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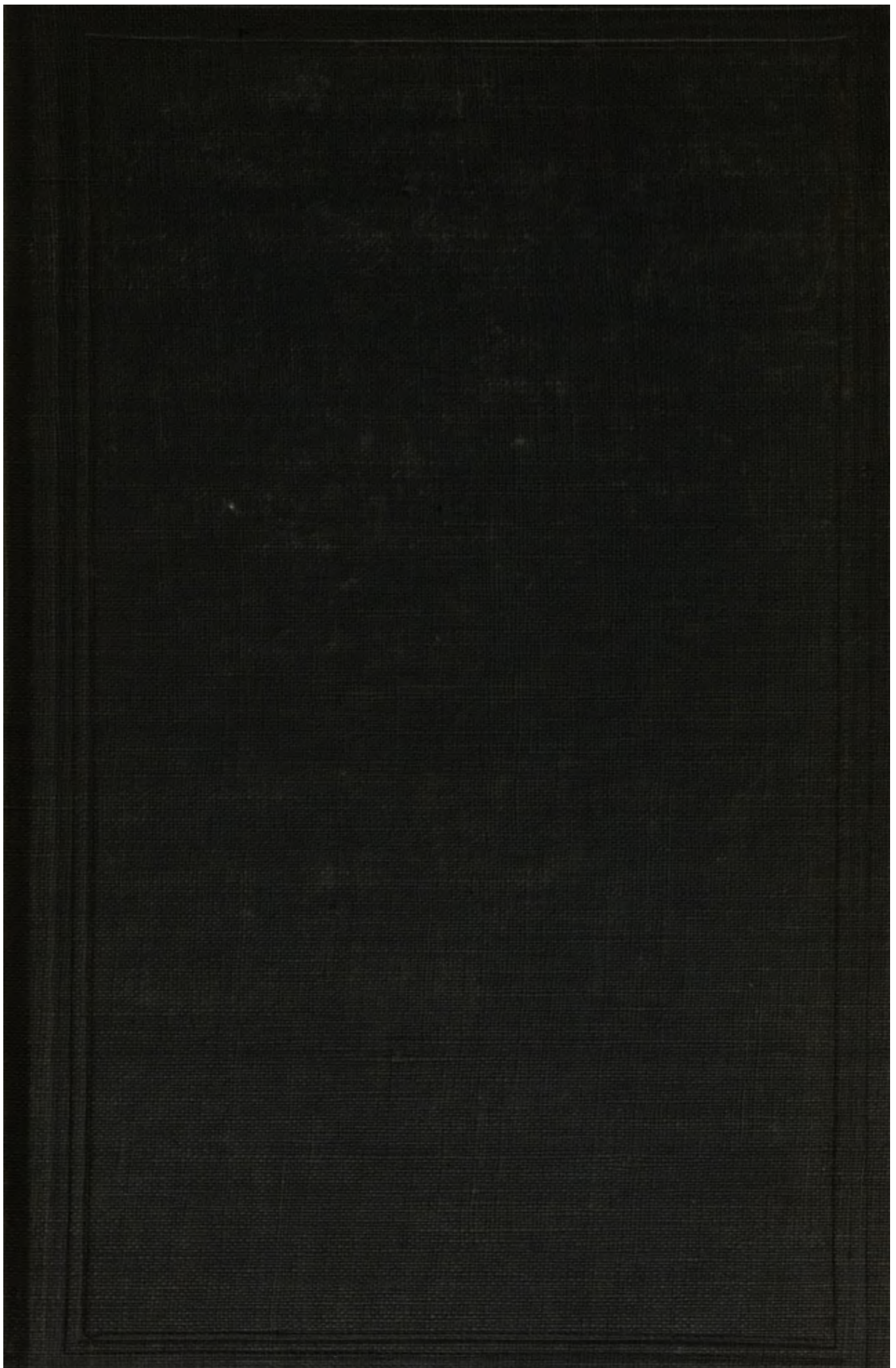
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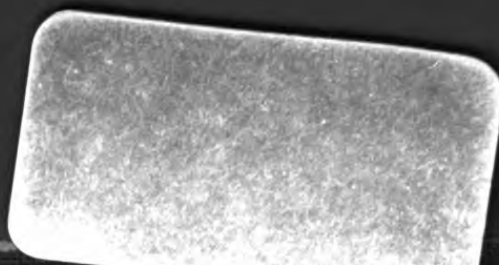


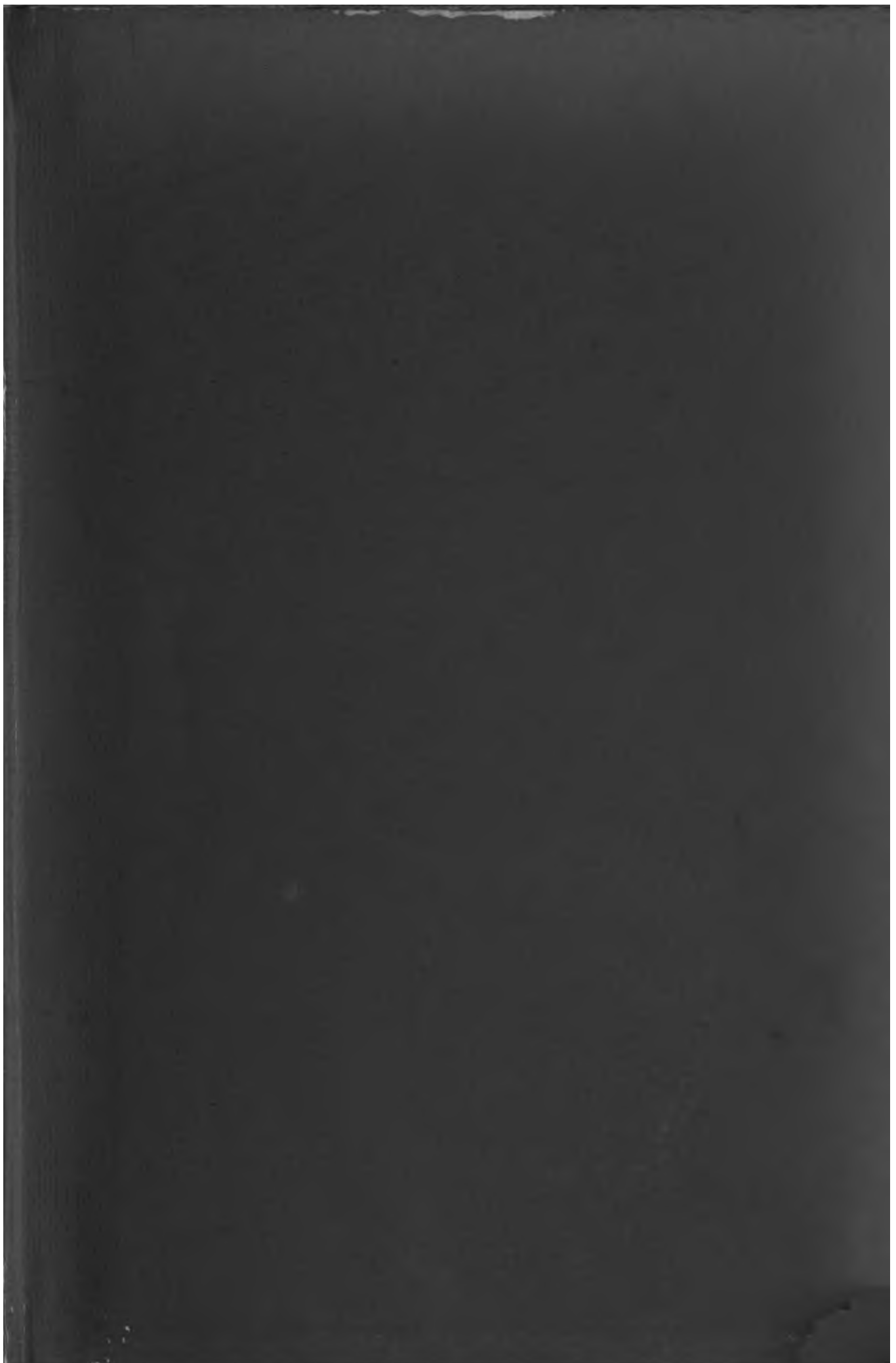
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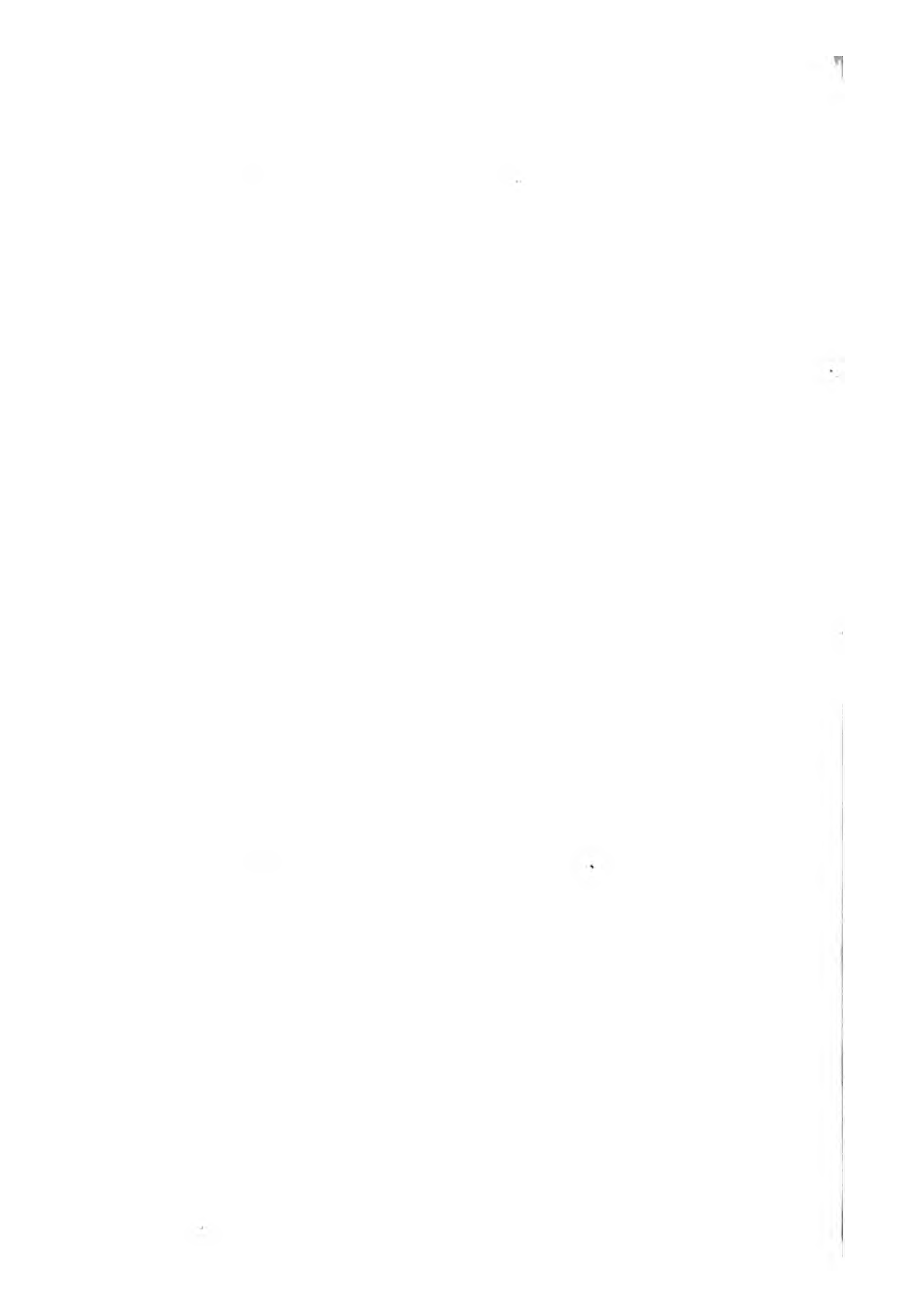




