

458 BC
 THE EUMENIDES
 Aeschylus

Translated by E.D.A. Morshead

Aeschylus (525-456 BC) - Ranked with Sophocles and Euripides as one of the greatest Greek dramatists, he is often called the father of Greek tragic drama.

Aeschylus is distinguished for his grand imagination that dwelled habitually in the loftiest regions of theology and ancient mythology. Eumenides (458 BC) The last part of the trilogy of plays called Orestia, the only extant trilogy of Greek dramas. Completes the cycle of family murders that comprised this tragic history of the fate of Orestes.

CHARACTERS

THE PYTHIAN PRIESTESS
 APOLLO
 ORESTES
 THE GHOST OF CLYTEMNESTRA
 CHORUS OF FURIES
 ATHENA
 ATTENDANTS OF ATHENA
 TWELVE ATHENIAN CITIZENS
 EUMENIDES

Before the temple of APOLLO at Delphi. The PYTHIAN PRIESTESS enters and approaches the doors of the temple.)

THE PYTHIAN PRIESTESS First, in this prayer, of all the gods I name The prophet-mother Earth; and Themis next, Second who sat- for so with truth is said On this her mother's shrine oracular.

Then by her grace, who unconstrained allowed, There sat thereon another child of Earth Titanian Phoebe. She, in after time, Gave o'er the throne, as birthgift to a god, Phoebus, who in his own bears Phoebe's name.

He from the lake and ridge of Delos' isle Steered to the port of Pallas' Attic shores, The home of ships; and thence he passed and came Unto this land and to Parnassus' shrine.

And at his side, with awe revering him, There went the children of
Hephaestus' seed, The hewers of the sacred way, who tame

The stubborn tract that erst was wilderness.

And all this folk, and Delphos, chieftain-king Of this their land,
with honour gave him home; And in his breast Zeus set a prophet's
soul, And gave to him this throne, whereon he sits, Fourth prophet
of the shrine, and, Loxias hight, Gives voice to that which Zeus his
sire decrees.

Such gods I name in my preluding prayer, And after them, I call
with honour due On Pallas, wardress of the fane, and Nymphs
Who dwell around the rock Corycian, Where in the hollow cave,
the wild birds' haunt, Wander the feet of lesser gods; and there,
Right well I know it, Bromian Bacchus dwells, Since he in godship
led his Maenad host, Devising death for Pentheus, whom they rent
Piecemeal, as hare among the hounds. And last, I call on Pleistus'
springs, Poseidon's might, And Zeus most high, the great
Accomplisher.

Then as a seeress to the sacred chair I pass and sit; and may the
powers divine Make this mine entrance fruitful in response

Beyond each former advent, triply blest.

And if there stand without, from Hellas bound, Men seeking
oracles, let each pass in In order of the lot, as use allows; For the
god guides whate'er my tongue proclaims.

(She goes into the interior of the temple; after a short interval, she
returns in great fear.)

Things fell to speak of, fell for eyes to see, Have sped me forth
again from Loxias' shrine, With strength unstrung, moving erect no
more, But aiding with my hands my failing feet, Unnerved by fear.
A beldame's force is naught Is as a child's, when age and fear
combine.

For as I pace towards the inmost fane Bay-filleted by many a
suppliant's hand, Lo, at the central altar I descry One crouching as
for refuge- yea, a man Abhorred of heaven; and from his hands,
wherein A sword new-drawn he holds, blood reeked and fell:

A wand he bears, the olive's topmost bough, Twined as of purpose
with a deep close tuft

Of whitest wool. This, that I plainly saw, Plainly I tell. But lo, in
front of him, Crouched on the altar-steps, a grisly band Of women

slumbers- not like women they, But Gorgons rather; nay, that word is weak, Nor may I match the Gorgons' shape with theirs!

Such have I seen in painted semblance erst Winged Harpies, snatching food from Phineus' board, But these are wingless, black, and all their shape The eye's abomination to behold.

Fell is the breath- let none draw nigh to it Wherewith they snort in slumber; from their eyes Exude the damned drops of poisonous ire:

And such their garb as none should dare to bring To statues of the gods or homes of men.

I wot not of the tribe wherefrom can come So fell a legion, nor in what land Earth Could rear, unharmed, such creatures, nor avow That she had travailed and had brought forth death.

But, for the rest, be all these things a care Unto the mighty Loxias, the lord Of this our shrine: healer and prophet he,

Discerner he of portents, and the cleanser Of other homes- behold, his own to cleanse!

