
Moan on, the man is gone, and flees far off:
My kindred find protectors; I find none.

[Moan as before.
Too sleep-oppressed art thou, nor pitiest me:
Orestes, murderer of his mother, 'scapes.

[Noises repeated.
Dost snort? Dost drowse? Will thou not rise and speed?
What have ye ever done but work out ill?

[Noises as before.
Yea, sleep and toil, supreme conspirators,
Have withered up the dreaded dragon's strength.

Chor. [starting up suddenly with a yell.] Seize him,
seize, seize, yea, seize: look well to it.

(1) The thought that the highest wisdom came to men rather in
"visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men," than through the
waking senses, which we have a ready met with in Agam., v. 178, is traceable
to the mysticism of Pythagoras, more distinctly perhaps to that of
Epimenides.
(2) Wine, as in Soph. (Ed. Gr., v. 100, 481, was rigidly excluded from
the cultus of the Eumenides, and to them only as daughters of Night were
midnight sacrifices offered. We must not lose sight of the thought thus
implied, that Clytemnestra had herself lived, after her deed of guilt, in
perpetual terror of the Erinnyes, seeking to soothe them by her
sacrifices.
Clytem. Thou, phantom-like, dost hunt thy prey, and
criest,
Like hound that never rests from care of toil.
What dost thou? (to one Erinnys.) Rise and let not toil
o'ercome thee,
Nor, lulled to sleep, lose all thy sense of loss.
Let thy soul (to another) feel the pain of just reproach: 130
The wise of heart find that their goad and spur.
And thou (to a third), breathe on him with thy blood-
flecked breath,
And with thy vapour, thy maw's fire, consume him;
Chase him, and wither with a fresh pursuit.

Leader of the Chor. Wake, wake, I say; wake her, as
I wake thee.
Dost slumber? Rise, I say, and shake off sleep.
Let's see if this our prelude be in vain.

STROPH. I.
Pah! pah! Oh me! we suffered, O my friends. . . . .
Yea, many mine own sufferings undeserved. . . . .
We suffered a great sorrow, full of woe,
An evil hard to bear.
Out of the nets he's slipped, our prey is gone:
O'ercome by sleep I have my quarry lost.

ANTISTROPH. I.
Ah, son of Zeus, a very robber thou,
Though young, thou didst old Goddesses ride down, 3
Honouring thy suppliant, godless though he be,
One whom his parents loathe:
Thou, though a God, a matricide hast freed:
Of which of these acts can one speak as just?

(1) The common rendering "in a dream" gives a sufficient meaning,
and is, of course, tenable enough. But there is a force in the repeti-
tion of the same word, as in v. 116, which is thus lost, and which I
have endeavoured to preserve. The Erinnyes, thus impotent in their
rage, are as much more dream-like spectres as is the ghost of Clytem-
nestra.

(2) Here, as throughout Eschylus, the Olympian divinities are thought
of as new comers, thrusting from their thrones the whole Chthonian and
Titanic dynasty, Gods of the conquering Hellenes superseding those of
the Pelasgi.
Strophe. II.
Yea, this reproach that came to me in dreams
Smote me, as charioteer
Smites with a goad he in the middle grasps,
Beneath my breast, my heart;
'Tis ours to feel the keen, the o'er keen smart,
As by the public scourger fiercely lashed.

Antistroph. II.
Such are the doings of these younger Gods,
Beyond all bounds of right
Stretching their power. . . . A clot of blood bésmeared
Upon the base, the head, . . .
Earth's central shrine itself we now may see
Take to itself pollution terrible.

Strophe. III.
And thou, a seer, with guilt that stains thy hearth
Hast fouled thy shrine, self-prompted, self-impelled,
Against God's laws a mortal honouring,
And bringing low the Fates
Born in the hoary past.

Antistroph. III.
Me he may vex, but shall not rescue him;
Though 'neath the earth he flee, he is not freed;
For he, blood-stained, shall find upon his head
Another after me,
Destroyer foul and dread.
[Apollo advances from the Adytum and confronts them.

Apol. Out, out, I bid you, quickly from this temple;
Go forth, and leave this shrine oracular,
Lest, smitten with a serpent winged and bright,
Forth darted from my bow-string golden-wrought,
Thou in sore pain bring up dark foam, and vomit
The clots of blood thou suck'dst from human veins.
This is no house where ye may meetly come,
But there where heads upon the scaffold lie, 1
And eyes are gouged, and throats of men are cut,
*And mutilation mars the bloom of youth,
Where men are maimed and stoned to death, and groan
With bitter wailing, 'neath the spine impaled;
Hear ye what feast ye love, and so become
Loathed of the Gods? Yes, all your figure's fashion
Points clearly to it. Such as ye should dwell
In cave of lion battening upon blood,
Nor tarry in these sacred precincts here,
Working defilement. Go, and roam afield
Without a shepherd, for to flock like this
Not one of all the Gods is friendly found.

Chor. O king Apollo, hear us in our turn:
No mere accomplice art thou of these things,
But guilty art in full as principal.

Apol. How then? Prolong thy speech to tell me this.
Chor. Thou bad'st this stranger be a matricide.
Apol. I bade him to avenge his sire. Why not?
Chor. Then thou did'st welcome here the blood just shed.

Apol. I bade him seek this shrine as suppliant.
Chor. Yet us who were his escort thou revilest.
Apol. It is not meet that ye come nigh this house.
Chor. Yet is this self-same task appointed us.
Apol. What function's this? Boast thou of nobler task?
Chor. We drive from home the murderers of their mothers.
Apol. What? Those who kill a wife that slays her spouse?
Chor. That deed brings not the guilt of blood of kin. 3

(1) The accumulation of horrid forms of cruelty had, probably, a special significance for the Athenians. These punishments belonged to their enemies, the Persians, not to the Hellenic race, and the poet's purpose was to rekindle patriotic feeling by dwelling on their barbarity, as in Agam., v. 894, he points in like manner to their haughtiness and luxury.

(2) The argument of the Erinnyes is, to some extent, like that of the Antigone of Sophocles, (Antig., 969-913,) and the wife of Intaphernes, (Herod. III., 119.) The tie which binds the husband to the wife is less sacred than that between the mother and the son. This, therefore, brings
Apol. *Truly thou mak'st dishonoured, and as nought,
The marriage-vows of Zeus and Hera great;
And by this reasoning Kypris too is shamed,
From whom men gain the ties of closest love.
For still to man and woman marriage bed,
Assigned by Fate and guided by the Right,
Is more than any oath. If thou then deal
So gently, when the one the other slays,
And dost not even look on them with wrath,
I say thou dost not justly chase Orestes;
For thou, in the one case, I know, dost rage;
I' the other, clearly tak'st it easily:
The Goddess Pallas shall our quarrel judge.

Chor. That man I ne'er will leave for evermore.

Apol. Chase him then, chase, and gain yet more of toil.

Chor. Curtail thou not my functions by thy speech.

Apol. Ne'er by my choice would I thy functions own.

Chor. True; great thy name among the thrones of
Zeus:

But I, his mother's blood constraining me,
Will this man chase, and track him like a hound.

Apol. And I will help him and my suppliant free;
For dreadful among Gods and mortals too
The suppliant's curse, should I abandon him.