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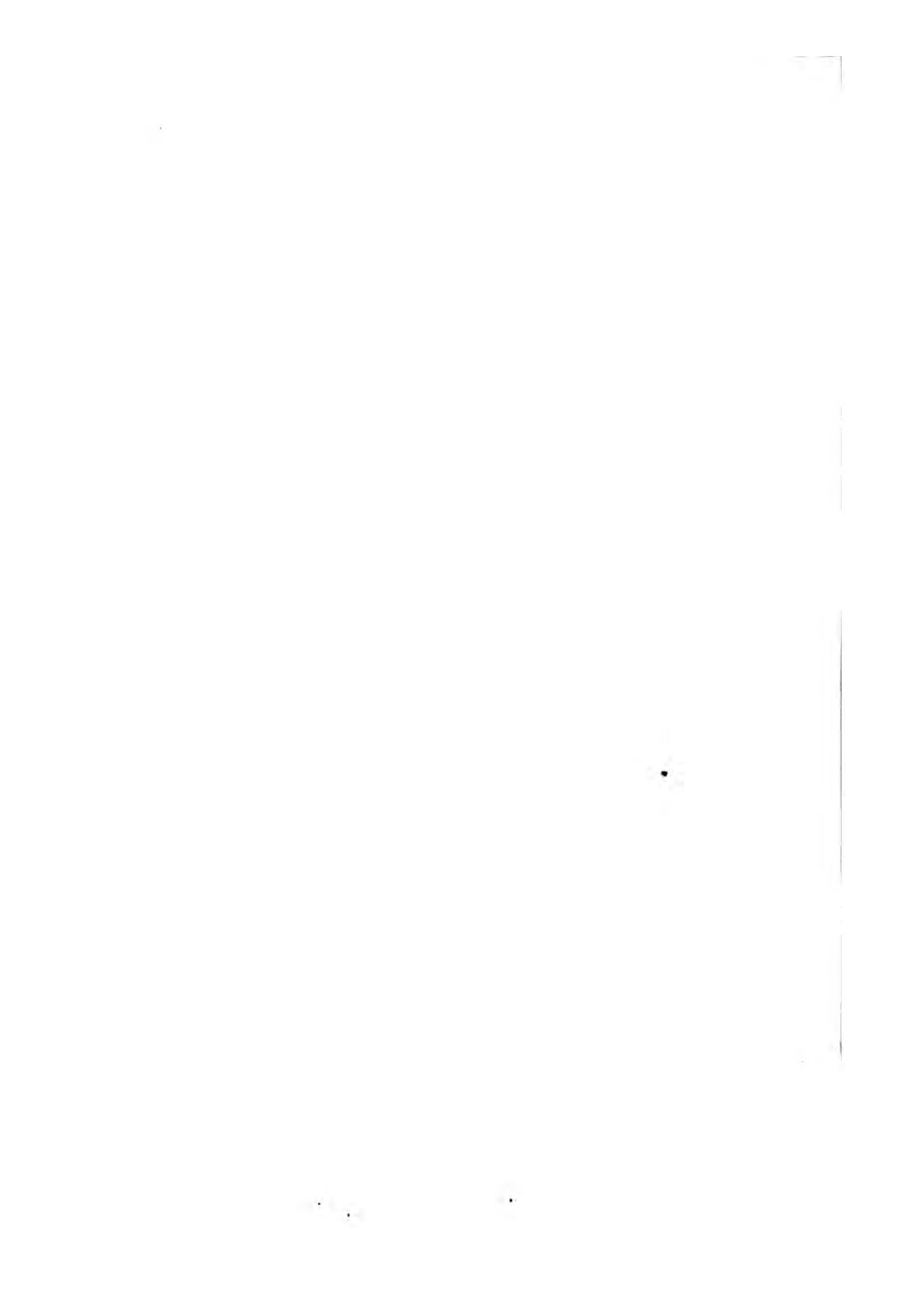
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PROMETHEUS BOUND.



THE
PROMETHEUS BOUND
OF ÆSCHYLUS.

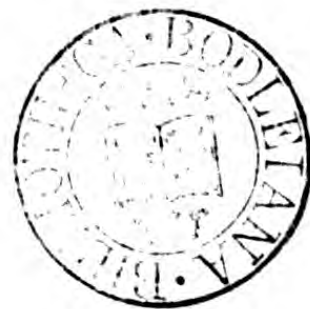
TRANSLATED IN THE ORIGINAL METRES.

BY

C. B. CAYLEY, B.A.

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Deduxisse modos.



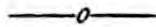
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JOHN CAMDEN HOTTEN, PICCADILLY.

1867.

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Lincoln's-Inn Fields, W.C.

PREFACE.



I SHOULD not have attempted a work which has been so many times translated as the “Prometheus Bound” of Æschylus, and that by such able hands as the late Mrs. Barrett Browning’s and Professor Blackie’s, and more recently Mrs. Webster’s, if it had not been one of my principal objects to do something towards familiarizing English readers, and partly even classical students, through the medium of a language they pronounce accurately and confidently, with the stately forms and the scientific principles of the Greek versification. Of these forms, I believe the dramatic metres to be even more likely to reward the attention of imitators than is the hexameter of epic poetry. The iambic trimeter, in particular, which is usually employed in the tragic dialogue, has so much affinity and historical connexion with our own blank verse, that the remarkable differences which separate it therefrom can only be exhibited by the most accurate composition, in which one must rigidly dis-

tinguish those elements of *quantity* and *accent* which have been so ruthlessly confounded by most of the poets and critics who have patronized the "accental" hexameter. Feeling this, although I have taken pains to combine the accents of my lines in modes partly regular and familiar to the English ear, I have yet endeavoured to realize the metres of my original by the strictest consideration of the quantities of the words I have employed. I have not, however, added to the present little volume any formal analysis of the metres used, because I judge it better to leave these in a first experiment to the ear of the uncritical reader, and to the insight which the scholar may readily command from other sources. I will only request the former not to condemn my versification without a little practice in reading it: for it is habit that makes every measure distinct, from even a nursery rhyme; and before a measure has some distinctness, the ear is seldom satisfied with it. On the other hand I will request the scholar not to be unfairly prejudiced (if he should condescend to *scan* any of my lines) by the apparent anomalies which inevitably arise from an orthography not symmetrically representing the sounds of the language. In particular, as the metrical syllable runs usually from vowel to vowel, and may be rendered long,

not only by containing a long vowel, but by ending on a combination of consonants in one or two words (thus *lip* is short, *lips* and *leap* long ; but *lip* before *stained* is long also), it must be remembered that we often write two consonants where we pronounce one only—as *would* is pronounced with *d* for *ld*, and a simple short vowel ; so the *ll* in *folly* is a different thing from *ll* in *coolly*, or in the Italian or Latin *Apollo* : *ng* in *sing* represents a simple sound as much as *ph* or *th*. To enumerate more such instances would be tedious and superfluous ; but readers may see my paper in the Transactions of the Philological Society for 1862 ; to which some reference has been made in Professor Blackie's "Homer and the Iliad." * I remark more willingly here, that the advantages of the iambic trimeter over our common blank verse are perhaps most prominent in those sharp theatrical encounters in which every line makes a repartee in itself, which can hardly be expressed conveniently if the ordinary compass of the measure be reduced from twelve to ten syllables. As to the lyric passages, the corruptions or difficulties of the text of the

* Vol. i., diss. 10. I must add that every language requires its own rules for elisions, and for that shortening of long vowels before the hiatus, which is in some cases more agreeable to the English ear.

“Prometheus” have sometimes deterred me from rigidly following the original versification : but I have endeavoured everywhere to preserve the dominant movement of the passage, so beautifully varied as it everywhere is to express eagerness, suspense, or other emotions. The more equable movement of the anapæstic passages is sometimes very closely approached in English rhyme, as in Lord Byron’s

“On a throne of rocks in a robe of clouds.”

Manfred.

