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THE  
PROMETHEUS VINCTUS

OF  
ÆSCHYLUS,

LITERALLY TRANSLATED.

BY JOHN PERKINS, M. A.,  
*Fellow and Tutor of Downing College, Cambridge.*

CAMBRIDGE:—J. HALL & SON;

—WHITTAKER AND CO; SIMPKIN, MARSHALL AND CO. ;

AND BELL AND DALDY.

1870.

293. g.

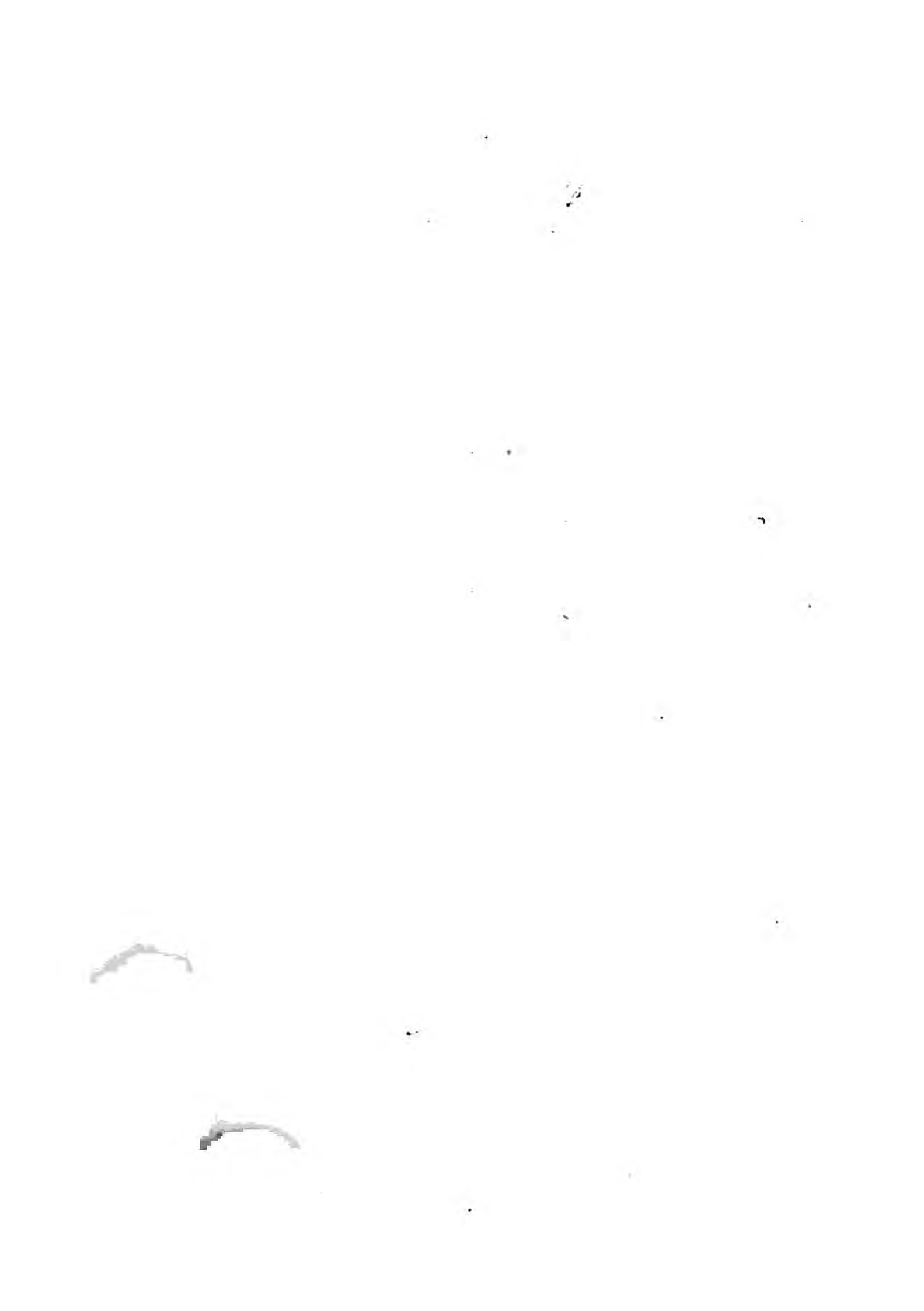
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## PROMETHEUS.

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[1—33

*Power.* To a remote plain of the earth are we now come, to a Scythian tract, to an untrodden wilderness. And thy care, Vulcan, must be the commands which the Father enjoined upon you, to fasten this villain to high-cliffed rocks in stoutest fetters of iron bonds. For thy pride, the brightness of all-working fire, he stole and gave to mortals: for such a crime surely must he pay penalty to the gods, that he may be taught to brook the sway of Jove, and cease from his philanthropic mood.

*Vulcan.* Power and Might! for you no doubt Jove's command has now its end, and nothing further hinders: but I lack resolution to bind a kindred god by force to a stormy crag. But at all hazards it is necessary for me to summon courage for this: for to neglect the Father's orders is a serious matter. High-scheming son of wise Themis! I against my will will fasten thee against thy will with indissoluble fetters to this deserted rock, where thou shalt neither hear voice nor see form of any of mortals, but scorched by the sun's bright ray thou shalt change thy skin's fair colour: and to thy joy shall night of spangled garb hide away the light, and the sun scatter again the morning hoar frost: and ever shall the burden of thy present woe afflict thee: for he that shall relieve thee is not yet born. Such deserts hast thou reaped from thy philanthropic mood. For a god thyself, not trembling at the wrath of gods, thou gavest privileges to mortals beyond what was right. Wherefore thou shalt watch this joyless rock, in an upright posture, sleepless, not bending thy knee: and many lamentations and



futile wailings shalt thou utter: for inexorable is the heart of Jove: and every one is stern, whoever is newly in power.

*Power.* Well! well! why dost thou delay and commiserate in vain? Why dost thou not hate the god that is the god's greatest enemy, when he has betrayed to mortals thy peculiar right?

*Vulc.* Assuredly relationship is a strong tie, and so is intimacy.

*Power.* I allow it, but disobey the Father's orders, how can we? dost thou not fear this rather?

*Vulc.* Ah! you were always pitiless and full of courage.

*Power.* Why its no good lamenting over this fellow: so dont you labour in vain about things that do no good.