[Exeunt.

Scene changes to Athens, in front of the Temple of Athena
Polias, on the Acropolis.¹

Enter ORESTES.

Orest. [clasping the statue of the Goddess.] O Queen
Athena, I at Loxias' hest

on the slayer the guilt of blood of kin, while murder in the other case is
reduced to simple homicide. Orestes therefore was not justified in per-
petrating the greater crime as a retribution for the less. Apollo, in
meeting this plea, asserts the sacredness of the marriage bond as standing
on the same level as that of consanguinity.

(1) The ideal interval of time between the two parts of the drama is
left undefined, but it would seem from vv. 290, 274-6, and 429, to have
been long enough to have allowed of many wanderings to sacred places.
Orestes does not go straight from Delphi to Athens. He appears now,
not as before dripping and besmeared with blood, but with hands and
garments purified.
Am come: do thou receive me graciously,
Sin-stained though I have been: no guilt of blood
Is on my soul, nor is my hand unclean,
But now with stain toned down and worn away,
In other homes and journeyings among men,¹
O'er land and water travelling alike,
Keeping great Loxias' charge oracular,
I come, O Goddess, to thy shrine and statue:
Here will I stay and wait the trial's issue.

Enter the Erinnyes in pursuit.

Chor. Lo! here are clearest traces of the man:
Follow thou up that dumb informer's² hints;
For as the hound pursues a wounded fawn,
So by red blood and oozing gore track we.
My lungs are panting with full many a toil,
Wearing man's strength down. Every spot of earth
Have I now searched, and o'er the sea in flight
Wingless I came pursuing, swift as ship;
And now full sure he's crouching somewhere here:
The smell of human blood wafts joy to me.
See, see again, look round ye every way,
Lest he, the murderer, slip away unscathed.
He, it is true, in full security,
Clasping the statue of the deathless goddess,
Would fain now take his trial at our hands.
This may not be; a mother's blood out-poured
(Pah! pah!) can never be raised up again,
The life-blood shed is poured out and gone,
But thou must give to us to suck the blood
Red from thy living members; yea, from thee,
May I gain meal of drink undrinkable!

¹ The story of Adrastos and Crises in Herod. I. 35, illustrates the gradual purification of which Orestes speaks. The penitent who has the stain of blood-guiltiness upon him comes to the king, and the king, as his host, performs the lustral rites for him. Here Orestes urges that he has been received at many homes, and gone through many such iustrations. He has been cleansed from the pollution of sin: what he now seeks, to use the terminology of a later system, is a forensic justification.
² Sc., the scent of blood, which though no longer visible to the eyes of men, still lingers round him and is perceptible to his pursuers.
And, having dried thee up, I'll drag thee down
Alive to bear the doom of matricide.
There thou shalt see if any other man
Has sinned in not revering God or guest,
Or parents dear, that each receiveth there
The recompense of sin that Vengeance claims.
For Hades is a mighty arbiter
Of those that dwell below, and with a mind
That writes true record all man's deeds surveys.

Orest. I, taught by troubles, know full many a form
Of cleansing rites,—to speak, when that is meet,
And when 'tis not, keep silence, and in this
I by wise teacher was enjoined to speak;
For the blood fails and fades from off my hands;
The guilt of matricide is washed away.
For when 'twas fresh, it then was all dispelled,
At Phoebos' shrine, by spells of slaughtered swine.
Long would the story be, if told complete,
Of all I joined in harmless fellowship.
Time waxing old, too, cleanseth all alike:
And now with pure lips, I in words devout,
Call Athenea, whom this land owns queen,
To come and help me: So without a war
Shall she gain me, my land, my Argive people,
Full faithful friends, allies for evermore;¹
But whether in the climes of Libyan land,
Hard by her birth-stream's foam, Tritonian named,²
She stands upright, or sits with feet enwrapped,
Helping her friends, or o'er Phlegrean plains,
Like a bold chieftain, she keeps watchful guard.³

(1) Here, too, we trace the political bearing of the play. In the year
when it was produced (a.c. 455) an alliance with Argos was the favourite
measure of the more conservative party at Athens.
(2) The names Triton and Tritonias, wherever found in classical geo-
graphy, (Libya, Crete, Thessaly, Bceotia,) are always connected with
the legend that Athena was born there. Probably both name and
legend were carried from Greece to Libya, and then amalgamated with
the indigenous local worship of a warlike goddess. Hesiod (iv. 180, 188)
connects the Libyan lake with the legend of Jason and Argonauts.
(3) In the war with the giants fought in the Phlegrean plains (the
volcanic district of Campania) Athena had helped her father Zeus by her
Oh, may she come! (far off a God can hear,)
And work for me redemption from these ills!

Chor. Nay, nor Apollo, nor Athena's might
Can save thee from the doom of perishing,
Outcast, not knowing where to look for joy,
The bloodless food of demons, a mere shade.
Wilt thou not answer? Scornest thou my words,
A victim reared and consecrate to me?
Alive thou'lt feed me, not at altar slain;
And thou shalt hear our hymn as spell to bind thee.

The Erinnyes, as they sing the ode that follows, move round
and round in solemn and weird measure.

Come, then, let us form our chorus;
Since 'tis now our will to utter
Melody o: song most hateful,
Telling how our band assigneth
All the lots that fall to mortals;
And we boast that we are righteous:
Not on one who pure hands lifteth
Falleth from us any anger,
But his life he passeth scatheless;
But to him who sins like this man,
And his blood-stained hands concealeth,
Witnesses of those who perish,
Coming to exact blood-forfeit,
We appear to work completeness.

STROPH. 1.

O mother who did'st bear me, mother Night,
A terror of the living and the dead,
Hear me, oh hear!
The son of Leto puts me to disgrace
And robs me of my spoil,

wise co usel, and was hounooured there as keeping in check the destructi
Tital forces which had been so subdued, burying Enkelados, e.g.,
Sicily. The "friends" are her Libyan worshippers. The passage interesting, as showing the extent of Aeschylus's acquaintance with the
African and Italian coasts of the Mediterranean.
This crouching victim for a mother's blood:
   And over him as slain,
We raise this chant of madness, frenzy-working,¹
   The hymn the Erinnyes love,
A spell upon the soul, a lyreless strain
   That withers up men's strength.

**Antistrophe. I.**

This lot the all-pervading Destiny
Hath spun to hold its ground for evermore,
   That we should still attend
On him on whom there rests the guilt of blood
   Of kin shed causelessly,
Till earth lie o'er him; nor shall death set free.
   And over him as slain,
We raise this chant of madness, frenzy-working,
   The hymn the Erinnyes love,
A spell upon the soul, a lyreless strain
   That withers up men's strength.