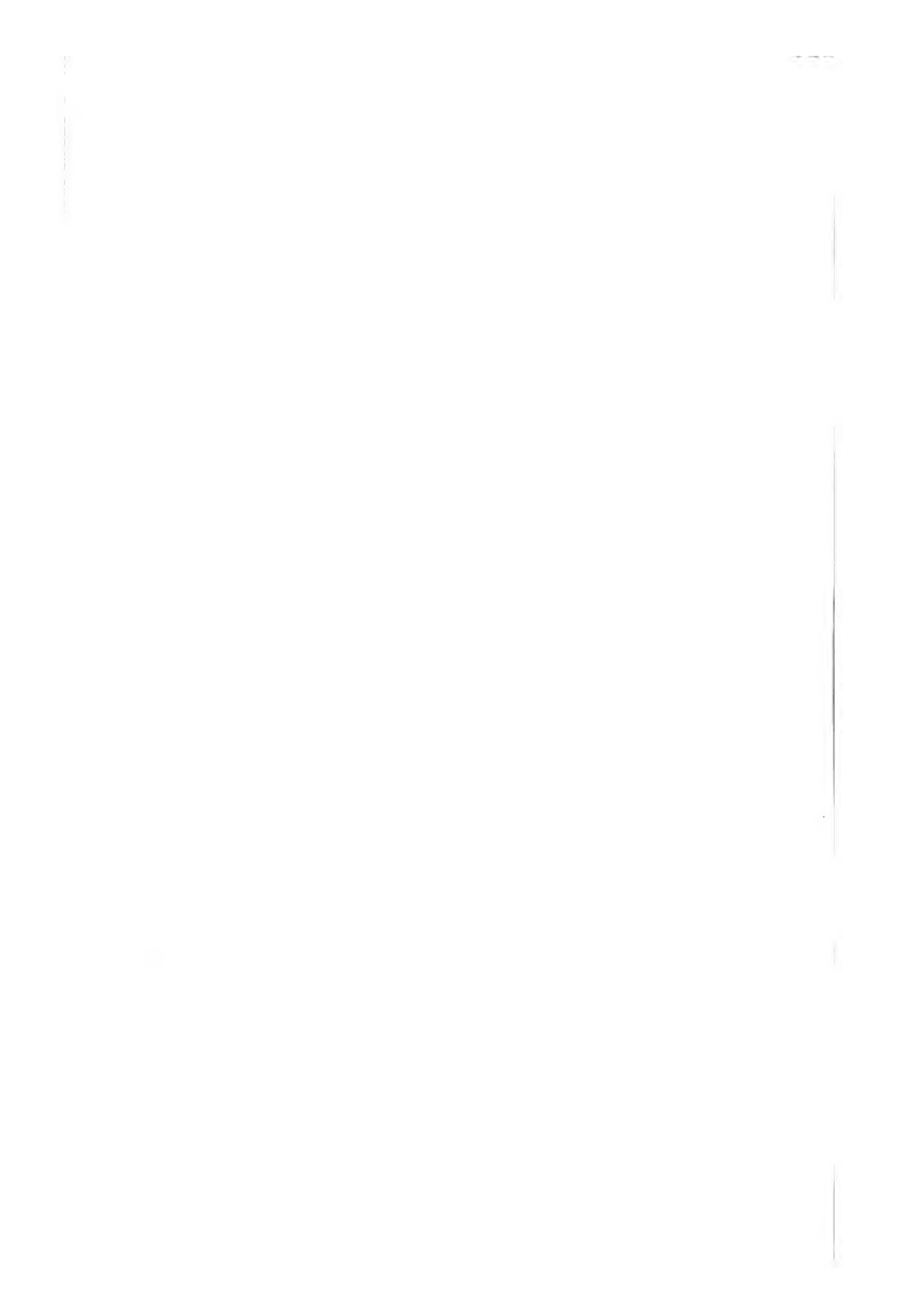
If I am told, after all, that the metres I have used are not sufficiently national, I am disposed to answer that the musical laws of verse have no indissoluble connection with the grammar or vocabulary of particular languages. To translate a poet is, as it were, to teach him our idiom ; but we should not presume to confine his ideas of style and versification by the standards we are accustomed to respect among our own countrymen or contemporaries. Nor is the history of literature deficient in instances of authors, and schools of authors, who have very successfully realized these principles. Our Chaucer—a patriarch of translators and imitators, though he had no eminent invention or originality—introduced several of the forms of verse to which we are now most

attached, from France and Italy: he would have indeed made poor work of the "Romance of the Rose," and of the tale of Troilus, had he reduced them to the alliterative doggerel to which our countrymen had been accustomed from the times of the Anglo-Saxon kings. Yet the attempt would have been hardly more unsatisfactory than that of doing the Iliad into English in a ballad metre somewhat resembling the "Rhyme of Sir Thopas." The poetry of Spain received much of its highest culture from the writers who introduced the well-accented Italian verse in place of the scarcely rhythmical octo-syllabics of the native balladists. Above all, the Romans adopted from Greece the hexameters and all the forms of lyric and elegiac verse they so brilliantly cultivated; nevertheless the two languages, Greek and Latin, differed nearly as much in the elements of their prosodial structure as Greek and English do. On the other hand, it has been maintained in very sweeping terms that the classical poetry cannot be uttered like verse without a conventional accentuation, or else without the aid of singing and a musical accompaniment. The fact is little felt, that quantitative verse, whether said or sung, has in itself a musical time which our own verse lacks and has to borrow sometimes from the drawling of the singer.

The former kind may have needed a few regular accents, but not so many as the line in which there are no regular quantities : even the modern Italian hendecasyllable needs fewer fixed accents than the English heroic verse, which so closely resembles it—most likely because the Italian strong syllables cannot be of such unequal length as the English can. But I do not think the Greeks can have largely tolerated an artificial accentuation in verse, except in proportion as they were prepared for it by the different dialects of the poems with which they were familiar, from Homer's to Sappho's,—dialects which are notoriously somewhat atticized and assimilated by the written accents now in use. The mode in which accents may or should be combined in English quantitative verse, appears to me to afford a fair field for careful compromises between the Greek and the modern system : there are also some kinds of verse,—as the hexameter, the sapphic, and the alcaïc, in which the prevalent Latin rhythms, however they became so, may fairly claim particular attention.

I have not considered it needful to add many notes to this translation ; because the geographical details, which at first sight appear to require some exegesis, have been pronounced by one of the best critics to be founded on many misconceptions, which the time

of ordinary readers would only be wasted in unravelling. The readings and interpretations have been selected from two or three editions. I have not in general replaced the Greek proper names by Latin; but I hope to have committed no inconsistency by introducing "Jove" and "Jupiter" for "Zeus," inasmuch as they are derived from the same root, and less disagreeably mispronounced in English usage. On the substance of the tragedy I will offer no observations, except that I believe some prevalent misconceptions of its religious tendency (it being a fragment and not a complete work) have been very properly noticed and condemned in the translation by Professor Blackie.



ARGUMENT.

PROMETHEUS, having stolen fire from heaven to relieve the misery of mankind, is bound by the command of Zeus (Jupiter) to a rock in Scythia. He is visited by Oceanus, whose mediation he declines, and by the Nymphs, his daughters, to whom he declares the wrongs and the ingratitude he has sustained from Jupiter, since made by his help the lord of all, and declares himself master of a secret on which must depend the permanency of the latter's sovereignty. Last he sees Io, the daughter of Inachus, king of Argos, persecuted with a gad-fly by the jealous wrath of Hera (Juno). He predicts to her the course of her wanderings ; and how he will himself owe his deliverance to one of her posterity (Hercules), the thirteenth from the son whom she will bear to Jupiter in Egypt, and proximately descended from the only one of the fifty Danaides who will not slay her husband. Hermes (Mercury) is then sent by Jupiter to threaten Prometheus with torment by the vulture and otherwise, if he will not reveal his secret, to whom he opposes a resolute defiance.

This tragedy was the second of a trilogy, in which the first play was entitled "Prometheus Fire-bringing," and which comprised the marriage of the Titan with Hesione. In the third play, "Prometheus Unbound," the Titan, having been released by the mediation of Hercules, was reconciled to Jupiter ; he then warned the latter against Thetis, who was fated to have a child that should be superior to his own father. It is said that Thetis, in consequence of this prediction, was given in marriage to Peleus, king of the Myrmidones, and that they became the parents of Achilles.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

STRENGTH.

FORCE (a mute).

HEPHÆSTUS (Vulcan).

PROMETHEUS.

OCEANUS, father-in-law of Prometheus.

IO, the beloved of Jupiter.

HERMES (Mercury).

Chorus of Virgins, daughters of Oceanus.

SCENE.—The head of a ravine in Scythia, where appears
Hephæstus, with Strength and Force, leading Prometheus.

PROMETHEUS BOUND.

Strength.

HERE is the furthest margin of the world attain'd :
Here is the Scythian pathless and forlorn desert.
And it remains, Hephæstus, unto thee to do
The work the Sire commandeth, and to fasten up
With chains of adamant temper indestructible,
Against the rock's precipitous edge this trespasser.
For fire, which is the splendour of thine excellence,
Art's universal origin, he by stealth removed,
And gave to mortals : now the crime's declared to
thee
For which an atonement by the gods is claim'd from
him,
That he to Jove's authority may be taught to fit
His tastes, quitting that humour of philanthropy.

Hephæstus.

Ah with sufficing virtue, Force and Strength, to you
Jove's hest arriveth, and is ungainsayable.
But I to bind a Power of my kind upon
This ill-bewinter'd precipice have no hardihood.
Yet must I algates on the work perforce resolve,
For with the Father's order who can dare dally?
Thou lofty-thoughted offspring of discreet Themis,
Unwilling as I'm unwelcome, I've to bind thee here
With sturdy brass-links on this hill's forlorn summit,
Where of the language or the shape of man never
Shall a glimpse attain thee ; but the sun with blazing
heat
Thy bodily bloom shall parch up ; and thou shalt
alike
Welcome the Night's rich mantle as she dims the
world,
And every sunrise which the nightly frost repels.
And aye the galling misery thou'st to dwell withal,
Shall waste thee ; nor begot yet is thy rescuer.
Such fruits come of thy humour of philanthropy ;
For by divine wrath undeterr'd, thyself divine,
Thou didst to man give glory not design'd for him ;
For which th' atonement is to guard this drear
hollow,

Unsleeping, upright, and with unreposed sinews ;
 And vainly many moans thou'lt utter, laments many,
 For unto prayer unyielding are Jove's purposes—
 As new tenants of lordship are severe ever.

Strength.

Come ! why this useless lingering to sympathize ?
 And why the gods' worst enemy wilt not thou
 detest,
 Who thy peculiar excellence betray'd to men ?

Hephæstus.

Ties of blood and old fellowship are with pain
 sever'd.

Strength.

I grant ye ; but by what plan is the Sire's behest
 To be got over ? Art prepared for that better ?

Hephæstus.

Thus alway art thou pitiless and unscrupulous.

Strength.

Because lamenting over him can heal nothing,
 Nor idly shouldst thou labour at th' infeasible.

Hephæstus.

Out on this hated and detested handicraft !

Strength.

Why shouldst abhor it? since, if all the truth is
own'd,
Art for the griefs we witness hath no blame to bear.

Hephæstus.

I would this only were to some one else assigned!

Strength.

One feat is hopeless, that the gods should all govern,
For Jove alone hath freedom, and none else hath it.

Hephæstus.

I know this, and none answer have to make to thee.

Strength.

Then wilt not hasten, and the chains about him
hang,
So that the Father may discern no loitering?

Hephæstus.

Here are the fast'nings of the curb prepared for him.

Strength.

About his arms now clamp him; and effectively
Bring down that hammer, and each one on the rock
rivet.

Hephæstus.

This work is onward hast'ning, and is undelay'd.

Strength.

Strike and nip harder, and secure him every way ;
For out of all straits parlous arts hath he to wind.

Hephæstus.

This arm is over-tightly clench'd at least for him.

Strength.

Then brace that other as hard up, and apprise him
how
Futile are his diplomacies unto Jupiter's.

Hephæstus.

To none but him my labour ought to seem amiss.

Strength.

And now, with all thy power, urge the fang'd wedge's
Remorseless adamant right across the breast of him.

Hephæstus.

Ah, ah, Prometheus ! I'm to groan for thee driven !

Strength.