(She goes out. The central doors open, disclosing the interior of the temple. ORESTES clings to the central altar; the FURIES lie slumbering at a little distance; APOLLO and HERMES appear from the innermost shrine.)

APOLLO (to ORESTES) Lo, I desert thee never: to the end, Hard at thy side as now, or sundered far, I am thy guard, and to thine enemies Implacably oppose me: look on them, These greedy fiends, beneath my craft subdued!

See, they are fallen on sleep, these beldames old, Unto whose grim and wizened maidenhood Nor god nor man nor beast can e'er draw near.

Yea, evil were they born, for evil's doom, Evil the dark abyss of Tartarus Wherein they dwell, and they themselves the hate Of men on earth, and of Olympian gods.

But thou, flee far and with unfaltering speed; For they shall hunt thee through the mainland wide Where'er throughout the tract of travelled earth

Thy foot may roam, and o'er and o'er the seas And island homes of men. Faint not nor fail, Too soon and timidly within thy breast Shepherding thoughts forlorn of this thy toil; But unto Pallas' city go, and there Crouch at her shrine, and in thine arms enfold Her ancient image: there we well shall find Meet judges for this cause

and suasive pleas, Skilled to contrive for thee deliverance From all this woe. Be such my pledge to thee, For by my hest thou didst thy mother slay.

ORESTES O king Apollo, since right well thou know'st What justice bids, have heed, fulfil the same, Thy strength is all-sufficient to achieve.

APOLLO Have thou too heed, nor let thy fear prevail Above thy will. And do thou guard him, Hermes, Whose blood is brother unto mine, whose sire The same high God. Men call thee guide and guard, Guide therefore thou and guard my suppliant;

For Zeus himself reveres the outlaw's right, Boon of fair escort, upon man conferred.

(APOLLO, HERMES, and ORESTES go out. The GHOST OF CLYTEMNESTRA rises.)

GHOST OF CLYTEMNESTRA Sleep on! awake! what skills your sleep to me Me, among all the dead by you dishonoured Me from whom never, in the world of death, Dieth this course, 'Tis she who smote and slew, And shamed and scorned I roam? Awake, and hear My plaint of dead men's hate intolerable.

Me, sternly slain by them that should have loved, Me doth no god arouse him to avenge, Hewn down in blood by matricidal hands.

Mark ye these wounds from which the heart's blood ran, And by whose hand, bethink ye! for the sense When shut in sleep hath then the spirit-sight, But in the day the inward eye is blind.

List, ye who drank so oft with lapping tongue The wineless draught by me outpoured to soothe Your vengeful ire! how oft on kindled shrine

I laid the feast of darkness, at the hour Abhorred of every god but you alone!

Lo, all my service trampled down and scorned!

And he bath baulked your chase, as stag the hounds; Yea, lightly bounding from the circling toils, Hath wried his face in scorn, and flieth far.

Awake and hear- for mine own soul I cry Awake, ye powers of hell! the wandering ghost That once was Clytemnestra calls- Arise!

(The FURIES mutter grimly, as in a dream.)

Mutter and murmur! He hath flown afar My kin have gods to guard them, I have none!

(The FURIES mutter as before.)

O drowsed in sleep too deep to heed my pain!

Orestes flies, who me, his mother, slew.

(The FURIES give a confused cry.)

Yelping, and drowsed again? Up and be doing That which alone is yours, the deed of hell!

(The FURIES give another cry.)

Lo, sleep and toil, the sworn confederates, Have quelled your dragon-anger, once so fell!

THE FURIES (muttering more fiercely and loudly) Seize, seize, seize, seize- mark, yonder!

GHOST In dreams ye chase a prey, and like some hound, That even in sleep doth ply woodland toil, Ye bell and bay. What do ye, sleeping here? Be not o'ercome with toil, nor, sleep-subdued, Be heedless of my wrong. Up! thrill your heart With the just chidings of my tongue,- such words Are as a spur to purpose firmly held.

Blow forth on him the breath of wrath and blood, Scorch him with reek of fire that burns in you, Waste him with new pursuit- swift, hound him down!

(The GHOST sinks.)

FIRST FURY (awaking) Up! rouse another as I rouse thee; up!

Sleep'st thou? Rise up, and spurning sleep away,

See we if false to us this prelude rang.

CHORUS OF FURIES (singing)

strophe 1 Alack, alack, O sisters, we have toiled, O much and vainly have we toiled and borne!