**Strophe. II.**

Such lot was then assigned us at our birth:
From us the Undying Ones must hold aloof:
   Nor is there one who shares
The banquet-meal with us;
In garments white I have nor part nor lot;³
My choice was made for overthrow of homes,
Where home-bred slaughter works a loved one's death:
   Ha! hunting after him,
Strong though he be, 'tis ours
*To wear the newness of his young blood down.*³

(1) The Choral ode here is brought in as an incantation. This weapon
is to succeed where others have failed, and this too, the frenzy which
seizes the soul in the remembrance of its past transgression, is soothed
and banished by Athena.
(2) White, as the special colour of festal joy, was not used in the worship
of the Erinnyes.
(3) Another rendering gives—
   "To dim the bright hue of the fresh-shed blood."
**Antistroph. II.**

*Since 'tis our work another's task to take,*
*The Gods indeed may bar the force of prayers*
   Men offer unto me,
   But may not clash in strife;
For Zeus doth cast us from his fellowship,
   "Blood-dropping, worthy of his utmost hate." ...
For leaping down as from the topmost height,
   I on my victim bring
   The crushing force of feet,
**Limbs that o'erthrow e'en those that swiftly run,**
   An Até hard to bear.

**Stroph. III.**

**And fame of men, though very lofty now**
   Beneath the clear, bright sky,
Below the earth grows dim and fades away
   Before the attack of us, the black-robed ones,
      And these our dancings wild,
   Which all men loathe and hate.

**Antistroph. III.**

**Falling in frenzied guilt, he knows it not;**
   So thick the blinding cloud
*That o'er him floats; and Rumour widely spread*
With many a sigh reports the dreary doom,
   A mist that o'er the house
In gathering darkness broods.

**Stroph. IV.**

**Fixed is the law, no lack of means find we;**
   We work out all our will,

(1) "he thought which underlies the obscurity of a corrupt passage seems to be that, as the relief of the Gods from the task of being avengers of blood, all that the Gods on their side can is to render powerless the prayers for vengeance offered by the kindred of the slain. Their very isolation, as Chthonian deities, from the Gods of Olympos should protect them from open conflict. But an alternative rendering of the second line gives, perhaps, a better meaning—**
   "And by the prayers men offer unto me
   Work freedom for the Gods;"*  
**i.e., by being the appointed receivers of such prayers leave the Gods free for a higher and serener life.**
We, the dread Powers, the registrars of crime,
Whom mortals fail to soothe,
Fulfilling tasks dishonoured, unrevered,
Apartment from all the Gods,
*In foul and sunless gloom,1
Driving o'er rough steep road both those that see,
And those whose eyes are dark.

Antistrophe IV.

What mortal man then doth not bow in awe
And fear before all this,
Hearing from me the destined ordinance
Assigned me by the Gods?
This task of mine is one of ancient days;
Nor meet I here with scorn,
Though 'neath the earth I dwell,
And live there in the darkness thick and dense,
Where never sunbeam falls.

Enter Athena, appearing in her chariot, and then alights.

Athena. I heard far off the cry of thine entreaty
E'en from Scamandros,2 claiming there mine own,
The land which all Achaia's foremost leaders,
As portion chief from out the spoils of war,
Gave to me, trees and all, for evermore,
A special gift for Theseus' progeny.
Thence came I plying foot that never tires,
Flapping my ægis-folds, no need of wings,
My chariot drawn by young and vigorous steeds:
And seeing this new presence in the land,
I have no fear, though wonder fills mine eyes;
Who, pray, are ye? To all of you I speak,

[1] Perhaps, "With torch of sunless gloom."
[2] The words contain an allusion to the dispute between Athens and Mitylene in the time of Peisistratos, as to the possession of Sigeion. Athena asserts that it had been given to her by the whole body of Achaeans at the time when they had taken Troia. Comp. Herod. vv. 94, 95. It probably entered into the political purposes of the play to excite the Athenians to a war in this direction, so as to draw them off from the constitutional changes proposed by Pericles and Ephialtes.
And to this stranger at my statue supplicant.
And as for you, like none of Nature's births,
Nor seen by Gods among the Goddess-forms,
Nor yet in likeness of a mortal shape . . . .
But to speak ill of neighbours blameless found
Is far from just, and Right holds back from it.

Chor. Daughter of Zeus, thou shalt learn all in brief;
Children are we of everlasting Night;
[At home, beneath the earth, they call us Curses.]
Athena. Your race I know, and whence ye take your
    name.
Chor. Thou shalt soon know then what mine office is.
Athena. Then could I know, if ye clear speech would
    speak.
Chor. We from their home drive forth all murderers.
Athena. Where doth the slayer find the goal of
    flight?
Chor. Where to find joy in nought is still his wont.
Athena. And whirrest thou such flight on this man
    here?
Chor. Yea, for he thought it meet to slay his mother.
Athena. Was there no other power whose wrath he
    feared?
Chor. What impulse, then, should prickle to matricide?
Athena. Two sides are here, and I but half have heard.
Chor. But he nor takes nor tenders us an oath.¹

¹ Here, and throughout the trial, we have to bear in mind the technicalities of Athenian judicial procedure. The prosecutor, in the first instance, tendered to the accused an oath that he was not guilty. This he might accept or refuse. In the latter case, the course of the trial was at least stopped, and judgment might be recorded against him. If he could bring himself to accept it, he was acquitted of the special charge of which he was accused, but was liable to a prosecution afterwards for that perjury. If, on the other hand, he tendered an oath affirming his guilt to the prosecutor, he placed himself in his hands. Orestes, not being able to deny the fact, will not declare on oath that he is "not guilty," but neither will he place himself in the power of his accusers. The peculiarities of this use of oaths were: (1.) That they were taken by the parties to the suit, not by witnesses. (2.) That if both parties agreed to that mode of decision, the oath was either way decisive. An allusion to the latter practice is found in Heb. vi. 16, and traces of it are found, as the Velverton cause célèbre has recently reminded us, in the law-proceedings of Scotland. If either party refused, the cause had to be tried in the usual way, and witnesses were called.
Athena. Thou lov'st the show of Justice more than act.  
Chor. How so? Inform me. Skill thou dost not lack!  
Athena. 'Tis not by oaths a cause unjust shall win. 1 410  
Chor. Search out the cause, then, and right judgment judge.  
Athena. And would ye trust to me to end the cause? 2  
Athena. What dost thou wish, O stranger, to reply?  
Tell thou thy land, thy race, thy life's strange chance,  
And then ward off this censure aimed at thee,  
Since thou sitt'st trusting in thy right, and hold'st  
This mine own image, near mine altar hearth,  
A suppliant, like Ixion, 3 honourable. 432  
Answer all this in speech intelligible.  
Orest. O Queen Athena, from thy last words starting,  
I first will free thee from a weighty care:  
I am not now defiled: no curse abides  
Upon the hand that on thy statue rests;  
And I will give thee proof full strong of this.  
The law is fixed the murderer shall be dumb,  
Till at the hand of one who frees from blood,  
The purple stream from yeanling swine run o'er him;  4  
Long since at other houses these dread rites 5 