What ! dost again flinch, and the foes of Jove lament ?
Beware, or haply thou'lt provoke thine own pity.

Hephæstus.

Thou seest what eyesight hardly bears to rest upon.

Strength.

I see that he gets after his deserts punish'd.
Now tightly compass with that under-rein the ribs.

Hephæstus.

I obey necessity : do not overmuch command.

Strength.

I will command it, and will howl it into thee.
Go lower, and be fast'ning on the legs the gyves.

Hephæstus.

This I've accomplish'd and without prolong'd effort.

Strength.

Secure with hard blows over him the flesh'd fetters,
As thou to one worth fearing art responsible.

Hephæstus.

Thy tongue resounds the likeness of thy countenance.

Strength.

Play thou the soft heart ; but reproach not unto me,
That I've a rude complexion and peremptory.

Hephæstus.

His limbs are all mesh'd : now let us depart again.

Strength.

Wilt here remain high-handed, and of deities
 Bestow the pilfer'd glories on the perishable?
 What part of all thy misery will mankind carry?
 Thy name *Prometheus* wrongly seems allow'd by us!
 Thou need'st a true *forethinker*, who by some device
 Could extricate thee safely from this hard mishap.

Prometheus (alone).

O splendid Æther, O ye Winds of nimble wing,
 O Fountain-heads, and yonder hoary Deep's billows
 Innumerosly smiling, and all-teeming Earth,
 You, and the Sun's orb that beholdeth all, attest
 How well the gods their fellow-god are revenged
 upon!

See th' indignities uncouth, whereby
 Gall'd my difficult wrestlings I abide
 Of a thousand ages.

Such a foul bondage this new paramount
 Of the supernals machinates for me!

Woe, woe! sufferings, anticipations,
 Both compel a moan : where in eternity
 Shall a boundary loom to my anguish?

Yet why this utterance ? All the future unto me
 Stands clear beforehand ; and an unforeseen penance
 Cannot befall me ; but the weird I must abide
 Of Fate, as I most lightly can, remembering
 Necessity's arm'd with power incontestable ;
 But how remain mute in such haps, or not remain ?
 I know not, who by serving of mankind, alas,
 Have come to be yoked under ill's peremptory.
 I caught the furtive fire-spring, in the reed secured,
 Which shone to be man's tutor, and for all behests
 Of art the chiefest power and resource he hath.
 Here's then the suffering, which to mine offence
 belongs,
 Below the welkin riveted in my chains to pine.
 Ah, ah ! oh, oh ! oh, oh !

What accents ? what odours
 Approach me without shape ?
 Be they divine, or human, or the twain yfere ?
 What has approach'd the limitary summit,
 To gaze upon mine anguish, or with what design ?
 See then an immortal, captive and malfortunate,
 Jove's antagonist, who the benevolence
 Of those deities, all and each one,
 That Jove's palace-hall range have sacrificed.
 Why ? for men having too much kindness !

Ugh ! what a turmoil hear I again coming
Hither of pinions ! what a whistling of air
Unto the nimble wing-strokes answers !

Dread is all for me that approaches.

Chorus (entering, drawn by swans).

Let nought alarm thee !

'Tis a friendly band that urges*
To this hill the plummy racers,
Having our father uneath won over,
To yield reluctantly the boon ;
And rapid airs follow'd as my escorts ;
For in the deep cave's hollowness
The clangour of steel echoed, and shook out o' me
Brow-tethering modesty :
So shoeless, a rider in air, I hasten'd.

Prometheus.

Woe 's me, woe 's me !
You that fruitful Tethys's offspring,
You from a father sprung, that on all sides
Rolls his flood around earth irreposably,
Children of Ocean, look hither, view me !
What an enchainment up to the vale's rocky

* The indented lines are properly half-line

Barriers clamps me, where I my vigil
Am keeping, a warden unenvied.

Chorus.

I look, Prometheus :

But a tearful haze alarmful
Rusheth o'er my eyes beholding
To the rocks thy body laid a-parching
Beneath this ignominious
Cankering heap of unyielding irons—
Sithence th' Olympic ship obeys
A new direction : modelling the laws anew,
Jove at his own caprices
Begins what of old was immense to crumble.

Prometheus.

Rather had he below Earth, below Hades,
Yon spirit-harbourer, into the bound-lacking
Erebus plunged me,
Wrapt in chains infrangible, horrible,
So nor deity, nor other nature
Thence were gratified !
Now to the welkin set up a standard,
I pine to delight them who hate me.

Chorus.

Which of the gods thus hard a heart
Can own, that herein he delights ?

To whom are undeplorable
Thy griefs, but only Jove ? for he to malice ever
Setting as a flint his heart's resolve,
Tames the divine lineage,
Nor will he not always ;
 Till he either appeaseth his heart, or a new-
 comer
Him from his hard eminence supplanteth.

Prometheus.

Yet shall he algates need me, pent within
Ignominious chains and ponderous,
He the supremest god, to reveal him
New conspiracies, which from his empire
And prerogatives menace his downfall.
Nor shall I hear from him honey-tongued rhetoric's
Incantations ;
Yet shall his hard threats not a whit force me
To the disclosure, ere from his horrible
Chains to release me first he be willing,
And an atonement
For this disgrace to return me.

Chorus.

To thee belongs the daring heart
That yields to no bitter agonies,
The free tongue over all limits—

But I with apprehension am the while harried,
Looking to thy mishaps, to think
Where is a term to be hail'd,
Where arrived at, of thy miseries?

For a mood unapproachable hath the son
Of Kronos, and difficult to sue to.

Prometheus.

Well have I known Jove bitter, and still having
Reason on his side : yet shall he algates
Very compliant
Prove, let occasion that way buffet him ;
And, on alliance bent and friendship,
These tempestuous humours mollified,
He'll willing as welcome approach me.

Chorus.

Disclose the whole transaction and rehearse it us,
What charge against thee Jupiter preferr'd, that he
Might seize, to do thee shameful, hateful injuries.
Instruct us, if the story cause no detriment.

Prometheus.

Ah, painful is the speaking, and the leaving it
Unspoken, and 'tis grievous every way to bear.
When first offences 'mid the gods had broken out,
And into factions controversy parted us,

Some were desirous from the throne to push Kronos
For Jove to take it : but the opposing host declared
They would not have Jove ruler of the gods at all.
And when with wholesome counsel I prevail'd no-
thing,
Urging the Titans yonder—heav'n and earth-begot—
(For, slighting all mild remedies, in their haughtiness,
They thought to violently gain the mastery
With small ado ; yet often of futurity,
My mother, a shape whereunto many a name adheres,
As Themis or Earth, predicted all the course to me,
How that the victor would not owe to force ever
Or vehemence the achieving of the mastery,
But all to policy ; yet, when I this maxim urged,
They would not on me condescend to cast a look ;))
Hence of such instant courses as the affair allow'd,
To lend a welcome cheerful aid to Jupiter,
My mother assisting, seem'd the most advisable.
So my devices have for eldest-born Kronos
And his supporters made the dark profundities
Of hell an abode : yet owing all this unto me,
Look, how the tyrant of the gods with injuries
Pays me ; for usurpation has this vice ever,
That no reliance upon a friend consists with it.
Now for the question, how provoked these outrages
He puts upon me, this will I rehearse to you.

When yon paternal sceptre he began to wield,
 With sundry portions he the sundry gods fitted,
 And gave them empire : but to poor mankind would
 he

Deign no regard, but wholly sought to exterminate
 Their race, to plant a fresh one on the site of it.
 And thus devising, none but I resisted him :
 I dared it only : thus was I man's rescuer
 From falling headlong blasted into hell's abyss.
 Therefore to make me yielding are such pains
 devised,

Severe to bear and pitiable for eyes to view ;
 Thus I, that on man had beyond myself pity,
 Am not supposed to merit it, and despitefully
 Am here retemper'd, sight to Jove inglorious.

Chorus.

Oh, iron-hearted and cut out of stone is he,
 That shares not indignation at thy wretchedness !
 For I, Prometheus, neither have this spectacle
 Been fain to view, nor viewing am not heart-stricken.

Prometheus.

In faith, I am ruthworthy for my friends to see.

Chorus.

Didst thou not haply further after this proceed ?

Prometheus.

Man's glimpses of destruction I withheld from him.

Chorus.

How? for the malady what relief occur'd to thee?

Prometheus.

To plant within the bosom hopes purblind ever.

Chorus.

Great is the benefit truly man deriveth hence.

Prometheus.

And fire have I subjected herewithal to them.

Chorus.

So man the beamy countenance of fire commands?

Prometheus.

Ay! from which also many an art will he derive.

Chorus.

Are these the charges truly Jove insists upon,
That he doth outrage, doth remit no grief to thee?
And unto thine affliction is no term assign'd?

Prometheus.

None, till the period when by his desire it ends.

Chorus.

By his? what hope? but art not in thyself aware
 Of erring? how far neither I contentedly
 Can tell, nor heark'ning be not all unsweet to thee.
 But leave it : only seek thou out a cure for all.

Prometheus.

Whose feet are outside of mishaps, it is not hard
 For him to counsel and direct th' unfortunate.
 But I did all and each thing understand aright,
 And wilful I've err'd, wilful, I'll avow to you,
 Since I to save humanity must myself sorrow.
 Yet was the guise of suffering unforeseen to me,
 That from the dizzy rocks I should here hang a-
 withering.

Upon the naked and the neighbourhoodless hill.
 Yet now bewail not my calamities actual,
 But rather, having alighted on the ground, listen
 To what the time prepareth, and learn out the whole.
 Be guided, O be guided ; and endure with him
 That is to-day the sufferer. Unto sundry ones
 At sundry times will roving Evil hand the cup.

Chorus.

Not on unwilling ears truly, Prometheus,
 Falls thy precept :

Lo, my nimble chariot quitted, and
Air, the feather'd kind's limpid thoro'fare,
Tow'rd this craggy land here I am hast'ning :
And thy destinies
I crave entirely to master.

Oceanus (entering).

Ending a distant journey, Prometheus,
Here I approach thee, guiding a fleet-wing'd
Fowl by will alone, all unbridled,
And thy affliction, be assured, wounds me,
Both as kindred's natural sympathies
Haply necessitate,
And that, apart hence, there's not another whom
I would apportion dearer affection :
And my true speech thou shalt recognize.
For no flatterer's tongue have I ; test me,
Tell me wherein might I avail thee :
And thou'lt not avouch
Any friend more staunch than is Ocean.

Prometheus.

Aha ! what is thy meaning ? art thou too to view
My pains come ? how didst venture on relinquishing
The stream that is co-partner of thy name, the caves
To which the live rock is the roof, and entering

This land, the womb of iron? Art intent upon
 Seeing what I bear, with my ills to sympathize?
 Behold the sight then, how the friend of Jupiter,
 His helper in the founding of the despotism,
 Am here to be with agony made amenable.