Vainly! and all we wrought the gods have foiled, And turned us to scorn!

He hath slipped from the net, whom we chased: he hath 'scaped us who should be our prey O'ermastered by slumber we sank, and our quarry hath stolen away!

antistrophe 1 Thou, child of the high God Zeus, Apollo, hast robbed us and wronged; Thou, a youth, hast down-trodden the right that to godship more ancient belonged; Thou hast cherished thy suppliant man; the slayer, the God-forsaken, The bane of a

parent, by craft from out of our grasp thou hast taken; A god, thou hast stolen from us the avengers a matricide son

And who shall consider thy deed and say, It is rightfully done?
strophe 2 The sound of chiding scorn Came from the land of dream;
Deep to mine inmost heart I felt it thrill and burn, Thrust as
a strong-grasped goad, to urge Onward the chariot's team.

Thrilled, chilled with bitter inward pain I stand as one beneath the
doomsman's scourge.

antistrophe 2 Shame on the younger gods who tread down right,
Sitting on thrones of might!

Woe on the altar of earth's central fane!

Clotted on step and shrine, Behold, the guilt of blood, the ghastly
stain!

strophe 3 Woe upon thee, Apollo! uncontrolled, Unbidden, hast
thou, prophet-god, imbrued The pure prophetic shrine with
wrongful blood!

**For thou too heinous a respect didst hold Of man, too little heed
of powers divine!**

And us the Fates, the ancients of the earth,
Didst deem as nothing worth.

antistrophe 3 Scornful to me thou art, yet shalt not fend My wrath
from him; though unto hell he flee, There too are we!

And he the blood-defiled, should feel and rue, Though I were not,
fiend-wrath that shall not end, Descending on his head who foully
slew.

(APOLLO enters from the inner shrine.)

APOLLO Out! I command you. Out from this my home Haste,
tarry not! Out from the mystic shrine, Lest thy lot be to take into
thy breast The winged bright dart that from my golden string
Speeds hissing as a snake,- lest, pierced and thrilled With agony,
thou shouldst spew forth again Black frothy heart's-blood, drawn
from mortal men, Belching the gory clots sucked forth from
wounds.

These be no halls where such as you can prowl Go where men lay
on men the doom of blood, Heads lopped from necks, eyes from
their spheres plucked out,

Hacked flesh, the flower of youthful seed crushed out, Feet hewn away, and hands, and death beneath The smiting stone, low moans and piteous Of men impaled- Hark, hear ye for what feast Ye hanker ever, and the loathing gods Do spit upon your craving? Lo, your shape Is all too fitted to your greed; the cave Where lurks some lion, lapping gore, were home More meet for you. Avaunt from sacred shrines, Nor bring pollution by your touch on all That nears you. Hence! and roam unshepherded No god there is to tend such herd as you LEADER OF THE CHORUS Thou hast not only part in these ill things, But art chief cause and doer of the same.

APOLLO How? stretch thy speech to tell this, and have done.

LEADER Thine oracle bade this man slay his mother.

APOLLO I bade him quit his sire's death,- wherefore not?

LEADER Then didst thou aid and guard red-handed crime.

APOLLO Yea, and I bade him to this temple flee.

LEADER And yet forsooth dost chide us following him!

APOLLO Ay- not for you it is, to near this fane.

LEADER Yet is such office ours, imposed by fate.

APOLLO What office? vaunt the thing ye deem so fair.

LEADER From home to home we chase the matricide.

APOLLO What? to avenge a wife who slays her lord? LEADER That is not blood outpoured by kindred hands.

APOLLO How darkly ye dishonour and annul The troth to which the high accomplishers, Hera and Zeus, do honour. Yea, and thus Is Aphrodite to dishonour cast, The queen of rapture unto mortal men.

Know, that above the marriage-bed ordained For man and woman standeth Right as guard, Enhancing sanctity of trothplight sworn; Therefore, if thou art placable to those Who have their consort slain, nor will'st to turn On them the eye of wrath, unjust art thou In hounding to his doom the man who slew His mother. Lo, I know thee full of wrath Against one deed, but all too placable Unto the other, minishing the crime.

But in this cause shall Pallas guard the right.

LEADER Deem not my quest shall ever quit that man.

APOLLO Follow then, make thee double toil in vain

LEADER Think not by speech mine office to curtail.

APOLLO None hast thou, that I would accept of thee!