(1) Æschylus seems here to attach himself to the principles of those who were seeking to reform the practice described in the previous note as being at once cumbrous and unjust, throwing its weight into the scale of the least scrupulous conscience, and to urge a simpler, more straightforward trial. The same objection is noticed by Aristotle in his discussion of the subject. (Rhet. i. 15.)  
(2) Athena offers herself, not as arbitrator or sovereign judge, but as presiding over the court of jurors whom she proceeds to appoint.  
(3) Ixion appeared in the mythical history of Greece as the prototype of all suppliants for purification. When he had murdered Deionus, Zeus had had compassion to him, received him as a guest, cleansed him from his guilt. His ingratitude for this service was the special guilt of his attempted outrage upon Hera. The case is mentioned again in v. 687.  
(4) In heathen, as in Jewish sacrifices, the blood was the very instrument of purification. It was sprinkled or poured upon men, and they became clean. But this could not he done by the criminal himself, nor by any chance person. The service had to be rendered by a friend, who of very love gave himself to this mediatorial work.  
(5) In the legend related by Pausanias (Corin. c. 3), Trozen was the
We have gone through, slain victims, flowing streams:
This care, then, I can speak of now as gone.
And how my lineage stands thou soon shalt know:
An Argive I, my sire well known to thee,
Chief ruler of the seamen, Agamemnon,
With whom thou madest Troia, Ilion's city,
To be no city. He, when he came home,
Died without honour; and my dark-souled mother
Enwapt and slew him with her broidered toils,
Which bore their witness of the murder wrought
There in the bath; and I, on my return,
(Till then an exile,) did my mother kill,
(That deed I'll not deny,) in forfeit due
Of blood for blood of father best beloved;
And Loxias, too, is found accomplice here,
Foretelling woes that pricked my heart to act,
If I did nought to those accomplices
In that same crime. But thou, judge thou my cause,
If what I did were right or wrong, and I,
Whate'er the issue, will be well content.

Athena. Too great this matter, if a mortal man
Think to decide it. Nor is't meet for me
To judge a cause of murder stirred by wrath;
*And all the more since thou with contrite soul
Hast come to this my house a suppliant,
Harmless and pure. I now, in spite of all,
Take thee as one my city need not blame; ¹
But these hold office that forbids dismissal,
And should they fail of victory in this cause,
Hereafter from their passionate mood will poison ²

first place where Orestes was thus received, and in his time the descendants of those who had thus helped held periodical feasts in commemoration of it.

(1) The course which Athena takes is: (1.) to receive Orestes as a settler with the rights which attached to such persons on Athenian soil, not a criminal fugitive to be simply surrendered; (2.) to offer to the Erinnyes, as being too important to be put out of court, a fair and open trial; (3.) to acknowledge that he and they are equally "blameless," as far as she is concerned. She has no complaint to make of them.

(2) The red blight of vines and wheat was looked on as caused by drops of blood which the Erinnyes had let fall.
Fall on the land, disease intolerable,
And lasting for all time. E'en thus it stands;
And both alike, their staying or dismissal,
Are unto me perplexing and disastrous.
But since the matter thus hath come on me,
I will appoint as judges of this murder
Men bound by oath, a law for evermore;¹
And ye, call ye your proofs and witnesses,
Sworn pledges given to help the cause of right.
And I, selecting of my citizens
Those who are best, will come again that they
May judge this matter truly, taking oaths
To utter nought against the law of right.

[ Exit.

STROPH. I.

Chor. Now will there be an outbreak of new laws:
If victory shall rest
Upon the wrong right of this matricide,
This deed will prompt forthwith
All mortal men to callous recklessness.
And many deaths, I trow,
At children’s hands their parents now await
Through all the time to come.

ANTISTROPH. I.

For since no wrath on evil deeds will creep
Henceforth from those who watch
With wild, fierce souls the evil deeds of men,
I will let loose all crime;
*And each from each shall seek in eager quest,
*Speaking of neighbours’ ills,
*For pause and lull of woes;² yet wretched man,
He speaks of cures that fail.

(1) Stress is laid on the fact that the judges of the Areopagus, in contrast with those of the inferior tribunes of Athens, discharged their duty under the sanction of an oath.
(2) Perhaps

"And each from each shall learn, as he predicts
His neighbour’s ills, that he
Shares in the same and harbours them, and speaks,
Poor wretch, of cures that fail."
STROPH. II.
Henceforth let none call us,
When smitten by mischance,
Uttering this cry of prayer,
"O Justice, and O ye, Erinnyes’ thrones!"
Such wail, perchance, a father then shall utter,
Or mother newly slain,
Since, fallen low, the shrine of Justice now
Lies prostrate in the dust.

ANTISTROPH. II.
There are with whom ’tis well
That awe should still abide,
As watchman o’er their souls.
Calm wisdom gained by sorrow profits much:
For who that in the gladness of his heart,
Or man or commonwealth
Has nought of this, would bow before the Right
Humbly as heretofore?

STROPH. III.
Praise not the lawless life,
Nor that which owns a despot’s sovereignty;
To the true mean in all God gives success,
And with far other mood,
On other course looks on;
And I will say, with this in harmony,
That Pride is truly child of Godlessness;
While from the soul’s true health
Comes the fair fortune, loved of all mankind,
And aim of many a prayer.

ANTISTROPH. III.
And now, I say in sum,

(1) At a more advanced period of human thought, Cicero (Orat. pro Roscio, c 24) could point to the "thoughts that accuse each other," the horror and remorse of the criminal, as the true Erinnyes, the "assiduæ domesticæque Furiae." Æschylus clings to the mythical symbolism as indispensable for the preservation of the truth which it shadowed forth.

(2) Once again we have the poet of constitutional conversatism keeping the via media between Peisistratos and Pericles.
Revere the altar reared to Justice high,
Nor, thine eye set on gain, with godless foot
Treat it contemptuously:
For wrath shall surely come;
The appointed end abideth still for all.
Therefore let each be found full honour giving
To parents, and to those,
The honoured guests that gather in his house,
Let him due reverence show.

Stroph. IV.
And one who of his own free will is just,
Not by enforced constraint,
He shall not be unblest,
Nor can he e'er be utterly o'erthrown;
But he that dareth, and transgresseth all,
In wild, confused deeds,
Where Justice is not seen,
I say that he performeth, as time wears on,
Will have to take in sail,
When trouble make him hers, and each yard-arm
Is shivered by the blast.

Antistroph. IV.
And then he calls on those who hear him not,
And struggles all in vain,
In the fierce waves' mid-whirl;
And God still mocks the man of fevered mood,
When he sees him who bragged it ne'er would come,
With woes inextricable
Worn out, and failing still
To weather round the perilous promontory;
And for all time to come,
Wrecking on reefs of Vengeance bliss once high,
He dies unwpt, unseen.

The scene changes to the Areopagus. Enter Athena,
followed by Herald and twelve Athenian citizens.

Athena. Cry out, O herald; the great host hold back;
Then let Tyrrhenian trumpet, piercing heaven,
Filled with man’s breath, to all that host send forth
The full-toned notes, for while this council-hall
Is filling, it is meet men hold their peace.

[Herald blows his trumpet.]

And let the city for all time to come
Learn these my laws, and this accused one too,
That so the trial may be rightly judged.  

[As ATHENA speaks, APOLLO enters.]

Chor. O King Apollo, rule thou o’er thine own;
But what hast thou to do with this our cause?
Apol. I am come both as witness,—for this man
Is here as suppliant, that on my hearth sat,
And I his cleanser am from guilt of blood,—
And to plead for him as his advocate:
I bear the blame of that his mother’s death.
But thou, who’er dost act as president,
Open the suit in way well known to thee.