Oceanus.

I see, Prometheus; and the best advice to thee,
 Be't e'en to one so politic, I desire to give.
 Begin to learn thy margin, and to new manners
 Conform, for he's new, that the gods hath under him.
 But if to words so galling and so truculent
 Thy mouth give utterance, haply Jove, if e'en on
 high
 Enthroned, will hear thee; whence his anger here-
 tofore
 Will seem a discipline only for the woes to come.
 Set rather, O distress'd one, all this heat aside,
 And seek th' abatement of the pains that cleave to
 thee.
 Thou deem'st the doctrine trivial, out of date
 perhaps?
 But of the tongue that speaketh over-loftily,
 These, O Prometheus, are the wages and the dues.
 Yet no whit art thou lowly, nor to pain docile,
 But wilt pull evil after evil unto thee.

Yet not, were I thy teacher, up to meet the pricks
 Wouldst raise a foot, perceiving how the lord of all
 Is sternly minded, and to none responsible.
 But now will I be seeking how to win release
 For thee from all this evil ; and do thou remain
 Peaceful the while, and loose not overmuch the
 tongue.

Why should the knower of so much yet have to learn
 That for the rash mouth is the chastisement pre-
 pared ?

Prometheus.

Joy be to thee, for 'scaping all unblamed away,
 When thou'dst in all my daring and my plans a part.
 Leave me still algates : let th' affair be nought to thee :
 Thou need'st not hope to move him : he's unpliant.
 Look only lest the journey cause thine own annoy.

Oceanus.

Better to neighbours than to self 'tis thine to give
 Advice ; nor hearsay, but the fact evinces it.
 But, I beseech thee, my prepared attempt allow,
 For I'll to thee be surety, Jove at my request
 Will deign to free thee from this hard adversity.

Prometheus.

One praise will I give, and deny no more to thee,
 In zeal to be not wanting, as becomes a friend.

But spend not on me labour : I can have nothing
For me done, if not futile and without profit.
But dwell securely rather, and in quietness,
For I desire not, if to me betide sorrow,
That on the most heads possible it should have to
fall.

*Oceanus.**

Ah no ! for eke my kinsman Atlas his penance
Grieves me, that at the frontier of yon Occident
The pillar upholdeth of the world and heav'n against
His shoulder, uncouth burden in the clasp of arms.
And of the caves Cilician I with ruth beheld
Typhon the inhabitant monstrous, of the brood of
earth,
Violently master'd spite of all his hundred heads—
Th' impetuous enemy, that, the gods' united host
Challenging, hiss'd destruction out of jaws abhorr'd,
And flash'd a Gorgon brightness underneath his eyes,
As now to quell Jove's suzerainty compassing.
Yet came to reach him Jupiter's wakeful weapon,
The fiery-breathing lightning, headlong in descent,
Which from the vauntings of the proud tongue
ousted him,
For in the breath's mid-region he received the wound,
That scorch'd up all his power and outblasted it.

* This speech is by some good critics assigned to Prometheus.

Now yon disabled and unhandy bulk of his
 Lies in the sea-lane's neighbourhood, below the roots
 Of Ætna fasten'd, where the labour of the forge
 Hephæstus urges, on the lofty peaks sitting—
 There whence the floods hereafter of the fiery deep
 Shall burst an outlet, and begnaw the rich levels
 With jaw ferocious of Sicilia fruit-adorn'd.
 Such wrath the Titan from below will cause to seethe,
 A fiery foam's abateless and hot-breathed volleys—
 He, scorch'd to ruins by the brand of Jupiter.

Prometheus.

Thou know'st the teaching of the times, nor I to thee
 Need play the master : use the best device to save
 Thyself ; but I'll my fortune out and out abide,
 Till Jove from indignation have released his heart.

Oceanus.

Art thou, Prometheus, of the doctrine ignorant,
 That words are healers of the mind that anger heats ?

Prometheus.

Aye, when that unction seasonably reaches hearts,
 Not when the turgid humour is by force reduced.

Oceanus.

But in the being cautious and adventurous,
 Dost thou behold an evil ? answer that, prithee.

Prometheus.

I see but idle labour and a fond folly.

Oceanus.

Leave me this ailment, for the road to thrive is his
That, knowing excellently, seems to know nothing.

Prometheus.

Well, this to be my trespass haply must appear.

Oceanus.

Thy word's a signal for returning home to me.

Prometheus.

Lest wailing o'er me should to thee bring enmities.

Oceanus.

Mean'st thou with him that on the mighty throne
sitteth?

Prometheus.

Beware, against thee lest his heart be stirr'd anew.

Oceanus.

Thy lot, Prometheus, is the best instructor here.

Prometheus.

Mount and depart then, while the politic humour
holds.

Oceanus (departing).

Thy speeches on one hast'ning urge alacrity.
And now the flying quadruped the buxom air
Ruffles with eager pinion, and his joints to rest
Within the wonted shelter of the stall covets.

Chorus.

I sigh, Prometheus,
To behold the woe befall'n thee.
An abundant river of tears,
From a tender eye departing,
Floodeth all the cheek beneath it ;
For ill-omenèdly Jupiter,
At his own caprice commanding,
To the gods obey'd before him
Showeth a victor's haughty temper.

And now the region
Ringeth all to notes of anguish,
Sobbing after the majestic
Domination and the pristine,
Which among thy house thou ownedst.
Not a mortal in the sacred
Lesser Asia's homes sojourneth,
But a share his heart receiveth
In thy afflictions sore to wail for.

Add you armies of the Colchic
Shore, the maids in arms unhumbled,
And the Tartar hordes commanding
On the verge o' the world the confines o' the lake
Meotis;

And [Arabia's] hardy man-crop,
And the lofty-nested hamlet,
Of the Caucasus the neighbour,
Whence the loud battle-order of spears in a wedge
united.

One only Titan I beheld in thrall before
With a chain of unyielding links to gall him ;
And this was the god Atlas,
Who still the mighty force he owns lamenteth,
And upon his shoulders to support the burthen of the
welkin.

There boom the mighty sea-currents
Meeting, and the deep sobbeth :
The gloomy caves rebellow beneath of Hades,
And the rivers' hyaline fountains bemoan the rueful
anguish.

Prometheus.

Think not that out of self-will or from haughtiness
I cleave to silence : but the conscious heart within

Pains me, because brow-beaten I'm compell'd to see
 Myself : yet who divided all the privileges
 Mid those the young divinities ? who but I was it ?
 But unsaid I will leave it ; else I might to you
 But tell what ye know plainly : now the woes
 amongst

Humanity reigning hearken, how by me the race
 Once brutish, have to reason and to thought arrived.
 I will rehearse it, not to chide men herewithal,
 But my benevolence in the gifts to call to mind ;
 For, firstly, seeing they discern'd confusedly,
 And hearing heard not ; but to dreamy shows
 muddled

The live-long hours* at random ; and unknown to them
 Remain'd the mason's fabric on the noon looking,
 And what the joiner shapeth : and below the ground
 They dwelt, as in their sunless holes the feeble ants.
 Nor was the winter, or the bloomy spring discern'd,
 Or fruitful autumn, by secure criterions :
 All was done headlong and apart from intellect—
 Till I the setting and rising of the stars defined,
 Hard lore to compass : and the doctrine excellent
 Of number, and the multifarious orderings
 Of writing, and that universal artisan,
 Memory, the parent of the Nine, I brought to them.

* I would read *ἀλίγκιον* for *ἀλίγκιοι*.

I first bade harness in the yoke those huge cattle
 To the bonds obedient ; and, to give to man relief
 In all his harder labour, in the cars did I
 Fasten the rein-contented horses, ornament
 Of splendour over-wealthy. None but I the first
 Made known the canvas-plumèd and the surge-
 betoss'd
 Frame that the mariner rideth. And behold a
 wretch,
 Who, such resources unto man by him given,
 To ward my own disaster off have no device !

Chorus.

Thou'st borne a grievous burthen, and from reason art
 Gone erring ; and like leeches ignorant, on whom
 The malady falleth, art become discomfited,
 Nor know'st the medicine which can health restore
 to thee.

Prometheus.

Thou wilt on hearing all the rest be more amazed,
 What arts have I supplied them and expedients.
 And this the chiefest, that, whene'er disease occur'd,
 No remedy was before them, either in the shape
 Of food, or unguent, or potation—unrelieved
 They stay'd, a-sick'ning and a-withering, until I
 Taught them the virtues of the balmy lenitives,

That now from every malady make a shield to them ;
And divination multifarious I devised,
And first determined how much of the dream
 becomes
Aught real, and of all presages audible
And casual omens pointed out the mysteries.
And I defined each flying of the crook-talon'd
Prey-birds, the dextral and sinistral auguries
That each to nature oweth, and of every kind
The daily nurture, and the loves and enmities
And conferences. I defined the smooth-tissued
Surface of entrails, and by wearing of what hues
They might a grateful spectacle to gods afford.
I taught the diverse symmetries of the lobe, the
 gall,
And, by the burning of the limbs with fat cover'd,
And of the long loin, into an art mysterious
The sons of earth I guided : and the signs living
In fire have I made ocular, if purblind before.
And thus much hereof : and below the ground again
The things hid unto human arts available,
Gold, silver, iron, who'd pretend that he reveal'd
Sooner than I ? None surely, were not he to prate.
But summ'd up in a short saying hear the whole
 of it :
'Tis from Prometheus that men all their arts derive.

Chorus.

Do not beyond occasion human kind befriend,
Thyself neglecting in thy own adversities ;
For I'm yet hopeful that, from all this ill released,
Thou'lt reach an equal greatness unto Jupiter's.

Prometheus.

This course to this goal has the might inflexible
Of Fate not order'd, until, under infinite
Pains kneaded, I from thralldom have yon way to
flee ;
For art doth all too feebly cope with destiny.

Chorus.

But who then is the pilot of this destiny ?

Prometheus.

'Tis what the three Fates, and the wary Furies are.

Chorus.

And with them is Jove even all too weak to cope ?

Prometheus.

The prædetermined is to Jove inevitable.

Chorus.

What is determined, save that he's to rule for aye ?

Prometheus.

Ye must not hear it ; do not urge the question home.

Chorus.

'Tis something awful surely thou dost keep withheld.

Prometheus.

Recall to memory something else : to *this* topic
The time is all unsuited ; and with all covers
I must protect it ; for, retaining here my hold,
I 'scape the bonds that shend me and th' adversities.

Chorus.

Jove, the governor of all,
Ne'er on our conscience set a bar with his empire,
Nor let us loiter visiting
 The divine tables with approved hecatombs,
Yonder o'er the water abateless
 Of our sire Oceanus,
Or by a word give offence !
This within my heart abide,
Nor out of it be melted.