*Vulc.* Oh much detested handicraft!

*Power.* Why dost thou detest it? for of the present troubles, to speak plainly, thy art is in no way the cause.

*Vulc.* Would that it had fallen to somebody else's lot, nevertheless.

*Power.* All things are toilsome, except to rule the gods: for no one, save Jove, is free.

*Vulc.* I know it by this business, and I have nought to say against it.

*Power.* Well then, wilt thou not hasten to put fastenings on this culprit, that the Father may not see thee loitering?

*Vulc.* Why here you may see the fetters ready to hand.

*Power.* Take them and fasten them on his arms with a hammer with might and main, nail them to the rocks.

*Vulc.* Well this business is being done and not ineffectually.

*Power.* Strike harder, clinch close, leave looseness nowhere: for he is clever at finding a way even out of impossibilities.

*Vulc.* This arm at any rate is immoveably fixed.

*Power.* And now clasp this one securely, that he may learn is a more obtuse schemer than Jove.

*Vulc.* Except this unhappy wight, no one could fairly blame

*Power.* Now drive the obstinate tooth of an iron spike clean breast with force.

*Vulc.* Alas Prometheus! I groan for thy sufferings.

*Power.* So you are shrinking again and groaning over Jove's enemies: see you dont sometime commiserate yourself.

*Vulc.* Thou art looking on a sight ill for eyes to look upon.

*Power.* I see this fellow getting his deserts. Now put bands round his ribs.

*Vulc.* I must do that, dont be too particular in your orders.

*Power.* But I shall order you and keep shouting at you besides. Go down below and forcibly fasten his legs with rings.

*Vulc.* Well that business is done with no trouble.

*Power.* Now stoutly hammer the pierced fetters, since the overseer of the work is severe.

*Vulc.* Thy tongue gives utterances like thy form.

*Power.* Do thou play the humane, but throw not in my teeth my sternness and harshness of temper.

*Vulc.* Let us retire, since he has fetters on his limbs.

*Power.* Indulge in insolence *there*, will ye? and steal and give to creatures of a day prerogatives of gods. What part of these sufferings can mortals draw off for thee? By a false name do gods call thee Fore-thinker: for thou needest thyself a Fore-thinker, as to how thou shalt slip out of this piece of handicraft.

#### PROMETHEUS.

Oh boundless aether, and swift-winged breezes, and sources of streams, and countless dimple of the deep-sea waves and earth, universal mother, (you) and the all-seeing orb of the sun I call on: regard what I a god suffer at the hands of gods. See with what torments racked I shall struggle through my term of centuries. Such is the ignominious bondage which the new ruler of the gods has devised against me. Ah me! my present and my coming sorrow I groan for (when wondering) in what quarter a limit to these woes is to arise. Yet what am I saying? All that is to come I know exactly beforehand, nor will any calamity have come upon me unexpectedly: but my destined fate I mnst bear as patiently as possible, convinced that the might of Necessity is not to be encountered. But neither to be silent nor to refrain from silence

on these my fortunes is it possible for me. For through having given privileges to mortals I, poor wretch, have been bound in these fatal chains: and stowed away in fennel-stalk I secured the stolen source of fire, which has showed itself the teacher of every art to mortals, and a great resource. Hence are the penalties which I pay for my misdeeds, fastened with bonds in open air.

Aha! what now?

What sound, what odour of a form invisible has approached me? divine, or mortal, or combined? Has it come to this remote hill to view my sufferings, or with what intent? Behold me a prisoner, an ill-starred god, who am Jove's enemy, who am at enmity with all the gods, as many as frequent Jove's court, because of my excessive friendship for mortals. Alas! what fluttering again of birds do I hear near? and the air rustles slightly with the light vibrations of wings. Everything brings terror to me which approaches.

CHORUS.

Fear nought: for with friendly feelings this company has approached this hill with contested speed of wing, having with difficulty talked over our father's mind. And the swift-bearing gales wafted me: for a sound of the clatter of steel pierced the recess of our caves and banished my serious sense of shame and I started unsandalled in my winged car.

*Prom.* Aha! Aha! offspring of many childrening Tethys, and children of Father Oceanus, who rolls around the whole earth with restless stream, see, behold with what fastening riveted on topmost crags of this cliff I shall keep an unenviable watch.

*Chor.* I see, Prometheus, and a fearful mist has burst upon my eyes full of tears, when I look upon thy form wasting against a rock in these cruel fetters of iron: for new helmsmen sway Olympus: and with exceedingly new laws does Jove govern without fixed code, and the venerable things of old he now abolishes.

*Prom.* Would that he had sent me under earth and below Hades the dead-receiver to boundless Tartarus, having savagely bound me in indissoluble fetters, so that neither god nor any other

being had rejoiced at these sufferings. But now, a vane suspended in aether, I suffer woes for my enemies to rejoice at.

*Chor.* Who of gods is so hard-hearted, as that these things are his delight? Who does not sympathise with thy woes, except at least Jove? But he in wrath ever framing an inexorable spirit is putting down the race of heaven: neither shall he cease until he shall either have satiated his will, or by some device some one shall have destroyed his impregnable power.

*Prom.* But yet of me, though tortured in strong fetters, shall the lord of the deities have need, to make known the new plan by which he is to be despoiled of his sceptre and honours: and me in no way by honey-tongued enchantments of persuasion shall he appease, and never, through fear of harsh threats, will I give this information, until he shall have released me from my cruel bonds, and be willing to pay penalty for this outrage.

*Chor.* Thou indeed both art courageous and in no way givest in to thy bitter woes, and art very free with thy tongue. But pervading terror disturbs my mind: for I fear for thy lot, where ever it behoves thee, having run in thy ship, to see a limit to these troubles: for an inaccessible disposition and an inexorable heart has Saturn's son.

*Prom.* I know that Jove is stern and holding justice in his own hands: but nevertheless (I take it) yielding in spirit will he be some day, when he shall have been crushed in this way: and having calmed his unyielding anger he shall some day be brought to agreement and friendship with me: he willing with me willing.

*Chor.* Reveal and proclaim to us the whole tale, on what charge Jove seized thee and thus disgracefully and cruelly tortures thee: inform us, unless thou art hurt aught by the recital.