Athena, [to the Erinnyes.] ’Tis yours to speak; I thus
the pleadings open,
For so the accuser, speaking first, shall have,
Of right, the task to state the case to us.

Chor. Many are we, but briefly will we speak;
And answer thou [to ORESTES], in thy turn, word for
word;
First tell us this, did’st thou thy mother slay?

Great. I slew her: of that fact is no denial.

Chor. Here, then, is one of our three bouts decided.

(1) The Tyrrhenian trumpet, with its bent and twisted tube, retained
its proverbial pre-eminence from the days of Æschylus and Sophocles,
(Aias, 17) to those of Virgil, (Aen., viii, 526.)

(2) The fondness of the Athenians for litigation, and the large share
which every citizen took in the administration of justice, would probably
make the scene which follows, with all its technicalities, the part of the
play into which they would most enter.

(3) It was necessary that some one, sitting as President of the Court,
should formally open the pleadings, by calling on this side or that to begin.
Here Athena takes that office on herself, and calls on the Erinnyes.

(4) The technicalities of the Areopagis are still kept up. The three
points on which the Erinnyes, as prosecutors, lay stress are: (1.) the fact
of the murder ; (2.) the mode ; (3.) the motive. "Three bouts," as refer-
ing to the rule of the arena, that three struggles for the mastery should
be decisive.
Orest. Thou boastest this o'er one not yet thrown down.

Chor. This thou at least must tell, how thou did'st slay her.

Orest. E'en so; her throat I cut with hand sword-armed.
Chor. By whom persuaded, and with whose advice?
Orest. [Pointing to Apollo.] By His divine command: He bears me witness.

Chor. The prophet-God prompt thee to matricide!
Orest. Yea, and till now I do not blame my lot.
Chor. Nay, when found guilty, soon thou'lt change thy tone.

Orest. I trust my sire will send help from the tomb.
Chor. Trust in the dead, thou murderer of thy mother!

Orest. Yes; for in her two great pollutions met.

Chor. How so, I pray? Inform the court of this.
Orest. She both her husband and my father slew.
Chor. Nay then, thou liv'st, and she gets quit by death.

Orest. Why, while she lived, did'st thou to chase her fail?

Chor. The man she slew was not of one blood with her.

Orest. And does my mother's blood then flow in me?
Chor. E'en so; how else, O murderer, reared she thee
Within her womb? Disown'st thou mother's blood?

Orest. [Turning to Apollo.] Now bear thou witness, and declare to me,

Apollo, if I slew her righteously;
For I the deed, as fact, will not deny.
But whether right or wrong this deed of blood
Seem in thine eyes, judge thou that these may hear.

(1) The pleas put in by the Erinnyes as prosecutors are: (1.) That Clytemnestra had been adequately punished by her death, while Orestes was still alive; and (2.) when asked why they had not intervened to bring about that punishment, that the relationship between husband and wife was less close than that between mother and son. They drew, in other words, a distinction between consanguinity and affinity, and upon this the rest of the discussion turns. Orestes, and Apollo as his counsel, on the other hand, meet this with the rejoinder, that there is no blood-relationship between the mother and her offspring.
EUMENIDES.

Apol. I will to you, Athena's solemn council,
Speak truly, and as prophet will not lie.
Ne'er have I spoken on prophetic throne,
Of man, or woman, or of commonwealth,
But as great Zeus, Olympian Father, bade;
And that ye learn how much this plea avails,
I bid you [Turning to the court of jurymen] follow out my
Father's will;
No oath can be of greater might than Zeus.¹

Chor. Zeus, then, thou say'st, did prompt the oracle
That this Orestes here, his father's blood
Avenging, should his mother's rights o'erthrow?

Apol. 'Tis a quite other thing for hero-chief,
Bearing the honour of Zeus-given sceptre,
To die, and at a woman's hands, not e'en
By swift, strong dart, from Amazonian bow,²
But as thou, Pallas, now shalt hear, and those
Who sit to give their judgment in this cause;
For when he came successful from the trade
Of war with largest gains, receiving him
With kindly words of praise, she spread a robe
Over the bath, yes, even o'er its edge,
As he was bathing, and entangling him
In endless folds of cloak of cunning work,
She strikes her lord down. Thus the tale is told
Of her lord's murder, chief whom all did honour,
The ships' great captain. So I tell it out,
E'en as it was, to thrill the people's hearts,
Who now are set to give their verdict here.

Chor. Zeus then a father's death, as thou dost say,
Of highest moment holds, yet He himself
Bound fast in chains his aged father, Cronos;³

---

(1) So. Their oath to give a verdict according to the evidence must yield to the higher obligation of following the Divine will rather than the letter of the law.
(2) To have died in battle by the arrows of a woman-warrior might have been borne. To be slain by a wife treacherously in his bath was to endure a far worse outrage.
(3) In this new argument, and the answer to it, we may trace, as in the Prometheus and the Agamemnon, the struggles of the questioning intellect
Are not thy words at variance with the facts?
I call on you [To the Court] to witness what he says.

Apol. O hateful creatures, loathed of the Gods,
Those chains may be undone, that wrong be cured,
And many a means of rescue may be found:
But when the dust has drunk the blood of men,
No resurrection comes for one that's dead:
No charm for these things hath my sire devised;
But all things else he turneth up or down,
And orders without toil or weariness.¹

Chor. Take heed, how thou help this man to escape;
Shall he who stained earth with his mother's blood
Then dwell in Argos in his father's house?
What public altars can he visit now?
What lustral rite of clan or tribe admit him?³

Apol. This too I'll say; judge thou if I speak right:
The mother is not parent of the child
That is called hers, but nurse of embryo sown
He that begets is parent:³ she, as stranger,
For stranger rears the scion, if God mar not;
And of this fact I'll give thee proof full sure.
A father there may be without a mother:
Here nigh at hand, as witness, is the child
Of high Olympian Zeus, for she not e'en
Was nurtured in the darkness of the womb,⁴

against the more startling elements of the popular religious belief. Zeus
is worshipped as the supreme Lord, yet His dominion seems founded on
might as opposed to goodness, on the unrighteous expulsion of another.
Here, in Apollo's answer, there is the glimmer of a possible reconcilia-
tion. The old and the new, the sovereignty of Cronos and that of Zeus
may be reconciled, and one supreme God be “all in all.”
(1) Comp. the thought and language of the Suppliants, v. 98.
(2) The last argument is, that the acquittal can be, at the best, partial
only, not complete; formal, not real. There would remain for ever the
pollution which would exclude Orestes from the Paratra, the clan-bro-
therhood, by which, as by a sacramental bond, all the members were held
together.
(3) The question seems to have been one of those which occupied men's
minds in their first gropings towards the mysteries of man's physical life,
and both popular metaphors and primary impressions were in favour of
the hypothesis here maintained. Euripides (Orest., v. 534) puts the same
argument into the mouth of Orestes.
(4) The story of Athena's birth, full-grown, from the head of Zeus, is
next referred to as the leading case bearing on the point at issue.
Yet such a scion may no God beget.  
I, both in all else, Pallas, as I know,  
Will make thy city and thy people great,  
And now this man have sent as suppliant  
Upon thy hearth, that he may faithful prove  
Now and for ever, and that thou, O Goddess,  
May’st gain him as ally, and all his race,  
And that it last as law for evermore,  
That these men’s progeny our treaties own.