Sweet it is in well-assured
Hopes the length of life to devolve, if a mortal
With the light of gaiety pamper
 Her heart ; but we shudder at witnessing

Thee with infinite sufferings visited,
 Seeing that unawed
By the supreme sovereign,
Thou to mortals dost allow
Too much regard, Prometheus.

Look, it all is a grace to the graceless !
 Aread, good heart, what helpmate,
What upholder has all the race of earth to lend thee ?
Be aware what a puny, futile,
Dreamy life it is that hampers
Such a being on earth, such a blind generation !
No, never have the devices of humankind
 The rule o' Jove defeated.

That have I recognised, looking at
 Thy abhorrèd hap, Prometheus,
Which a tune ill-accorded in my heart awaketh
To the one, that about the bath-place
Sounded, and about the bower,
When a sister of ours well-equipp'd we attended,
As thine Hesione to the chamber that
 The wifely mate divideth.

Io (entering).

Where am I ? whom among ? whom encounter I
In rocky fast'nings tempest-beaten ?

For what offences suffering, perishing ?
Whither, O teach me,
Forlorn upon earth am I erring ?
Ah, ah ! aha, aha !
Again besets me miserable the gadfly,
The ghost of earthsprung Argus ! Earth aroint him !
I shrink that herdsman myriad-eyed beholding !
Ever attends on me that crafty look of his ;
For 'tis not in death even earth can hide him,
But penetrating always
From the dead under he returns, alas,
And up the sea-sand hunts me
 Bewilder'd, starving.

Hark, 'tis anew that reed
Wax-fasten'd, shrilling out
Melodies slumberous ! Whither afar, whither,
Whither am I driven on ?
Why, alas, Jupiter,
Why was I ta'en alone,
Unto this doom to yoke, I the forlorn woman ?
Why with horror hunt a soul
Frantic and miserable ?
Scorch with lightning, or else
Whelm within earth, or else
Give to the sea-dragons me to gnaw.

Mighty lord, begrudge not
This to my request.
Too sorely, sorely proved am I
With straying and restraying, and still ignorant
Where to flee my miseries?
Hearest thou this half-maiden and half-heifer?

Prometheus.

And how should I not hear the child of Inachus,
Her by the gadfly hunted, who with love the soul
Inflames of high Jove, and by Hera's enmity
Is forced to run this weary, weary pilgrimage.

Io.

Why with a name so dear
Meets me thine utterance?
Tell a woful woman, tell her, aha, tell her,
Miserable sufferer,
Who it is so readily
My sorrows can rehearse,
And the bane of the madd'ning, the withering terrors?
Ah, with uncouth springings,
Frantic and hunger-urged,
From Juno's malice I flee hither impotent.
Ah, where's any being unfortunate,
Bears the woe that I bear?

But declare, prithee,
Not darkly what remains to thole?
What healing or what suaging of my woe remains?
Speak it, if thou know it!
Tell, O tell the maid wandering desperate.

Prometheus.

I'll plainly tell thee, whatsoe'er thy need requires,
In homely language and without inwrought quibbles,
As op'ning our mouth unto friends we owe to them.
Thou seest Prometheus and the giver of fire to men.

Io.

O general author of the weal that men possess,
Wretched Prometheus, why belongs this doom to
thee?

Prometheus.

I have the dolorous story barely now quitted.

Io.

Wilt thou not even *this* demand allow to me?

Prometheus.

Ask it, for I will answer all thy questioning.

Io.

Tell me then, who was fast'ner of thy form aloft?

Prometheus.

Jove's was the counsel, and the hand Hephæstus's.

Io.

And for what evil has this unto thee befall'n ?

Prometheus.

Forbear to seek : beyond this I can tell nothing.

Io.

And only tell me, tell the maid unfortunate,
How long 's to last the period of my wanderings ?

Prometheus.

What need to learn it ? best abide in ignorance.

Io.

At least withhold not that which is for *me* reserved.

Prometheus.

That service I do surely grudge not, unto thee.

Io.

Then why reluctant ? why not all the tale rehearse ?

Prometheus.

I grudge not : I dread only thine annoy to cause.

Io.

Care not to serve me trulier than I require.

Prometheus.

Dost urge it? I will answer, and 'tis thine to hear.

Chorus.

Stay, give to me my portion of the like pleasure :
 Let us begin by hearing of what aileth her,
 If that disastrous story she'll herself relate ;
 Then teach her all that haply must be borne by her.

Prometheus.

Io, to thee belongs it unto these to show
 The kindness ask'd for, as to thy paternal aunts,
 (Nor is that all) ; but weeping and lamenting out
 What ill befalls us, when the tears of sympathy
 Can be won, is no spending of the time amiss.

Io.

I truly know not how to shun your confidence ;
 I shall to your wish answer unreservedly—
 Though, speaking even, I bemoan that god-derived
 Storm and that overthrowing of my birth-given
 Feature, which on me sad woman unawares arrived.
 To me the phantoms of the night were aye flocking
 Within the chamber of the maids, and whispering
 A gentle exhortation, “ O most fortunate
 Among the daughters, why prolong thy maidenhood,
 Having the greatest wooer at thy feet? sithence

Jove with the dart is wounded of thy loveliness,
And claims the bond of Venus. O reject not him,
Girl, from the couch he coveteth. Hearken, and
come out

To the deep meadows Lernæan, and beside the sheep
And oxen of thy father, and relieve the gaze
Of Jupiter from pining." Every night was I
With dreams thus haunted, unhappy one, till
hardihood

I won, to tell my father of the night-visions.
He then to Delphi and Dodona sent many
To seek the god's face, and to learn by what
measures
Or by what utterance we could heav'nly grace
regain.

And they reported each one, on returning home,
Hard things in high-flown phrases and mysterious.
At length a plain direction Inachus received,
Which told him, and full straitly charged, to send me
out

From our abode and even o'er the land's limits,
To roam to the very margin of the world unheld.
If he refused it, flamy lightning had to come
From Jove, to whelm his kindred in one ruin all.
Wherefore, to Phœbus yielding and to the prophecy,
He, loth as I was, drove abroad, and shut the doors

Of home upon me ; for the curb of Jupiter
By violence thereunto was constraining him.
At once then on my person and mine intellect
Distortion enter'd ; and with horns, as you behold,
By a madd'ning insect hunted, I ran out amain
To the water of Kerkhnaea, thirsty men's delight,
And Lerna's hill, whilst Argus at my heels follow'd,
That testy keeper earth-sprung, who my path ever
With countless eyes inspected. He was hence re-
moved
By some death all unlook'd for : I from land to
land
Roam fly-stung onward, by the lash divine hurried.
I have the past related : if thou know besides
What grief awaits me, speak it, and with falsities
Soothe me not overkindly, for the loathsomest,
Methinks, of evil is to trust in make-believes.

Chorus.

Alack, 'tis pitiful, pitiful !
Out upon it ! never, O never have I believed
That to my ear could arrive so uncouth a tale,
That such insufferable, not to be look'd upon
Terrors, penances, outrages,
Like a weapon double-edged could have assail'd my
soul.

Alas, alas, destiny, destiny !
I shudder at seeing what I o beareth.

Prometheus.

Thou'rt like a girl faint-hearted, all too soon sobbing ;
Wait, till the remnant of the tale be told to thee.

Chorus.

Speak and declare it, since the best for those that ail
Is that beforehand they should hear what is to be.

Prometheus.

What first you ask'd me, I've procured you easily,
In that from her narration ye desired to learn
Her heretofore disaster : hear of me the rest.
And take to heart my story, seed of Inachus,
Thou too, to know the period of thy wanderings.
Turn tow'rd the sunrise firstly, when thou go'st from
 hence,
Thy feet, across the region unto ploughs denied,
And thou'lt arrive in Scythia, 'mid the roving hordes
That on the well-wheel'd chariot off the ground erect
Their textile houses, and afar with bows threaten.
With them commune not ; but, beside the sea's fretting
Verge thy foot holding, pass beyond the country's
 end.
Then will the Chalybes on the left appear to thee,

Workers in iron ; but beware of their abodes,
For that's a fierce folk and to guests unreachable.
Thou'lt have to meet Hybrista (truly-named river*)
Next that, but o'er it pass not (hard it is to pass)
Till fairly thou'st proceeded up to Caucasus,
Of all the mountains loftiest, to where the flood,
Its brows dividing, 'gins to foam his pride abroad.
Thence it behoves thee tow'rd the south to make a
way

Beyond the peaks that only with the stars commune,
And on the man-detesting Amazon hosts arrive,
Who dwell beside Thermodon, in Themiskyra,
Where roughly jaw-like Salmydesus hems the surge,
Hateful to mariners and to ships a stepmother.
They will to guide thee gladly lend their services ;
And on the Kimbric isthmus, at the lake's narrow
And outer avenues, thou'lt arrive ; and hardily
Thou'lt leave it, and swim o'er the lake Mæotian.
And men shall of thy fording hear a great renown
Hereafter always ; and the name of Bosporus
Thou wilt bequeath to the channel ; and of Asia
thence
Thou'lt reach the coast from Europe. How suppose
ye now ?

* *I. e.* insolent.

Is not the tyrant of the gods with all alike
Stern, who desiring, as this earthly maiden he
(Himself a god) desireth, heaps these toils on her.
Ah child ! 'tis a bitter wooer of thy maidenhood
That has befall'n thee ; for the words as yet rehearsed
Are not the bare preamble of the griefs to come.

Io.

Ah, ah, woe to me ! ah, and wo to me !

Prometheus.

Art thou lamenting, breaking into sobs anew ?
What will come of thee knowing all the rest of ills ?

Chorus.

Hath she some anguish even after this to learn ?

Prometheus.

A howling ocean of calamity desperate.

Io.

What gain can I then live to ? Why should I not
haste
Myself to cast down headlong off this beetling height,
That, on the ground once hurtling, I from all sorrows
Might win releasement ? Surely once for all to die
Were less than always suffering on from day to day.

Prometheus.

Thou'dst hardly mine affliction undergo with ease,
Because death is not even in my destinies,
Nor will release me from the griefs I have to bear ;
And I can hope no rescue from futurity
Save at the downfall of the throne of Jupiter.

Io.

Will Jupiter from reigning have to cease ever ?

Prometheus.

It would delight thee doubtless if thou saw'st the
thing.

Io.

How not ? when I such miseries owe to Jupiter.

Prometheus.

Then mark that of realities I discourse to thee.

Io.

To whom will he the lordly sceptre have to yield ?

Prometheus.

His own devices lean-witted will ruin him.

Io.

How ? teach us, if the question is no scath to thee.

Prometheus.

He'll consummate an union he will have to rue.

Io.

Divine or human? speak, if aught thou canst of it.

Prometheus.

To whom demand not: that remains unutterable.

Io.

And by the consort will the throne depart from him?