*Prom.* Both painful to me are these things to tell, and a pain it is to be silent, and in every respect they are disastrous. As soon as the gods began their quarrel and their feud among one another was being raised, some wishing to cast Kronus from his seat, that Jove they pretended might be sovereign, and others promoting the contrary scheme, that Jove should never be king of the gods: thereupon I, proposing the best counsels, was unable to persuade



the Titans, the children of Heaven and Earth: and despising crafty wiles in their strong proud thoughts, they thought without toil and perforce to become masters. And not once only had Themis my mother and Earth, form unique of many names, foretold to me in what way futurity should result: how that it was necessary that not in the way of strength, nor by might, but by craft, those who prevailed should become masters. When I propounded this course in words they deigned not, no not even to look at me at all. So it seemed to me the best course of those which then presented themselves to me that having taken my mother as my assistant I should voluntarily side with Jove, glad of my offices. And through my plans the black deep abyss of Tartarus covers the primeval Kronus, allies and all. After having been thus benefitted at my hands the prince of the gods requited me with these ill returns. For there is inherent somehow in royalty this plague-spot, the not trusting one's friends. But now as to what you ask, for what reason he maltreats me, this I will certainly explain. As soon as ever he took his seat on his father's throne, immediately he gave various prerogatives to various deities, and arranged in orders his empire: but of miserable mortals he took no heed, but after having annihilated the whole race, he wished to produce another fresh one. And no one ran counter to these schemes except me: and I ventured: and I rescued mortals from going to Hades utterly annihilated. Wherefore I must bend to afflictions like these, painful for me to suffer and piteous for you to look upon: and after having held mortals in pity I was not myself deemed worthy to obtain it, but thus am I mercilessly brought to order, a spectacle discreditable to Jove.

*Chor.* Iron-hearted and wrought of rock is he, whosoever, Prometheus, sympathises not with thy sufferings: for I should never have desired to see these things and having seen them have been pained in heart.

*Prom.* Well of course I am pitiable for friends to look upon.

*Chor.* You did not somehow go still further than this?

*Prom.* Well I did stop mortals from foreseeing their fate.

*Chor.* By finding what remedy against this malady?

*Prom.* I planted vain hopes in them.

*Chor.* A great boon was this that thou conferredst on mortals.

*Prom.* Besides these things however I gave them fire.

*Chor.* And do creatures of a day now possess bright fire?

*Prom.* Yes and from it they will discover many arts.

*Chor.* Really for such charges as these does Jove maltreat thee and in no way relieve thee from ills? and is there no limit proposed to thy suffering?

*Prom.* No other at least, except when it shall seem good to him.

*Chor.* And how shall it seem good? What hope? dost thou not see that thou hast erred? and how thou hast erred is not for me to say with pleasure, and for thee it is pain. But these things let us drop, and do thou seek some release from suffering.

*Prom.* It is an easy matter, whenever a person has his foot clear of troubles, to advise and admonish him who is in a bad plight: but I knew all these things. Wittingly, wittingly I erred: I will not deny it: and by helping mortals I myself have earned troubles. Not that I in any way expected that with punishments like these I should wither away against lofty cliffs, having as my lot this deserted lonely hill. However, do not bewail my present woes, but having alighted on the ground hear my coming fortunes that ye may learn to the end the whole. Yield to me, yield, act in sympathy with me who am now in trouble. In this way, be assured, roaming, misfortune settles now on one, now on another.

*Chor.* Not to unwilling ears has thou uttered this, Prometheus: and now with nimble foot leaving my rapidly-borne seat and pure ether, high way of birds, I will approach this rugged earth: and thy sorrows I wish to hear in full.

#### OCEAN.

I am come after passing to the goal of a long journey to thee, Prometheus, guiding by will this swift-winged bird without bits. And with thy fortunes, know, I sympathise: for thus both relationship, I take it, compels me, and apart from family-ties there

is no one to whom I would give greater consideration than to thee. And thou shalt know that these sentiments are genuine, nor is it in me idly to gratify thee with my tongue: for come, explain in what it is meet I should co-operate with thee: for thou shalt never say that there is a firmer friend to thee than Ocean.

*Prom.* Halloa! what now! and so you too have come a spectator of my sufferings: how camest thou, having left thy cognominal stream and rock-roofed self-built caves, to come to the land that is the mother of iron? or hast thou come to look upon my misfortunes, and to sympathise with my ills? Behold a sight, me the friend of Jove, me that helped to establish his sway, with what sufferings I am brought low by him.

*Ocean.* I see, Prometheus, and I wish to give thee the best advice, though thou art versatile. Know thyself and adapt to thyself new notions: for there is a new king too among the gods. But if thou wilt utter at random words thus harsh and pointed, perhaps Jove, though sitting afar aloft, may hear thee, so that that which is upon thee as a crowd of troubles may seem to thee to be mere child's play. But, miserable one, cast aside thy present temper, and seek a respite from these woes. I seem perhaps to be thus saying to thee things out of date: such things however, Prometheus, are the reward of the tongue that is too presumptuous: but thou art not yet humble nor dost thou yield to ills, but in addition to thy present, thou desirest to receive fresh ones in addition. But verily thou shalt not, if using me as an instructor, stretch out thy legs against the goad, seeing that a stern monarch and no accountable one holds sway. And now I will go, and endeavour if I can to release thee from these woes. But do thou keep quiet and do not be excessively violent in language. Dost thou not know full well, overwise as thou art, that on a foolish tongue punishment is inflicted?

*Prom.* I envy thee, because thou art free from blame, after having shared and dared all with me: and now let the matter alone, and let it not be a care to thee: for anyhow you will not persuade him: for he is not easy of persuasion: but see carefully lest thou thyself get into some trouble by thy journey.

*Ocean.* Much better qualified art thou to instruct thy neighbours, than thyself: I draw my conclusion from deed and not word: and now that I am starting do not at all pull me back, for I declare, I declare that Jove will grant me this boon, so that I shall release you from these sufferings.