Athena. [To jurors.] I bid you give, according to your conscience,
A verdict just; enough has now been said.

Chor. We have shot forth our every weapon now:
I wait to hear what way the strife is judged.

Athena. [To Chorus.] How shall I order this, unblamed by you?

Chor. [To jurors.] Ye heard what things ye heard, and in your hearts
Reverence your oaths, and give your votes, O friends.

Athena. Hear ye my order, O ye Attic people,
In act to judge your first great murder-cause.
And henceforth shall the host of Ægeus’ race
For ever own this council-hall of judges:
And for this Ares’ hill, the Amazons’ seat
And camp when they, enraged with Theseus, came
In hostile march, and built as counterwork
This citadel high-reared, a city new,

(1) Here, of course, the political interest of the whole drama reached its highest point. What seems comparatively flat to us must, to the thousands who sat as spectators, have been fraught with the most intense excitement, showing itself in shouts of applause, or audible tokens of clamorous dissent. The rivalry of Whigs and Tories over Addison’s Cato, the sensation produced in times of Papal aggression by the king’s answer to Pandulph in King John, present analogies which are worth remembering.

(2) The story ran that the tribe of women-warriors from the Caucasus, or the Thermodon, known by this name, had invaded Attica under Oreithyia, when Theseus was king, to revenge the wrongs he had done them, and to recover her sister Hippolyta. Ares, the God of Thrakians, Skythians, and nearly all the wilder barbaric tribes, was their special deity; and when they occupied the hill which rose over against the Acropolis, they sacrificed to him, and so it gained the name of the Areopagus, or “hill of Ares.”
And sacrificed to Ares, whence 'tis named
As Ares' hill and fortress: in this, I say,
The reverent awe its citizens shall own,
And fear, awe’s kindred, shall restrain from wrong
By day, nor less by night, so long as they,
The burghers, alter not themselves their laws:
But if with drain of filth and tainted soil
Clear river thou pollute, no drink thou’lt find. 3
I give my counsel to you, citizens,
To reverence and guard well that form of state
Which is nor lawless, nor tyrannical,
And not to cast all fear from out the city; 6
For what man lives devoid of fear and just?
But rightly shrinking, owning awe like this,
Ye then would have a bulwark of your land,
A safeguard for your city, such as none
Boast or in Skythia’s 4 or in Pelops’ clime.
This council I establish pure from bribe,
Reverend, and keen to act, for those that sleep
An ever-watchful sentry of the land.
This charge of mine I thus have lengthened out
For you, my people, for all time to come.
And now 'tis meet ye rise, and take your ballots, 5

(1) As in the Agamemnon, (v. 1010,) so here we find the aristocratic conservative poet showing his colours protesting against the admission to the Archonship, and therefore to the Areopagos, of men of low birth or in undignified employments.

(2) The words, like all political clap-trap, are somewhat vague; but, as understood at the time, the "lawless" policy alluded to was that of Pericles and Ephialtes, who sought to deface and to diminish the jurisdiction of the Areopagos, and the "tyrannical," that which had crushed the independence of Athens under Peisistratos. Between the two was the conservative party, of which Kimon had been the leader.

(3) The Skythians may be named simply as representing all barbarous, non-Hellenic races; but they appear, about this time, wild and nomadic as their life was, to have impressed the minds of the Greeks somewhat in the same way as the Germans did the minds of the Romans in the time of Tacitus. Tales floated from travellers' lips of their wisdom and their happiness—of sages like Zamoixis and Aristarchos, who rivalled those of Hellas—of the Hyperbored, in the far north, who enjoyed a perpetual and unequalled blessedness. —Comp. Lection-Powers, v. 366.

(4) Two topics of praise are briefly touched on: (1.) the lower, popular courts of justice at Athens might be open to the suspicion of corruption, but no breath of slander had ever tainted the fame of the Areopagos; (2.) it met by night, keeping its watch, that the citizens might sleep in peace.

(5) The first of the twelve jurymen rises and drops his voting-ballot
And so decide the cause, maintaining still
Your reverence for your oath. My speech is said.

Chor. And I advise you not to treat with scorn
A troop that can sit heavy on your land.

Apol. And I do bid you dread my oracles,
And those of Zeus, nor rob them of their fruit.

Chor. Uncalled thou com'st to take a murderer's part;
No longer pure the oracles thou'lt speak.

Apol. And did my father then in purpose err,
Then the first murderer he received, Ixion?¹

Chor. Thou talk'st, but should I fail in this my cause,
I will again dwell here and vex this land.

Apol. Alike among the new Gods and the old
Art thou dishonoured: I shall win the day.

Chor. This did'st thou also in the house of Pheres,²
Winning the Fates to make a man immortal.

Apol. Was it not just a worshipper to bless
In any case,—then most, when he's in want?

Chor. Thou did'st o'erthrow, yea, thou, laws hoar
with age,
And drug with wine the ancient Goddesses.³

Apol. Nay, thou, non-suited in this cause of thine,
Shalt venom spit that nothing hurts thy foes.

Chor. Since thou, though young, dost ride me down,
though old,
I wait to hear the issue of the cause,
Still wavering in my wrath against this city.

INTO ONE OF THE URNS, AND IS FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER AT THE END OF EACH OF THE SHORT TWO-LINE SPEECHES IN THE DIALOGUE THAT FOLLOWS. THE TWO URNS OF ACQUITTAL AND CONDEMNATION STAND IN FRONT OF THEM. THE PLAN OF VOTING WITH DIFFERENT COLOURED BALLS (BLACK AND WHITE) IN THE SAME URN, WAS A LATER USAGE.

(1) Compare note on v. 419.
(2) In the legend of Admetos son of Pheres, and king of Pherae in Thessalia, Apollo is represented as having first given wine to the Destinies, and then persuaded them to allow Admetos, whenever the hour of death should come, to be redeemed from Hades, if father, or mother, or wife were willing to die for him. The self-surrender of his wife, Alkestis, for this purpose, forms the subject of the noblest of the tragedies of Euripides.
(3) Parly as setting at nought the power of Erinnyes and the Destinies, partly as giving wine to those whose libations were wineless.—Comp. Sophocles, Ed. Coll. v. 100.
Athena. 'Tis now my task to close proceedings here;
And this my vote I to Orestes add;
For I no mother own that brought me forth,
And saving that I wed not, I prefer
The male with all my heart, and make mine own
The father's cause, nor will above it place
A woman's death, who slew her own true lord,
The guardian of her house. Orestes wins,
E'en though the votes be equal. Cast ye forth
With all your speed the lots from out the urns,
Ye jurors unto whom that office falls.

Orest. Phæbos Apollo! what will be the judgment?
Chor. Dark Night, my mother! dost thou look on this?
Orest. My goal is now the noose, or full, clear day.
Chor. Ours too to come to nought, or work on still.

[A pause. The jurors take out the voting tablets
from the two urns (one of bronze, the other of
wood) for acquittal or condemnation.

Apol. Now count ye up the votes thrown out, O friends,
And be ye honest, as ye reckon them;
One sentence lacking, sorrow great may come,
And one vote given hath oftentimes saved a house.