Prometheus.

Her child will o'er his father have the mastery.

Io.

Is there for him no fleeing of the blow prepared?

Prometheus.

Nay, that there is not, unless I, from bonds released—

Io.

Who can release thee, Jupiter not choosing it?

Prometheus.

To be one of thine offspring it behoveth him.

Io.

Say'st thou, that of my children is thy rescuer?

Prometheus.

The third descendant following on the tenth is he.

Io.

I can this oracle hardly find conceivable.

Prometheus.

Nor further into thine affliction ask to look.

Io.

Withhold not, after holding out, the boon to me.

Prometheus.

Thou shalt have either narrative out of this couple.

Io.

Of what couple ? tell, and propose the choice to me.

Prometheus.

Well, choose to learn distinctly what remains to thee
Of thine affliction, or to learn my rescuer.

Chorus.

Nay, with the one tale favour her, then favour us
With th' other, if our entreaty thy regard merit.
Tell her the future wanderings in store for her,
Tell us what I crave, who's to be thy rescuer.

Prometheus.

Since you thus urge it, I deny no more to you
 The whole narration ye desire the hearing of.
 Io then, at thy mazy journeys I'll begin,
 Which hold in heedful tablet of thy soul written.
 Yon stream, which is the frontier of the continent,
 When thou'st gone over, tow'rd the flamy sun-trod
 East
 Thy course across the surges of the Caspian hold,
 Till thou the Gorgon country reach, Kisthena, where
 Three maids dwell, hoary like the swan, the Phorkides,
 Who share one eye between them, and one tooth
 have each,
 Where gleams the sun not or the nightly moon ever.
 Nigh them resides the plummy sisterhood triple,
 The man-detested Gorgones, with snaky locks,
 Which he that only seeth, has no more to breathe.
 One danger here is noted ; and attend again,
 What a sight tremendous even after this follows.
 Beware the Gryphons, voiceless* hounds of Jupiter,
 Sharp-mouthèd, and the legion of the single-eyed
 Arimaspians, who beside the gold-gravell'd
 Stream their abode have, where the ford of Plutus is.

* Perhaps meaning *barkless*, to show that *hounds* is said metaphorically, as afterwards of the vulture.

With them commune not : and a border-land remote
Thou'lt reach, a dusky people, who below the dawn
Dwell, on the flood that laveth Æthiopia.
Then keep beside its margin, unto where afar
Thou'lt find the cataract, which the draughts delect-
able
Of holy Nilus off the Bybline hill flingeth.
Thy guide will he be tow'rd that isle triangular,
His Delta, where thy children have with thee to
found,
Io, the distant colony that the Fates design.
But if aught of all this seemeth hard or intricate,
Bid me repeat it, till the truth thou reach of all,
For leisure here aboundeth, and exceeds desire.

Chorus.

If aught yet uncompleted, or put by remain,
That she should hear thee mention of that mazy route,
Speak : but if it all be spoken, O deny not us
Our boon on our side : surely thou rememberest.

Prometheus.

She's heard the furthest journey that's for her reserved ;
But lest a doubt come o'er her of the truth of all,
I'll say what had befall'n her ere she came hither,
So that this also may to vouch my story serve.

I will the general multitude of points omit,
And on the latest enter of thy wanderings.
When thou the plain Molossian hadst attain'd, about
The steepy-ridged Dodona, where that halidom
Of Jupiter Thesprotic and his shrine appear,
And (past belief) that wonder of the talking oaks
That plainly gave thee greeting, and without quibble,
As Jove's renown'd wife in the days that are to be—
If such a prediction haply can thy soul delight—
Thence, by the fierce compulsion of the fly driven,
Fledd'st thou to Rhea's huge lap, all the coast along,
From which disaster hunted off thy steps anew.
And learn this also, that the name Ionian
Shall cleave to yonder inlet of the main ever,
That all men of thy journey may the story learn.
This much to be the token of my skill to thee,
That not th' apparent only therein entereth ;
And 'tis for her sake and for yours I tell the rest,
Gathering the former traces of my tale anew.
There lies a town Canopus on the land's limits,
Right at the Nile's mouth where the drift accumulates.
Here shall depart thy frenzies at the laying-on
And mere touch of the quiet hand of Jupiter.
Which touch to keep in memory thou'lt conceive of him
Thy sable Epaphus, as the name will testify.
All lands the broad Nile watereth shall he possess :

And fifty maids, his offspring in the fifth degree,
Shall wander on compulsion Argos-wards again,
Th' unkindly wedlock fleeing of their own cousins,
Who then with hearts high-beating, in the guise of
 hawks,

What time the doves can barely, barely keep ahead,
Will come to chase the bridal all unchaseable ;
But heav'n the bosoms of the maids will grudge to
 them,

And soil Pelasgic win them * at the bold vigil
Of murder in the feminine hand victorious ;
So that the life of one man every she shall have,
Who dyes the double edge of the sword in sacrifice.
—Feel thus my enemies Aphrodita's influence !
Love shall one only damsel of them all beguile
From slaying her bed's partner, her resolve in her
Being disabled ; and between alternatives
She'll choose the craven's, not the name of
 murderess.

A kingly seed will Argos out of her derive.
Long arguments were needed all the rest to show ;
But hence a champion, famous at the bow, will have
His origin, who my thraldom is to terminate.
Thus has that ancient Titaëss, my own mother

* See Wellauer's interpretation.

Themis predicted, and the tale rehearsed to me.
 But how ! but at what æra ? that for thee to learn
 Would need much heark'ning and to no good end avail.

Io (departing).

Horror unbearable ! how convulsions
 And frenzies of heart thrill again through me
 From that scorching venom unkindled !
 How my throbbing heart spurns my bosom !
 Giddy mine eyes roll, and my footsteps
 Frenzy's wild spirit out o' the pathway
 Pushes at random ; my tongue wandereth,
 And my stammering words buffet idly
 Stern surges of infatuation.

Chorus.

How politic, politic was he,
 Who the thought foremost in his heart carried,
 And by word set afloat as a maxim,
 That to find one's mate on his own level
 Is by far the best :
 And not for him that toileth to desire a partner
 Either of those whom opulence puffeth up,
 Or the pride of lofty birth exalts.

Me never, O never have the Fates
 Tow'rd the couch of Jove to behold bidden,

Or with deity pair'd from Olympus !
All aghast I stand to behold
 When a lacklove maidenhood,
Like that which Io weareth, the disastrous hatred
Of the wife of Jove pitilessly devours,
And to baleful wanderings condemns.

I dread not, if the yoke sit equally !
May ne'er the lordly gods' love unto me
Direct the gaze of eyes inevitable !
For then the war is all unwarrable,
And help is helpless : what can come of it ?
Surely Jove's resolves
How to shun I discern not.

Prometheus.

Yet Jove, for all he maketh his desire a law,
Shall once get humbled—I behold prepared for him
So dire a wedlock, whose effect from mastery
And throne shall oust, and into nought shall crumble
 him.

Then shall the curse completely be fulfill'd, the curse
Kronos bequeath'd him, who the throne of Eld
 quitted.

Out of this evil no one of the gods but I
A safe release can teach him :—all is known to me,

And how to effect it. Now then on the throne let him
Sit, trusting in the bellowing of the firmament,
And poise the lightning's flamy bolt in both his
hands—

That shall not aught avail him, or secure him aught
From falling infamously falls unbearable.

Against his own self he prepares *himself* a foe
So formidable, a monster overhard to fight,
Who fire to worst the lightning, and a dreadfuller
Peal than the thunder's shall devise to cope with it.
He shall the trident of the seas, the lance that arms
Poseidon, and that ague-shakes the world, shatter,
That Jove, when into ruin here his foot rushes,
May learn whether the master and the slave differ.

Chorus.

Thy wish createth wordy dooms for Jupiter.

Prometheus.

This is what I wish, and it is what is to be.

Chorus.

Can one then over Jupiter get mastery?

Prometheus.

Yes, he'll yet harder anguish have than mine to
bear.

Chorus.

But how without awe canst a word like this fling
out?

Prometheus.

Why, what should awe me,—death not in my destinies?

Chorus.

But if some heavier suffering he decreed to thee.

Prometheus.

Let him ! for all extremities I've to be prepared.

Chorus.

Yet are the fawners on the Needs-must-be the wise.

Prometheus.

Revere, adore, cringe unto those aloft ever ;
But I reckon of Jove less than of nonentity.
Leave him to do, to lord it all this hour of his !
Not long the sovereign of the gods shall he remain.
But yonder I see Jupiter's courier coming,
The new usurper's minion, and beyond a doubt
He has to be th' announcer of some new decree.

Hermes (entering).

Hark, thou the sophist, the bitter and the too bitter,
That hast the gods defrauded in thy zeal to lend

Honour to mortals, thou the fire's purloiner, hark !
The Sire demands more notice of those ties of
his
Which thou'st begun to prate of, and which are to
cause
His fall from empire. He'll without mysterious
Terms have the truth minutely. Turn to no
quibbles
With me, Prometheus. Thou'st a proof had already
That these to soften Jupiter can help nothing.

Prometheus.

A lofty-tongued speech and with high conceit
swelling,
Such as the legate of the gods aright befits !
Ye reign a new seed newly, yet forsooth flatter
Yourselves as holding a citadel from hurt secure.
But have not I seen tyranny twice flung out of it ?
And shall not I most quickly, most disgracefully
Expect the third who reigneth overthrown to see ?
Dost think the young gods are to me redoubtable
And dreadful ? I grant neither all nor part of it.
Return, plod homeward on the way thou cam'st
hither,
For I'll not answer anything at thy questioning.

Hermes.

Yet by defying heretofore in this fashion
Thou'st into this calamity run thyself aground.

Prometheus.

Thou mayst believe me, that to gain thy servitude
I'd not resign my miseries. I count it better
That I should here the bondsman of the rock remain
Than rise to be the trusty page of Jupiter.
'Tis thus with insult we should answer insolence.

Hermes.

One might believe thee resting here in luxury.

Prometheus.

Luxury! could I mine enemies in this luxury
See resting! and among them hold thyself reckon'd.

Hermes.

Mean'st thou to me too something of thy lot to
charge?

Prometheus.

Wilt take a simple answer? All the gods alike
I hate, that owe me kindness and with wrongs
repay.

Hermes.

How frantic is the malady thy discourse reveals !

Prometheus.

Is hating enemies malady ? Then to me give it.

Hermes.

Thou'dst be beyond all bearing, if more fortunate.

Prometheus.

Ah me !

Hermes.

Of " ah me " Jove doth understand nothing.

Prometheus.

Time waxeth older, and in all instructeth us.

Hermes.

Of self-command yet thou'st not understood the lore.

Prometheus.

Else I should hardly bandy words with servitors.

Hermes.

Thou wilt not answer Jupiter's demands belike ?