LEADER Yea, high thine honour by the throne of Zeus:

But I, drawn on by scent of mother's blood, Seek vengeance on this man and hound him down.

(The CHORUS goes in pursuit of ORESTES.)

APOLLO But I will stand beside him; 'tis for me To guard my suppliant: gods and men alike Do dread the curse of such an one betrayed, And in me Fear and Will say Leave him not.

(He goes into the temple.)

(The scene changes to Athens. In the foreground is the Temple of ATHENA on the Acropolis; her statue stands in the centre; ORESTES is seen clinging to it.)

ORESTES Look on me, queen Athena; lo, I come

By Loxias' behest; thou of thy grace Receive me, driven of avenging powers Not now a red-hand slayer unannealed, But with guilt fading, half-effaced, outworn On many homes and paths of mortal men.

For to the limit of each land, each sea, I roamed, obedient to Apollo's best, And come at last, O Goddess, to thy fane, And clinging to thine image, bide my doom.

(The CHORUS OF FURIES enters, questing like hounds.)

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Ho! clear is here the trace of him we seek:

Follow the track of blood, the silent sign!

Like to some hound that hunts a wounded fawn, We snuff along the scent of dripping gore, And inwardly we pant, for many a day Toiling in chase that shall fordo the man; For o'er and o'er the wide land have I ranged, And o'er the wide sea, flying without wings, Swift as a sail I pressed upon his track, Who now hard by is crouching, well I wot,

For scent of mortal blood allures me here.

CHORUS (chanting) Follow, seek him- round and round Scent and snuff and scan the ground, Lest unharmed he slip away, He who did his mother slay!

Hist- he is there! See him his arms entwine Around the image of the maid divine Thus aided, for the deed he wrought Unto the judgment wills he to be brought.

It may not be! a mother's blood, poured forth Upon the stained earth, None gathers up: it lies- bear witness, Hell!

For aye indelible And thou who sheddest it shalt give thine own
That shedding to atone!

Yea, from thy living limbs I suck it out, Red, clotted, gout by gout,
A draught abhorred of men and gods; but I Will drain it, suck thee
dry; Yea, I will waste thee living, nerve and vein; Yea, for thy
mother slain,

**Will drag thee downward, there where thou shalt dree The weird
of agony!**

And thou and whosoe'er of men hath sinned Hath wronged or
God, or friend, Or parent,- learn ye how to all and each The arm of
doom can reach!

Sternly requiteth, in the world beneath, The judgment-seat of
Death; Yea, Death, beholding every man's endeavour, Recordeth it
for ever.

ORESTES I, schooled in many miseries, have learnt How many
refuges of cleansing shrines There be; I know when law alloweth
speech And when imposeth silence. Lo, I stand Fixed now to
speak, for he whose word is wise Commands the same. Look, how
the stain of blood Is dull upon mine hand and wastes away, And
laved and lost therewith is the deep curse Of matricide; for while
the guilt was new, 'Twas banished from me at Apollo's hearth,
Atoned and purified by death of swine.

Long were my word if I should sum the tale, How oft since then
among my fellow-men I stood and brought no curse. Time cleanses
all Time, the coeval of all things that are.

Now from pure lips, in words of omen fair, I call Athena, lady of
this land, To come, my champion: so, in aftertime, She shall not fail
of love and service leal, Not won by war, from me and from my
land And all the folk of Argos, vowed to her.

Now, be she far away in Libyan land Where flows from Triton's
lake her natal wave, Stand she with planted feet, or in some hour
Of rest conceal them, champion of her friends Where'er she be,- or
whether o'er the plain Phlegraeon she look forth, as warrior bold I
cry to her to come, where'er she be, (And she, as goddess, from
afar can hear) And aid and free me, set among my foes.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS Thee not Apollo nor Athena's strength
Can save from perishing, a castaway

Amid the Lost, where no delight shall meet Thy soul- a bloodless
prey of nether powers, A shadow among shadows. Answerest thou

Nothing? dost cast away my words with scorn, Thou, prey prepared and dedicate to me? Not as a victim slain upon the shrine, But living shalt thou see thy flesh my food.

Hear now the binding chant that makes thee mine.

CHORUS (chanting) Weave the weird dance,- behold the hour To utter forth the chant of hell, Our sway among mankind to tell, The guidance of our power.

Of Justice are we ministers, And whosoe'er of men may stand Lifting a pure unsullied hand, That man no doom of ours incurs, And walks thro' all his mortal path Untouched by woe, unharmed by wrath.