[A pause, during which the urns are emptied and
the votes are counted.

Athena. The accused is found "not guilty" of the
murder:

For lo! the numbers of the votes are equal.¹

Orest. O Pallas, thou who hast redeemed my house,
Thou, thou hast brought me back when I had been
Bereaved of fatherland, and Hellenes now
Will say, "The man's an Argive once again,
And dwells upon his father's heritage,
Because of Pallas and of Loxias,
And Zeus, the true third Saviour, all o'erruling,
Who, touched with pity for my father's fate,

¹ The practice of the Areopagus is accurately reproduced. When the
votes of the judges were equal a casting vote was given in favour of the
accused, and was known as that of Athena.
Saves me, beholding these my mother's pleaders."
And I will now wend homeward, giving pledge
To this thy country and its valiant host,
To stand as firm for henceforth and for ever,
That no man henceforth, chief of Argive land,
Shall bring against it spearmen well equipped:
For we ourselves, though in our sepulchres,
On those who shall transgress these oaths of ours,
Will with inextricable evils work,
Making their paths disheartening, and their ways
Ill-omened, that they may their toil repent.
But if these oaths be kept, to those who honour
This city of great Pallas, our ally,
Then we to them are more propitious yet.
Farewell then, Thou, and these who guard thy city.
Mayst thou so wrestle that thy foes escape not,
And so win victory and deliverance!

STROPH. 710

Chor. Ah! ah! ye younger God!
Ye have ridden down the laws of ancient days,
    And robbed me of my prey.
But I, dishonour'd, wretched, full of wrath,
    Upon this land, ha! ha!
Will venom, venom from my heart let fall,
    In vengeance for my grief,
A dropping which shall smite
    The earth with barrenness!
And thence shall come, (O Vengeance!) on the plain
Down swooping, blight of leaves and murrain dire
That o'er the land flings taint of pestilence.
    Shall I then wail and groan?
    Or what else shall I do?
Shall I become a woe intolerable
Unto these men for wrongs I have endured?
    Great, very great are they,
Ye virgin daughters of dim Night, ill-doomed,
    Born both to shame and woe!
Athena. Nay, list to me, and be not over-grieved;  
Ye have not been defeated, but the cause  
Came fairly to a tie, no shame to thee.  
But the clear evidence of Zeus was given,  
And he who spake it bare his witness too  
That, doing this, Orestes should not suffer.  
Hurl ye not then fierce rage on this my land;  
Nor be ye wroth, nor work ye barrenness,  
*By letting fall the drops of evil Powers,¹  
The baleful influence that consumes all seed.  
For lo! I promise, promise faithfully,  
That, seated on your hearths with shining thrones,  
Ye shall find cavern homes in righteous land,  
Honoured and worshipped by these citizens.

ANTISTROPHE.

Chor. Ah! ah! ye younger Gods!  
Ye have ridden down the laws of ancient days,  
And robbed me of my prey.  
And I, dishonoured, wretched, full of wrath,  
Upon this land, ha! ha!  
Will venom, venom from my heart let fall,  
In vengeance for my grief,  
A dropping which shall smite  
The earth with barrenness!  
And thence shall come, (O Vengeance!) on the plain  
Down-swooping, blight of leaves and murrain dire  
That o’er the land flings taint of pestilence.  
Shall I then wail and groan?  
Or what else shall I do?  
Shall I become a woe intolerable  
Unto these men for wrongs I have endured?  
Great, very great are they,  
Ye virgin daughters of dim Night, ill-doomed,  
Born both to shame and woe!  
Athena. Ye are not left unhonoured; be not hot  
In wrath, ye Goddesses, to mar man’s land,

(1) Another reading gives—  
“By spurring from your throats those venom drops.”
I too, yes I, trust Zeus. Need I say more? I only of the high Gods know the keys Of chambers where the sealed-up thunder lies; But that I have no need of. List to me, Nor cast upon the earth thy rash tongue's fruit, That brings to all things failure and distress; Lull thou the bitter storm of that dark surge, As dwelling with me, honoured and revered; And thou with first-fruits of this wide champaign, Offerings for children's birth and wedlock-rites, Shalt praise these words of mine for evermore.

Chor. That I should suffer this, fie on it! fie! That I, with thoughts of hoar antiquity,¹ Should now in this land dwell, Dishonoured, deemed a plague! I breathe out rage, and every form of wrath. Oh, Earth! fie on it! fie! What pang is this that thrills through all my breast? Hear thou, O mother Night, Hear thou my vehement wrath! For lo! deceits that none can wrestle with Have thrust me out from honours old of Gods, And made a thing of nought.

Athena. Thy wrath I'll bear, for thou the elder art, ²¹⁸ [And wiser too in that respect than I;] Yet to me too Zeus gave no wisdom poor; And ye, if ye an alien country seek, Shall yearn in love for this land. This I tell you; For to this people Time, as it runs on, Shall come with fuller honours, and if thou Hast honoured seat hard by Erechtheus' home, Thou shalt from men and women reap such gifts As thou would'st never gain from other mortals; But in these fields of mine be slow to cast Whetstones of murder's knife, to young hearts bale,

(1) The conservative poet enters his protest through the Erinnyes against the innovating spirit that looked with contempt upon the principles of a past age.
Frenzied with maddened passion, not of wine;  
Nor, as transplanting hearts of fighting-cocks,¹  
Make Ares inmate with my citizens,  
In evil discord, and intestine broils;  
Let them have war without, not scantily,  
For him who feels the passionate thirst of fame:  
Battle of home-bred birds . . I name it not;  
This it is thine to choose as gift from me;  
Well-doing, well-entreated, and well-honoured,  
To share the land best loved of all the Gods.

Chor. That I should suffer this, fie on it! fie!  
That I, with thoughts of hoar antiquity,  
Should now in this land dwell,  
Dishonoured, deemed a plague,  
I breathe out rage, and every form of wrath;  
Ah, Earth! fie on it! fie!  
What pang is this that thrills through all my breast?  
Hear thou, O mother Night,  
Hear thou my vehement wrath!

For lo! deceits that none can wrestle with  
Have thrust me out from honours old of Gods,  
And made a thing of nought.

Athena. I will not weary, telling thee of good,  
That thou may'st never say that thou, being old,  
Wert at the hands of me, a younger Goddess,  
And those of men who in my city dwell,  
Driven in dishonour, exiled from this plain.  
But if the might of Suasion thou count holy,  
And my tongue's blandishments have power to soothe,  
Then thou wilt stay; but if thou wilt not stay,  
Not justly would'st thou bring upon this city,  
Or wrath, or grudge, or mischief for its host.  
It rests with thee, as dweller in this spot,²  
To meet with all due honour evermore.

¹ Cock fighting took its place among the recognised sports of the Athenians. Once a year there was a public performance in the theatre.
² The Temple of the Eumenides or Semnæ ("venerable ones") stood near the Areopagos.
Eumenides.