*Prom.* Partly I commend thee, and shall never cease in any way: for thou in no way lackest kindness: but take no trouble: for to no purpose, doing no benefit to me, wilt thou labour, if thou really dost wish to labour: but keep quiet, keeping thyself out of the way: for though I be in trouble, I should not wish on that account misfortunes to fall on the most possible. Not at all, since even the misfortunes of my brother Atlas afflict me who in Western regions stands supporting on his shoulders the pillar of heaven and earth, a weight not light to the arms. And the earth-born inhabitant of the Cilician (caves) I pitied when I saw, an awful monster, powerful Typhœus with a hundred heads mastered by force, who rose against all the gods, hissing destruction with his hideous jaws: and from his eyes he flashed a fearful gleam, as being about with might to overthrow the power of Jove: but there came against him the sleepless shaft of Jove, the descending bolt, breathing forth flame, which dashed him from his high-flown boastings: for struck to his inmost senses he was made a cinder and was blasted as to his strength: and now a useless and far extended form he lies near to the straits of the sea, crushed beneath the base of Ætna: and seated on the topmost peaks Vulcan forges molten metal, whence from time to time shall burst forth streams of fire, ravaging with savage jaws the level plains of Sicily with her fair fruits: such wrath shall Typhœus throw up with eruptions of hot, unapproachable, fire-breathing surge, although burnt to a cinder by the bolt of Jove. But thou art not without experience, nor dost thou require me as a teacher: save thyself as thou knowest how: but I will endure my present misfortune, until Jove's proud will shall have ceased from its wrath.

*Ocean.* Dost thou not know this, Prometheus, that of a disordered temper words are the physicians?



*Prom.* Yes, if one seasonably try to soften a heart and does not reduce by force a swelling spirit.

*Ocean.* But in being prudent and making a venture what inherent harm dost thou see? inform me.

*Prom.* Labour in vain and empty-headed folly.

*Ocean.* Allow me to be ill with this disease, since it is best that being in my sound senses I should not seem to be in my senses.

*Prom.* This fault will seem to be mine.

*Ocean.* Evidently thy converse sends me home again.

*Prom.* Yes: lest your lament for me should cast you into enmity.

*Ocean.* What! with him who is newly seated on the all-swaying throne?

*Prom.* Take care lest his heart should some day become annoyed.

*Ocean.* Thy misfortune, Prometheus, is my instructor.

*Prom.* Start, take thyself off, keep thy present notions.

*Ocean.* I was on the point of starting when thou urgedst upon me this advice: for my four-legged bird is flapping the smooth track of aether with his wings: and full gladly would he rest his legs in his own stalls.

*Chor.* I bewail thee for thy grievous lot, Prometheus: and letting trickle from tender eyes a flood of dripping tears I wet my cheek with humid streams: for unenviable are these things: and Jove holding sway with his own code of laws is exhibiting a proud supremacy to the original gods. And by this time the whole region resounds with groans, and pours down tears bewailing the magnificent time-graced honour of thee and of thy brothers, and as many mortals as dwell in the settlement fixed in sacred Asia feel for thy lamentable woes: and the maidens that dwell in the Colchian land, fearless in fight, and the Scythian hordes who hold the extreme region of the earth round the lake Maeotis: and the martial flower of Arabia who dwell in a fortress high on the cliffs near Caucasus, a warlike host, roaring with their array of sharp-pointed spears. One other of the gods only

before have I seen tamed under the pains of iron-bonds, a Titan, Atlas, who ever with groans bears on his back the vast mighty weight and the pole of heaven. And the deep sea billow roars in cadence, the depths groan, and the black abyss of Hell resounds underneath the earth and the streams of pure-flowing rivers groan for his pitiable suffering.

*Prom.* Think not at all that through pride or obstinacy I am silent: but by reflection I am tortured in heart, seeing myself thus trampled on. And after all for these new gods who other than I entirely settled their prerogatives? But thereon I hold my tongue: for you, to whom I should be telling, know. But as to the sufferings among mortals hear how when they were originally foolish I made them sensible and possessed of understanding. And I shall speak, not through having any complaint against mankind, but describing my good feeling in what I have given them: for they at first though looking looked in vain, though listening heard not: but like to forms in dreams all that long time they jumbled all things in confusion and neither knew of brick-built houses turned to the sun, nor working-in-wood: but they dwelt underground, like tiny ants, in sunless recesses of caves. And there was to them no certain sign of winter nor of flowery spring nor of fruitful summer, but without design they used to do everything until it was that I showed them the risings of constellations, and their ill-defined settings. And indeed numbers, most excellent of inventions, I discovered for them, and combinations of letters, the literary producer of recollection of all things: and I first harnessed beasts under yokes, submitting to yoke-bands and to bodies, so that they might undertake for mortals the greatest labours: and under the car I led the rein-loving steeds, an ornament of excessive luxury. And no other instead of me discovered sea-traversing linen-winged vehicles for sailors. After discovering such contrivances, I poor wight, for mortals, have not myself a device whereby I can get quit of this present trouble.

*Chor.* Thou hast fallen into a degrading affliction: reft of thy senses thou art wrong, and like a bad physician, having fallen into

disease thou art despondent, and as to thyself art not able to discover by what remedies thou art curable.

*Prom.* At hearing the rest from me thou shalt be more amazed; what arts and means I devised. The chief thing of all, if any one fell into disease, there was no antidote, either to be eaten, or rubbed on, or drunk: but through lack of drugs they pined away, until I showed to them mixtures of soothing remedies, with which they ward off all diseases. And many ways of divining I arranged, and I first decided out of dreams what must be taken as a real vision, and I made known to them sounds hard of interpretation: and omens on the road and the flight of crooked-taloned birds I clearly defined, both those which are propitious by nature, and the unpropitious, and what manner of life they each have, and what are their enmities towards one another and likings and flockings together: and the smoothness of vitals and when possessing what colour they would be acceptable to the gods, a variegated fair appearance of gall-bladder and liver. And having burnt the thighs wrapt up in fat and the long chine, I guided mortals to the mazy art: and signs in flames I made clear, being before obscured. Such then were these inventions: but benefits to mankind hidden beneath the earth—brass, iron, silver, and gold—who could say that he discovered them before me? No one, I know well, unless wishing to make an idle boast. But in a brief statement learn the whole concisely: all arts come to mortals from Prometheus.

*Chor.* Well, do not go on benefitting mortals beyond what is right, and taking no thought of thyself in thy misfortune: since I am hopeful that you having been released from these bonds will yet have no less power than Jove.

*Prom.* Not yet in this way is all-accomplishing Fate destined to bring about these things: but after having been bent down by countless woes and throes, thus I escape my bonds. But Art is by far less powerful than Necessity.

*Chor.* Who pray is director of Necessity?

*Prom.* The triple Fates and the mindful Furies.