Prometheus.

Of course the service richly were deserved by him.

Hermes.

Thou dost deride me for that I am young perhaps.

Prometheus.

Thou art a younker and whate'er is foolisher,
If thou believest I will aught disclose to thee.
There's no device, no villainy Jove can do to me,
That shall to wring this secret out of me suffice,
Till he remove my bondage and opprobrium.
Now let descend the smoky thunderbolt from him,
Let him with uproar subterrene and white-wingèd
Snows jumble and distemper all the world's array.
Yet nought shall even hereto make me bend, to say
Who shall the power of the mighty wrest from him.

Hermes.

But how can all this help to serve thine interest?

Prometheus.

Long since have I foreseen it and prepared for all.

Hermes.

Mad heart, bethink thee, though not able here-
tofore,
And by the crisis learn to shape thy sentiments.

Prometheus.

Thou cramm'st upon me counsel idle as the wave ;
Let it not enter into thy conceits that I
Shall wax effeminate with the fear of Jupiter,
To crave the mercies of one hateful unto me
With a mock-woman presenting of the palms, in
 hope
My chains that he may loosen. I'm not half for it.

Hermes.

I talk much, and much have to talk in vain perhaps :
Thou grow'st not either gentler or more pliable,
But at the curb art chafing, as the newly-yoked
Young horse rebels, and vehemently pulls the rein.
Yet weak 's the reason which supports thy violence ;
For worse than unsupported is the self-support
Of self-will in th' affection of the mind that errs.
But if to my words no regard thou deign, reflect
How sore a tempest, and an afterwave triple
Of ills opposeless are to come : for first of all
The lightning of the Father and the flamy bolt
Shall tear up all this rough crag, and below bury
Thy body, that on the shoulder of the rift shall
 hang.
Then, after ages consummated, hither again

Thou'lt come to daylight, and to thee the flying
hound
Of Jove, the blood-red eagle, who shall portion out
With greedy beak thy torn flesh, and return to feed,
A daily guest unwelcome, on thy dusk liver.
And of this anguish hope to reach the term never,
Until to be partaker of thy pain arrive
One of the gods, who freely shall the gloom visit
Of lightless Hades and th' abysm of Tartarus.
Now shape to this thy counsel, as no forgery,
But too good earnest, are the words avouch'd to thee;
Nor apt to falsehood is the mouth of Jupiter,
But brings to pass all promises. Hereupon reflect :
Look round on all sides, and believe will-worshipping
To wary wisdom is to be preferr'd never.

Chorus.

We think on our part that not out of season is
The word of Hermes, who to quit will-worshipping
And turn to wary wisdom is thy counsellor.
Be ruled : the failure of the wise is infamous.

Prometheus.

With a known import his loud messages
Come to my hearing : but a foe's suffering
By a foe maketh no disgrace for him.

Up ! let a double-edged curl of lightning
Be flung against me : fire and hurricane
All the skies redden ;
And let a tempest come to deracinate
Earth's foundations :
Let the marine floods' breakers dissonant
Merge the stars'-gates into one havoc all,
And my lifted body perforce cast
Into black hell adown, lent to Necessity's
Wrenching whirlwinds :
To slay me still is he unable.

Hermes.

But among frenzied men alone hear we
Such machinations, such-like language.
For what is absent that makes madness ?
What is he short of, to belie raving ?
However ye there, ye fellow-grievers
In his adversity, get away speedily
From this neighbourhood, ere grim bellowings
Of thunder alarm ye to madness.

Chorus.

Speak some other word : give me a precept
Thou canst get obey'd ; for unendurable
Is the direction thou'st here blurted.

To the poltroon's part dost thou call us ?
Bear with him I must that which must be ;
For my maxim is hating traitors,
Nor amongst all taints
Moves any one more my abhorrence.

Hermes.

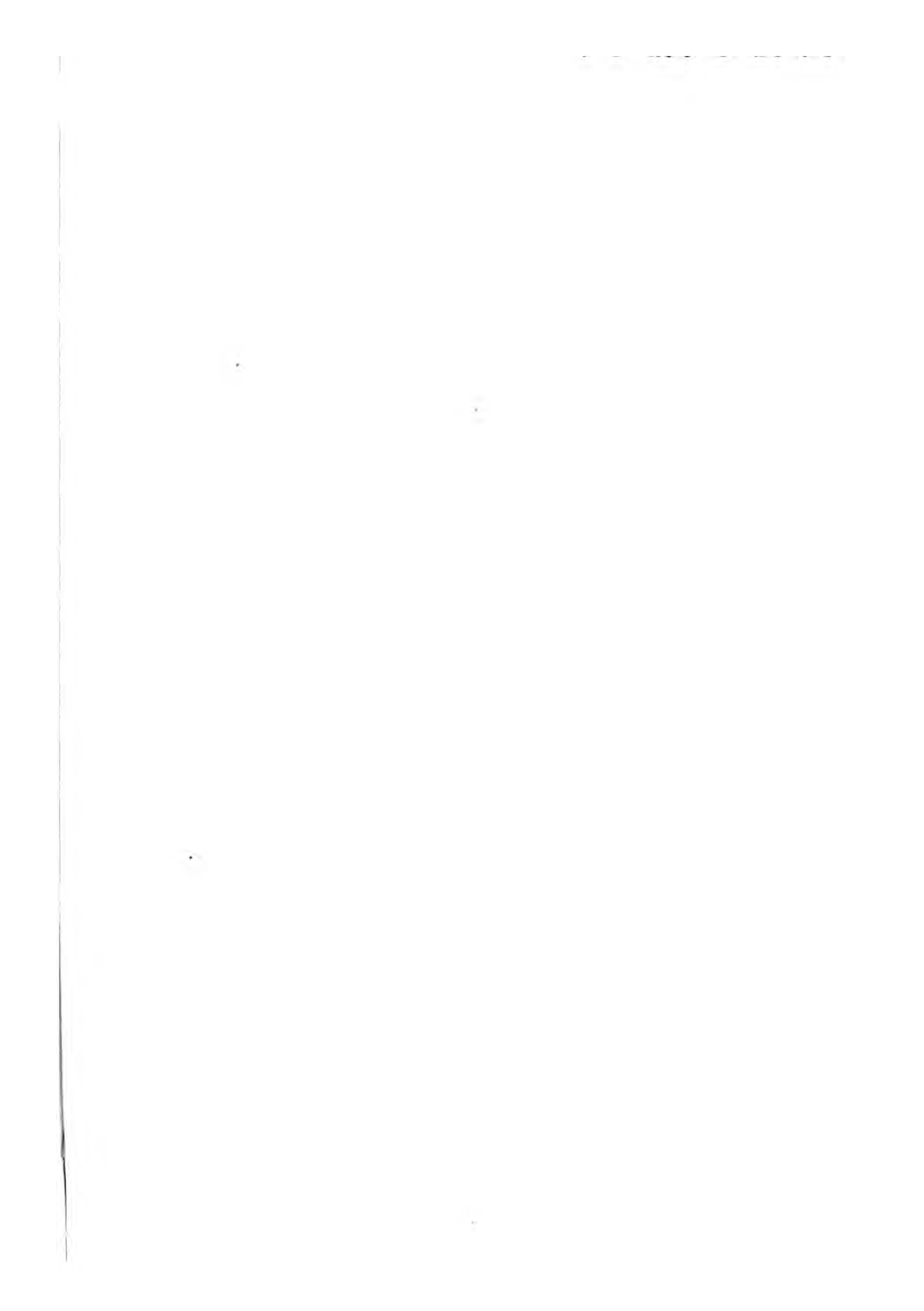
But recollect then my forewarnings ;
When folly traps you, chide not fortune,
Nor against Jove speak ever hereafter
For having drawn you
Tow'rd a punishment unforeseeable.
Ah no, you alone must yourselves blame,
Who not on impulse, nor unadvisedly,
But against evidence plunge insensate
In a close net of infatuation.

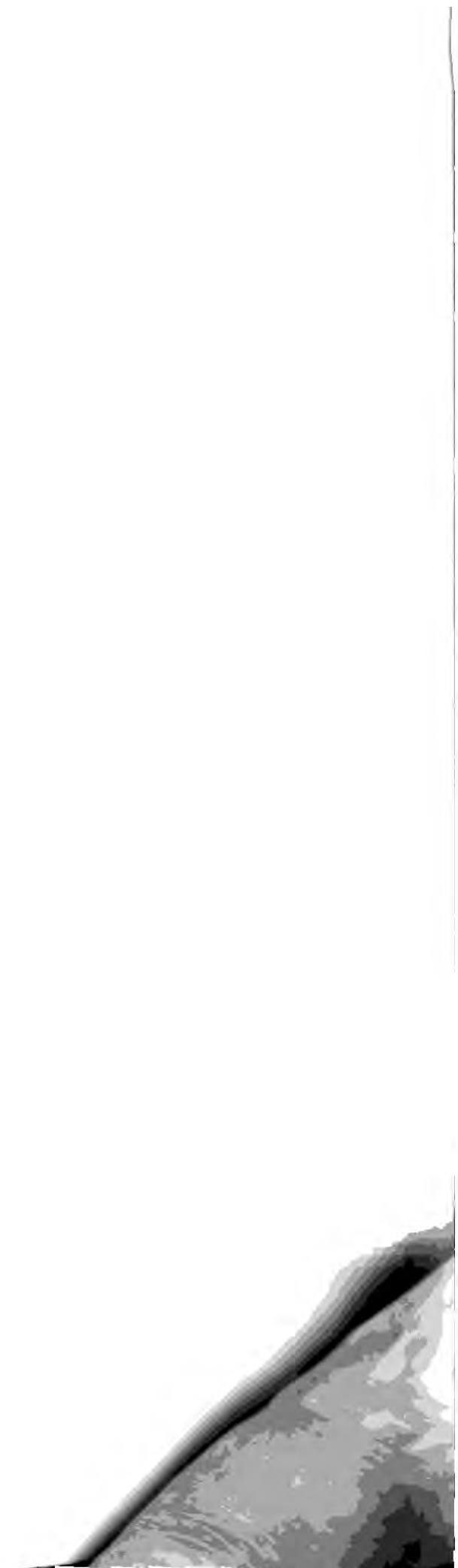
Prometheus.

And in very deed, not word any more,
Earth is quivering :
Thunders rush along bellowing surge-like ;
Lightnings flash abroad, jagged and fervent ;
Whirlwinds gather up rolling dust-clouds ;
Winds, as many as breathe, disporting,
Like antagonists
Make their opposite blasts a spectacle,

And together churn skies and waters.
Such an artillery, stirring terror up,
Jove, who against me sends it, manifests.
Hallow'd O Mother, and O thou welkin,
That the common light round all carriest,
What wrong ye behold me abiding !

THE END.





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