Chor. Athena, Queen, what seat assign’st thou me?
Athena. One void of touch of evil; take thou it.
Chor. Say I accept. What honour then is mine?
Athena. That no one house apart from thee shall prosper.
Chor. And wilt thou work that I such might may have?
Athena. His lot who worships thee we’ll guide aright.
Chor. And wilt thou give thy warrant for all time?
Athena. What I work not I might refrain from speaking.
Chor. It seems thou sooth’st me: I relax my wrath.
Athena. In this land dwelling thou new friends shalt gain.
Chor. What hymn then for this land dost bid me raise?
Athena. Such as is meet for no ill-victory.¹

And pray that blessings upon men be sent,
And that, too, both from earth, and ocean’s spray,
And out of heaven; and that the breezy winds,
In sunshine blowing, sweep upon the land,
And that o’erflowing fruit of field and flock
May never fail my citizens to bless,
Nor safe deliverance for the seed of men.
But for the godless, rather root them out:
For I, like gardener shepherding his plants,
This race of just men freed from sorrow love.
So much for thee: and I will never fail
To give this city honour among men,
Victorious in the noble games of war.

Strophe I.

Chor. I will accept this offered home with Pallas,
Nor will the city scorn,
Which e’en All-ruling Zeus
And Ares give as fortress of the Gods,
The altar-guarding pride of Gods of Hellas;
And I upon her call,
With kindly auguries,

(1) Some two or three lines have probably been lost here.
That so the glorious splendour of the sun
May cause life’s fairest portion in thick growth
*To burgeon from the earth.

Athena. Yea, I work with kindliest feeling
For these my townsmen, having settled
Powers great, and hard to soothe among them:
Unto them the lot is given,
All things human still to order;
He who hath not felt their pressure
Knows not whence life’s scourges smite him:
For the sin of generations
Past and gone;—a dumb destroyer,—
Leads him on into their presence,
And with mood of foe low bringeth
Him whose lips are speaking proudly.

Antistroph. I.

Chor. Let no tree-blighting canker breathe on them,
(I tell of boon I give,)
Nor blaze of scorching heat,
That mars the budding eyes of nursling plants,
And checks their spreading o’er their narrow bounds;
And may no dark, drear plague
Smite it with barrenness.
But may Earth feed fair flock in season due,
Blest with twin births, and earth’s rich produce pay
To the high heavenly Powers,
Its gift for treasure found.¹

Athena. Hear ye then, ye city’s guardians,
What she offers? Dread and mighty
With the Undying is Erinny;
And with Those beneath the earth too,
And full clearly and completely
Work they all things out for mortals,
Giving these the songs of gladness,
Those a life bedimmed with weeping.

(1) Probably an allusion to the silver-mine at Laurion, which about
the time formed a large element of the revenues of Athena, and of which
a tithe was consecrated to Athena.
STROPH. II.

Chor. Avaunt, all evil chance
That brings men low in death before their time!
And for the maidens lovely and beloved,
Give, ye whose work it is,
Life with a husband true,
And ye, O Powers of self-same mother born,
Ye Fates who rule aright,
Partners in every house,
Awe-striking through all time,
With presence full of righteousness and truth,
Through all the universe
Most honoured of the Gods!

Athena. Much I joy that thus ye promise
These boons to my land in kindness;
And I love the glance of Suasion,
That she guides my speech and accent
Unto these who gainsaid stoutly.
But the victory is won by
Zeus, the agora's protector;
And our rivalry in blessings
Is the conqueror evermore.

ANTISTROPH. II.

Chor. For this too I will pray,
That Discord, never satiate with ill,
May never ravine in this commonwealth,
Nor dust that drinks dark blood
From veins of citizens,
Through eager thirst for vengeance, from the State
Snatch woes as penalty
For deeds of murderous guilt.
But may they give instead
With friendly purpose acts of kind intent,
And if need be, may hate
With minds of one accord;
For this is healing found to mortal men
Of many a grievous woe.
Athena. Are they not then waxing wiser,
And at last the path discerning
Of a speech more good and gentle?
Now from these strange forms and fearful,
See I to my townsmen coming,
E’en to these, great meed of profit;
For if ye, with kindly welcome,
Honour these as kind protectors,
Then shall ye be famed as keeping,
Just and upright in all dealings,
Land and city evermore.

Strophe. III.

Chor. Rejoice, rejoice ye in abounding wealth,
Rejoice, ye citizens,
Dwelling near Zeus himself,¹
Loved of the virgin Goddess whom ye loved,
In due time wise of heart,
You, ’neath the wings of Pallas ever staying,²
The Father honoureth.

Athena. Rejoice ye also, but before you
I must march to show your chambers,
By your escorts’ torches holy;
Go, and with these dread oblations
Passing to the crypt cavernous,
Keep all harm from this our country,
Send all gain upon our city,
Cause it o’er its foes to triumph.
Lead ye on, ye sons of Cranaes,³
Lead, ye dwellers in the city,
Those who come to sojourn with you,
And may good gifts work good purpose
In my townsmen evermore!

(1) Reference is made to another local sanctuary, the temple on the
Areopagus dedicated to the Olympian Zeus.
(2) The figure of Athena, as identical with Victory, and so the tutelary
Goddess of Athens, was sculptured with outspread wings.
(3) Cranaes, the son of Cecrops, the mythical founder of Athens.
EUMENIDES.

ANTISTROPH. III.

Chor. Rejoice, rejoice once more, ye habitants!
I say it yet again,
Ye Gods, and mortals too,
Who dwell in Pallas' city. Should ye treat
With reverence us who dwell
As sojourners among you, ye shall find
No cause to blame your lot.

Athena. I praise these words of yours, the prayers ye offer,
And with the light of torches flashing fire,
Will I escort you to your dark abode,¹
Low down beneath the earth, with my attendants,
Who with due honour guard my statue here,
For now shall issue forth the goodly eye
Of all the land of Theseus; fair-famed troop
Of girls and women, band of matrons too,
In upper vestments purple-dyed arrayed:
*Now then advance ye; and the blaze of fire,
Let it go forth, that so this company
Stand forth propitious, henceforth and for aye,
In rearing race of noblest citizens,

Enter an array of women, young and old, in procession,
leading the Erinnyes—now, as propitiated, the Eumenides or Gentle Ones—to their shrines.

Chorus of Athenian women.

STROPH. I.

Go to your home, ye great and jealous Ones,
Children of Night, and yet no children ye;³
With escort of good-will,
Shout, shout, ye townsmen, shout.

ANTISTROPH. I.

There in the dark and gloomy caves of earth,
With worthy gifts and many a sacrifice

(1) The sanctuaries of the Eumenides were crypt-like chapels, where they were worshipped by the light of lamps or torches.
(2) Perhaps, "Children of Night, yourselves all childless left."
Consumèd in the fire—
Shout, shout ye, one and all.

STROPHE II.
Come, come, with thought benign,
Propitious to our land,
Ye dreaded Ones, yea, come,
While on your progress onward ye rejoice,
In the bright light of fire-devourèd torch;
Shout, shout ye to our songs.

ANTISTROPHE II.
Let the drink-offerings come,
In order meet behind,
While torches fling their light;
*Zeus the All-seeing thus hath joined in league
*With Destiny for Pallas' citizens;
Shout, shout ye to our songs.

[The procession winds its way, ATHENA at its head, then
the Eumenides, then the women, round the Areopagos
towards the ravine in which the dread Goddesses were to
find their sanctuary.]