*Chor.* Is then Jove of less power than these?

*Prom.* Well, he could not escape his destined lot.

*Chor.* Why? what is destined for Jove, except to hold sway for ever?

*Prom.* This further point you would not be able to learn, so dont be importunate.

*Chor.* Doubtless this is some grand secret which thou art wrapping up.

*Prom.* Mention some other subject, but this is by no means the time to disclose, but it must be wrapped up as closely as possible: for by keeping this safe I escape my humiliating bonds and pains.

*Chor.* Never may Jove who sways all things set his might in opposition to my judgment, nor may I be slow in approaching the gods with holy banquets of slaughtered oxen by the inexhaustible stream of father Ocean, nor may I offend in words: may this feeling particularly abide with me, and never melt away. A something sweet is it to pass one's long life in gladdening hopes, nourishing one's soul in bright joys: but I shudder when beholding thee racked by innumerable pains: for, fearing not Jove, by thine own judgment thou payest mortals too much respect, Prometheus. Come, how favourless was the favour, my friend, say! where? what assistance? What help in creatures of a day? Or seest thou not the powerless feebleness, like a dream, by which the blind race of men is bound enshackled? By no means shall plans of mortals go beyond the fixed order of Jove. These things I learn by looking upon thy miserable misfortunes, Prometheus: and the different strain has come upon me, this from that, when about the bath and thy nuptial couch I sang for thy marriage when thou ledst in marriage our sister Hesione, having won her to wife with presents, a sharer of thy bed.

Io.

What land? What nation? Whom am I to say that I see here exposed to the elements in rock-fastened chains? In atonement of what error art thou perishing? Tell me whither on earth I, poor wretch, have wandered. Oh! dear! oh! dear!



some gad-fly again stings me, the miserable one: an apparition of earth-born Argus: keep him off, oh earth! I fear when I look upon the ten thousand eyed herdsmen: but he advances with a crafty eye, whom not even when dead does earth conceal. But passing from the shades below he hunts me down, the wretched one, and causes me to wander famished along the sand by the sea shore. And a shrill pipe joined with wax sends forth the while a sleep-inducing strain. Oh! dear! Alas! Alas! whither are my far wandering wanderings leading me? In whatever transgression having found me, oh! Saturn's son! hast thou involved me in these sufferings? Oh! dear! and dost thou thus wear me out, poor wretch, frenzied, with fear of the driving of the gad-fly. Burn me with fire, or hide me in earth, or give me a prey to sea-monsters, and grudge me not my prayers oh! King. Enough have my much-wandering wanderings trained me, nor can I learn how I am to escape my woes. Dost thou hear the utterance of the heifer-horned maiden?

*Prom.* Of course I hear the gad-fly-driven damsel, daughter of Inachus, who warms the heart of Jove with love, and now an object of hate to Juno is forcibly exercised in excessively long courses.

*Io.* Whence utterest thou my father's name? tell me, the toilsome one, who art thou, who really, oh! wretched one, that thou thus correctly addressest me, the miserable one, and hast named my heaven-sent disease, which is wearing me away, stinging me with stirring goads? Oh! dear! and violently rushing with famishing tortures of leaps have I come, subdued under the wrathful plans of Juno: And who of unhappy wretches are there, who, oh! dear! suffer as I? But make known to me clearly what awaits me to suffer, what not: what remedy is there for my disease, point out, if thou knowest. Proclaim it, tell it to the cruelly-wandering maiden.

*Prom.* I will tell clearly to thee everything that thou desirest to learn, not weaving riddles, but in simple speech, just as it is right to open one's mouth to friends. Thou seest Prometheus giver of fire to mortals.

*Io.* Oh! thou who hast appeared a public benefit to mortals, much-enduring Prometheus, as penalty for what dost thou suffer these things?

*Prom.* Just now have I ceased bewailing my own woes.

*Io.* Would you not then grant this boon to me?

*Prom.* Name that thou askest: for anything thou mightest learn from me.

*Io.* Explain who fastened thee on the cliff.

*Prom.* The plan was Jove's, but the hand Vulcan's.

*Io.* And penalties for what crimes dost thou pay?

*Prom.* So much only am I satisfied to tell thee.

*Io.* And besides these things at any rate point out to me the end of my wandering: what will be its time to me the wretched one.

*Prom.* The non-learning these things is better for thee than learning.

*Io.* Pray do not conceal from me that which I am about to suffer.

*Prom.* Nay: I grudge thee not this boon.

*Io.* Then why hesitate, so as not to proclaim the whole?

*Prom.* Begrudging there is none, but I hesitate to shock thy feelings.

*Io.* Do not be anxious for me further than the extent to which it is agreeable to me.

*Prom.* Since thou art desirous, I must tell thee: hear then.

*Chor.* Not yet at least: but give to me too a share in the pleasure. Let us learn the misfortune of this woman first, while she herself describes her ruinous troubles: but the residue of her toils let her be taught from thee.

*Prom.* It is thy duty, *Io*, to grant the favour to these ladies, both for all other reasons and because they are sisters of your father: since bewailing and lamenting to the full one's troubles in a case when one is likely to draw forth tears from the hearers repays the time spent.

*Io.* I know not how I am to refuse you: but in a clear story all that you want, you shall learn: and yet in telling too of the

heaven-sent affliction I feel shame, and of the disfigurement of my form, whence it came upon me; poor wretch. For continually visions coming to my maiden-apartments tried to talk me over with smooth words: Oh! highly-favoured maiden! why dost thou continue a virgin so long, when it is in thy power to meet with highest wedlock? For Jove has been heated by thee with the shaft of lust, and wishes to join thee in Love: and do thou, my child, not spurn the couch of Jove, but come forth to Lerna's deep meadow, to the herds and ox-stalls of thy father, so that Jove's eye may rest from its longing. By such dreams every night was I wretched haunted, until at last I dared tell out to my father the night-appearing dreams. And he both to Pytho and towards Dodona sent numerous envoys that he might learn by doing or saying what it was needful to do things pleasing to the gods. And they returned, bringing back ambiguous oracles, indistinct and couched in terms hard of interpretation. But at last a distinct reply came to Inachus clearly enjoining and ordering that he should drive me from home and country, to wander at liberty to the extreme limits of the earth: and if he refused, a fiery bolt would come from Jove, which should annihilate his whole race. Persuaded by oracles like these from Loxias he drove me forth and excluded me from his house, he unwilling me unwilling: but the bit of Jove perforce compelled him to do this. And immediately my form and mind became perverted, and with horns, as ye see, stung by a sharp-biting gad-fly, with maddened leap I rushed to the fresh stream of Kerchneia, and the fountain of Lerna: and an earth-born herd, immoderate in wrath, Argus, kept following on my track, staring at me with numerous eyes. But a sudden unlooked-for fate deprived him of life: and I, stung by a gad-fly, am driven by a divine scourge from land to land. Thou hearest what has occurred; but if thou cans't tell what is the remnant of my ills, make it known: but do not, pitying me, console me with false words: for I declare that made-up speeches are a most disgraceful villainy.

*Chor.* Oh! oh! keep away! oh! dear! never, never, did I believe that strange words would come to my hearing nor that

thus hideous and intolerable woes, tortures, horrors would chill my soul with a two-edged pang. Ah! Ah! Fate! Fate! I shudder at looking at Io's condition.

*Prom.* Beforehand at any rate thou groanest and art one full of fear: stay, till thou shalt have learnt the rest too.

*Chor.* Speak, tell all: to the afflicted it is truly pleasant to know clearly beforehand the rest of their suffering.

*Prom.* Your former request ye obtained from me easily: for ye wished to learn from her first while narrating her own hard lot: now hear the rest, what sufferings this damsel must endure at Juno's hand: and do thou, offspring of Inachus, cast in thy mind my words, so that thou mayest learn the end of thy journey. First hence turning thyself to the sun's rising traverse unploughed plains: and thou shalt come to wandering Scythians, who raised in air inhabit wicker cots on well-wheeled cars, equipped with far-shooting bows: whom approach not: but turning thy feet to the sea-roaring beaches pass from the land. And on thy left hand dwell the iron-working Chalybes, of whom thou must beware: for they are uncouth and unapproachable by travellers. And thou shalt arrive at a violent stream, not falsely-named: which cross not: for it is not easy to cross, until thou shalt have arrived at Caucasus itself, loftiest of mountains, where a river breathes forth its strength from the very tops. And thou must, crossing the tops that reach the stars, take a southern course, where thou wilt arrive among the man-hating host of the Amazons, who some day shall inhabit Themiscyra by the Thermodon, where is the rugged Salmydessian gorge of the sea, hateful to sailors who approach it, step-mother of ships: these shall guide thee, aye! right readily. And thou shalt arrive at the Cimmerian isthmus, hard by the narrow-passaged entrances to the lake, leaving which with courageous heart thou must pass over the Meotian lake. And there shall be for ever among mortals a great history of thy journey, and it shall be called *Bosporus* after thy name. And leaving the plain of Europe, thou shalt arrive at the mainland of Asia. Does not the lord of the gods seem to you to be alike overbearing in all things? for on this mortal, desiring to have intercourse with her, has he a god



imposed these wanderings. And a cruel wooer of thy marriage-bed hast thou met with, maiden : for as to the words that thou hast now heard, do not think that they are as yet in prelude.

*Io.* Woe is me ! alas ! alas !

*Prom.* So thou in turn criest out and utterest sighs : what, pray, wilt thou do, when thou shalt learn the rest of thy ills ?

*Chor.* What ! any further store of ills for this maiden wilt thou mention ?

*Prom.* Yes : a stormy sea of grievous woe.

*Io.* What gain indeed were it for me to live, but why do I not at once hurl myself from this rugged rock so that having dashed myself to the ground I had got quit of all my sufferings ? for it were better to die once for all than to suffer ill all one's days.

*Prom.* Verily with difficulty wouldst thou bear my troubles, for to me to die is not fated : for this had been a release from woes : but now there is no allotted limit to my toils, until Jove shall have been expelled from his kingdom.

*Io.* What ! is it fated that Jove shall some day be expelled from his kingdom ?

*Prom.* You would be pleased, I take it, at seeing such an occurrence.

*Io.* How not, when I suffer ill at Jove's hands ?

*Prom.* As then that these things are so, you may now learn.

*Io.* At whose hands will he be robbed of his royal sceptre ?

*Prom.* At his own hands by his very own foolish plans.

*Io.* In what way ? explain, unless there be some harm.

*Prom.* He will contract a marriage such that he will some day be grieved by it.

*Io.* Divine or mortal ? if it is to be spoken, tell me.

*Prom.* What matter what kind ? for this is not allowable to be spoken.

*Io.* Is he really to be driven from his throne at a wife's hands ?

*Prom.* Yes for she shall bring forth a son superior to his father.

*Io.* And is there not for him an averting of this calamity ?

*Prom.* Certainly not, unless I, let loose from bonds, (avert it).

*Io.* Pray who is there who will release thee, if Jove be unwilling?

*Prom.* It must be that he be one of thy descendants.

*Io.* How sayest thou? shall a son of mine free thee from ills?

*Prom.* Yes, a third in descent in addition to ten other generations.

*Io.* This prophecy is no longer easy of understanding.

*Prom.* And do not thou at any rate seek to learn in full thine own troubles.

*Io.* Do not while holding out to me a boon, then deprive me of it.

*Prom.* I will present thee with one of two statements.

*Io.* Of what kind inform me, and grant me choice.

*Prom.* I grant it: so choose whether I shall describe to thee clearly the remainder of thy troubles, or him that shall release me?

*Chor.* Of these do thou be willing to grant to this damsel the one favour, and to me the other, and reject not my proposals: accordingly proclaim to her the remainder of her wandering, and to me thy future deliverer: for this I long for.

*Prom.* Since ye are anxious I will not oppose you so as not to proclaim all that ye desire. To thee first, *Io*, I will tell thy far rambling wandering, and do thou write it in mindful tablets of memory. When thou shalt have passed the stream, boundary of continents, towardst the blazing sun-traversed East, go on straight in this direction, and first of all thou shalt arrive at Northern blasts, where be thou ware of a sweeping roar, lest it catch thee up suddenly whirling you in a stormy whirlwind, crossing the roaring main, until thou shalt have come to the Gorgonian plains of Kisthene, where the daughters of Phorcys dwell, antique damsels, three swan-shaped beings, possessed of a common eye, with one tooth, whom neither the sun looks upon with his rays, nor the moon of night ever. And hard by are three sisters of these bewinged, Gorgons, with snaky-locks, hated of mortals, having seen whom no mortal shall

retain his breath. Such is this previous caution that I give thee. Now listen to another dangerous sight: for be thou ware of sharp-mouthed, dumb dogs of Jove, the Grypes, and the one-eyed host of the Arimaspi, riding on horses, who dwell around the gold-flowing river, Pluto's stream: to these do thou not approach. And thou shalt come to a distant land, a black race, who dwell by the sources of the Sun, where is the Æthiopian stream. To the banks of this go, until thou shalt have come to a cataract, where from the Bybline mountains Nile sends forth his holy limpid stream. This shall guide thee to the three-angled land of the Nile, where thou must know, Io! it is fated for thee and thy children to found the distant colony. If any of these instructions is both indistinct to thee and hard to find out, double back and learn it clearly: for there is more leisure to me than I like.

*Chor.* If thou hast anything left or passed over to tell this maiden of her disastrous wandering, say on: but if thou hast said all, to us in turn grant the favour which we beg: of course thou rememberest it.

*Prom.* She has heard the full extent of her journey. But that she may learn that she is not hearing to no purpose from me, I will tell her what she has toiled through ere she came hither, giving this very proof of my statements. Now the great bulk of descriptions I shall omit and proceed to the actual end of thy wanderings. For when thou camest to the Molossian plains, and to the locality of high-ridged Dodona, where are oracles and a seat of Thesprotian Jove, and an incredible wonder, the vocal oaks, by which thou in clear terms and in no way by riddle wert addressed as she that was about to be Jove's illustrious spouse, if aught of these things is agreeable to thee: thence stung by the gad-fly thou rushedst along the sea-coast track to the gulf of Rhea, from whence in reversed courses thou art being buffeted: and for time to come the gulf of the sea, know clearly, shall be called Ionian, a memorial of thy journey to all mankind. These are signs to thee of my powers of mind, that it sees somewhat further than that which has been brought to light. And the rest I will tell to you and to her together, coming back to the same track of my original descriptions. There is a city Canopus, remotest on earth, by the very mouth and

bar of the Nile: there Jove brings thee to thy senses, stroking thee with a gentle hand and merely touching thee. And thou shalt bear black Epaphus, named after the generative workings of Jove, who shall reap the fruits of all the land that wide-flowing Nile waters. And the fifth generation from him, of fifty children, shall again come to Argos not voluntarily, a family of females, in flight from an incestuous marriage with cousins: but they, frantic in mind, as hawks not left far behind doves, will arrive to hunt after marriages not to be pursued, but a god shall begrudge them their persons: and Pelasgia shall receive them, when their cousins have been slain by a woman-dealt death in night-watched security: for a woman shall deprive each man of life, having dyed a two-edged sword in his throat. May a similar love come upon my enemies. But one of the damsels desire shall soothe, so as not to slay her bed-fellow, but she shall be blunted in determination: and she will prefer the one of two evils, to be called cowardess rather than murderess: this one shall bear at Argos a royal offspring. It requires a long tale to go through these things clearly. However from this stock shall be born a hero, renowned with the bow, who shall release me from these troubles. Such is the prophecy which my ancient mother, Titanian Themis, declared to me: but how and in what way—these things require a long speech to tell, and thou by learning it all wilt gain nothing.

*Io.* Alas! Alas! Again a spasm and heart-piercing maddening inwardly heats me, and the sting of the gad-fly, not forged in fire, pricks me: and my heart beats against my diaphragm in fear: and my eyes roll round in whirling motion, and out of my course I am borne by a violent gust of madness, having no power over my tongue: but troubled words beat at random against the billows of hateful infatuation.

*Chor.* Verily wise, verily wise was he who first bore this in his mind and framed it as a maxim with his tongue that the making an alliance according to one's own station is by far best, and that when one is an artizan one should not desire connexions by marriage which give themselves airs by their wealth, nor those that pride themselves on their birth. Never, never, oh! revered Fates! may



ye see me become sharer of the bed of Jove. Nor may I be united to a spouse from the gods of heaven: for I shudder at seeing the wedlock-hating maidenhood of Io greatly harassed by the cruelly-long wanderings of the toils imposed by Juno. But to me when marriage is on an equality it brings no fear, nor am I afraid: and let not the love of any one of the higher gods cast on me an eye not be escaped. This war at least is no war, productive of impossibilities: nor do I know what I should become: for I see not in what way I should escape the counsel of Jove.

*Prom.* Assuredly yet shall Jove, though obstinate in thought, be humble—such a marriage is he arranging to make, which shall cast him in utter destruction from his sovereignty and throne: and the curse of his father Kronus shall then at last be entirely fulfilled, which he uttered when being cast from his time-honoured throne. An escape from such troubles no one of the gods save myself could point out to him clearly: these things I know, and in what way. Wherefore I say let him sit in confidence trusting in his rumblings in the air, and brandishing in his hands his fire-breathing bolt: for nought shall these things avail him to prevent his falling disgracefully with an irremediable downfall: such an antagonist is he preparing, himself against himself, a most irresistible monster: who verily shall invent a flame more potent than the thunder-bolt, and a powerful crash that surpasses the thunder, and the ocean earth-shaking pest, the trident, Neptune's spear, he shall shatter. And having stumbled against this calamity he shall learn how wide the being a lord and being a slave are apart.

*Chor.* Doubtless what thou desirest, that thou utterest against Jove.

*Prom.* Yes, and what will be fulfilled, and besides, what I say.

*Chor.* And is one to expect that any one will be lord over Jove?

*Prom.* Yes, and he will have troubles harder to bear than

*Chor.* But how is it thou fearest not, uttering at random such  
?

*Prom.* What should I fear, for whom it is not fated to die?

*Chor.* But he might cause thee a woe still more painful than this.

*Prom.* Let him do so : all things are to be looked for by me.

*Chor.* They who revere necessity are wise.

*Prom.* Continue to worship, to offer prayers, to court him that is for the time in power : but I take less thought of Jove than nothing. Let him do, let him hold sway this short period, as he pleases : for long he will not rule the gods. But the fact is I see this lacquey here of Jove, the menial of the new sovereign : doubtless he has come to tell something fresh.

#### MERCURY.

Thee, the crafty one, the bitterly over-bitter, that hast sinned against gods by giving privileges to mortals, the stealer of fire I address : the Father bids thee to declare what marriages thou pratest of, and at whose hands he is to be cast out of power : and these things let me tell you do not in any way set forth enigmatically, but every several particular : and dont cause me two journeys, Prometheus : and thou seest that Jove is not softened by such conduct as yours.

*Prom.* Well his speech is certainly high-flown and full of haughtiness, for a menial of the gods. You youngsters are young in your power and think of course that ye inhabit towers beyond reach of suffering : have I not from there seen two sovereigns cast down ? And a third I shall look upon, that is now lord, most disgracefully and speedily. I dont seem to you, do I, in any way to fear and crouch before the new gods ? I miss it by a good deal, aye, entirely. And do thou hurry back by the way thou camest : for thou shalt learn nothing of what thou askest me.

*Merc.* By just such exhibitions of obstinacy on a previous occasion also thou waftedst thyself into these troubles.

*Prom.* My evil plight for thy menial office, know well, I would not exchange.

*Merc.* For it is better, I suppose, to be a slave to this rock than to be a faithful messenger to father Jove.

*Prom.* Thus to insult the insolent is right.

*Merc.* Thou seemest to take pride in thy present circumstances.

*Prom.* Do I take pride? May I see my enemies thus taking pride: yes, and thee too I include among them.

*Merc.* Pray dost thou blame me too in any way for thy misfortunes?

*Prom.* In brief terms I hate all the gods as many as, having been well treated, ill-treat me unjustly.

*Merc.* I learn that thou art mad with no slight attack.

*Prom.* May I be mad, if it is madness to hate one's enemies.

*Merc.* Tolerable thou wouldst not be, if thou wert in prosperity.

*Prom.* Ah me!

*Merc.* That's an utterance that Jove knows not.

*Prom.* But advancing time teaches all things well.

*Merc.* And yet thou at least hast not yet learnt to be prudent.

*Prom.* Otherwise I should not be talking to thee, a mere menial.

*Merc.* Thou seemest likely to tell nought of what the Father desires.

*Prom.* Verily it would be through owing a favour that I should be repaying him one.

*Merc.* Thou sneerest at me just as though I were a child.

*Prom.* And art thou not a child and even more silly than that, if thou expectest to learn anything from me? There is not ill-treatment or device by which Jove shall cause me to proclaim these things until my galling bonds shall have been loosed. Wherefore let the blazing bolt be hurled, and let him with his white-feathered snow-storm and subterranean thunders confuse and disturb all things: for nought of these things shall bend me so far as to declare at whose hands he must be dethroned from his sovereignty.

*Merc.* Just consider whether this course seems likely to help thee.

*Prom.* This has long ago been considered and determined upon.

*Merc.* Bring thyself, oh! foolish one! bring thyself at last to be wise in reference to thy present troubles.

*Prom.* Thou annoyest me, counselling me to no purpose

as (thou mightest) a wave. Never let it enter thy head that I, fearing Jove's determination, shall become woman-hearted, and that I shall entreat that great object of hatred with womanly-fashioned upturnings of my hands to release me from these bonds: I lack it utterly.

*Merc.* By talking much I seem likely to say it to no purpose: for thou in no way relentest nor art softened in heart by entreaties: but biting the bit like a newly-yoked colt, thou art violent and fightest against the reins. But thou showest violence in an impotent scheme: for obstinacy in him that thinks not wisely, itself by itself, has less power than nothing. But consider if thou shalt not be persuaded by my words what a storm and triple wave of ills will come upon thee, not to be avoided: for firstly, the Father will cleave this rugged ravine with thunder and with the flame of the bolt, and will hide thy body, and an embrace of the rocks shall support thee. And having completed a long period of time thou shalt return back to light: and verily a winged hound of Jove, a blood-reeking eagle, shall fiercely tear in pieces a vast piece of thy carcase, coming unbidden a daily banqueter, and thy liver black from gnawing shall he glut himself on. Look not for any end to a suffering like this, until some one of the gods shall appear to relieve thy sufferings, and shall be willing to go to rayless Hades, and to frequent the gloomy depths of Tartarus. With this in view advise thee: for this threat is no fictitious one but spoken in entire earnestness: for the Divine mouth knows not how to utter falsehoods, but will accomplish every word. So do thou look well and consider, and do not ever think that obstinacy is better than prudence.

*Chor.* To us indeed Mercury seems to utter not unseasonable advice: for he bids thee laying aside thy obstinacy seek after good counsel which is wise. Be persuaded: for it is disgraceful for a wise man to go thoroughly wrong.

*Prom.* To me that know full well has this one bawled out these messages: but for an enemy to be ill-treated by enemies is nothing unfair. Wherefore at me let be hurled the two-edged wreath of fire, and let aether be convulsed with thunder and the



rack of wild winds, and let the blast shake earth from her foundations, roots and all, and commingle the wave of the deep sea with rough surge and the courses of the heavenly stars: and to black Tartarus hurl my body raised aloft with the strong eddyings of necessity: anyhow he will not cause me to die.

*Merc.* Such however, are the plans and words which are to be heard from maniacs. For in what respect does this man's condition fail of madness? in what does he abate from mad-fits? But do you at least who are condoling with this one's sufferings speedily retire some whither from these parts, lest a merciless bellowing of thunder render useless your senses.

*Chor.* Utter something else, and advise me something thou art likely to persuade me of: for this is not at all a speech to be tolerated that thou hast thrust upon us. How dost thou bid me practise baseness? with this one I am willing to suffer what is necessary: for traitors I have learnt to detest, and there is no evil which I abhor more than this.

*Merc.* Well! remember at any rate what I tell you beforehand: and dont, when overtaken by divine anger, blame fortune, and dont ever say that Jove hurled you into unforeseen trouble: Pray dont! but you are doing it to your own selves: for with full knowledge, and not suddenly, nor unawares, you will find yourselves involved through folly in an endless net of woe.

*Prom.* Well! now in deed and no longer in word, the earth is shaken: and a rumbling sound of thunder roars close by, and fiery zigzag streaks of lightning flash forth, and whirlwinds roll the dust: and blasts of all the winds leap forth, exhibiting a conflict of counter-gales: and aether is joined in confusion with the main. Such an onset from Jove is evidently advancing against me, causing fear. Oh! majesty of my mother! oh aether that rollest round light common to all, thou beholdest how unjustly I suffer.

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