But if, as yonder man, he hath Blood on the hands he strives to hide, We stand avengers at his side,

Decreeing, Thou hast wronged the dead:

We are doom's witnesses to thee.

The price of blood, his hands have shed, We wring from him; in life, in death, Hard at his side are we!

strophe 1 Night, Mother Night, who brought me forth, a torment To living men and dead, Hear me, O hear! by Leto's stripling son I am dishonoured:

He hath ta'en from me him who cowers in refuge, To me made consecrates A rightful victim, him who slew his mother, Given o'er to me and fate.

refrain 1 Hear the hymn of hell, O'er the victim sounding, Chant of frenzy, chant of ill, Sense and will confounding!

Round the soul entwining Without lute or lyre

Soul in madness pining, Wasting as with fire!

antistrophe 1 Fate, all-pervading Fate, this service spun, commanding That I should bide therein:

Whosoe'er of mortals, made perverse and lawless, Is stained with blood of kin, By his side are we, and hunt him ever onward, Till to the Silent Land, The realm of death, he cometh; neither yonder In freedom shall he stand.

refrain 1 Hear the hymn of hell, O'er the victim sounding, Chant of frenzy, chant of ill, Sense and will confounding!

Round the soul entwining Without lute or lyre Soul in madness pining, Wasting as with fire!

strophe 2 When from womb of Night we sprang, on us this labour
Was laid and shall abide.

**Gods immortal are ye, yet beware ye touch not That which is our
pride!**

None may come beside us gathered round the blood-feast For us
no garments white Gleam on a festal day; for us a darker fate is,
Another darker rite.

refrain 2 That is mine hour when falls an ancient line When in the
household's heart The God of blood doth slay by kindred hands,
Then do we bear our part:

On him who slays we sweep with chasing cry:

Though he be triply strong, We wear and waste him; blood atones for
blood, New pain for ancient wrong.

antistrophe 2 I hold this task- 'tis mine, and not another's.
The very gods on high,

Though they can silence and annul the prayers Of those who on us
cry, They may not strive with us who stand apart, A race by Zeus
abhorred, Blood-boltered, held unworthy of the council And
converse of Heaven's lord.

strophe 3 Therefore the more I leap upon my prey; Upon their head
I bound; My foot is hard; as one that trips a runner I cast them to
the ground; Yea, to the depth of doom intolerable; And they who
erst were great, And upon earth held high their pride and glory,
Are brought to low estate.

In underworld they waste and are diminished, The while around
them fleet Dark wavings of my robes, and, subtly woven, The
paces of my feet.

antistrophe 3 Who falls infatuate, he sees not neither knows he

That we are at his side; So closely round about him, darkly flitting,
The cloud of guilt doth glide.

Heavily 'tis uttered, how around his hearthstone The mirk of hell
doth rise.

strophe 4 Stern and fixed the law is; we have hands t' achieve it,
Cunning to devise.

Queens are we and mindful of our solemn vengeance.

Not by tear or prayer Shall a man avert it. In unhonoured darkness,
Far from gods, we fare, Lit unto our task with torch of sunless

regions, And o'er a deadly way Deadly to the living as to those
who see not Life and light of day Hunt we and press onward.

antistrophe 4 Who of mortals hearing Doth not quake for awe,
Hearing all that Fate thro' hand of God hath given us

For ordinance and law? Yea, this right to us, in dark abysm and
backward Of ages it befell:

None shall wrong mine office, tho' in nether regions And sunless
dark I dwell.

(ATHENA enters.)

ATHENA Far off I heard the clamour of your cry, As by
Scamander's side I set my foot Asserting right upon the land given
o'er To me by those who o'er Achaea's host Held sway and
leadership: no scanty part Of all they won by spear and sword, to
me They gave it, land and all that grew thereon, As chosen
heirloom for my Theseus' clan.

Thence summoned, sped I with a tireless foot, Hummed on the
wind, instead of wings, the fold Of this mine aegis, by my feet
propelled, As, linked to mettled horses, speeds a car.

And now, beholding here Earth's nether brood, I fear it nought, yet
are mine eyes amazed

With wonder. Who are ye? of all I ask, And of this stranger to my
statue clinging.

But ye- your shape is like no human form, Like to no goddess
whom the gods behold, Like to no shape which mortal women
wear.

Yet to stand by and chide a monstrous form Is all unjust- from such
words Right revolts.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS O child of Zeus, one word shall tell thee
all.

We are the children of eternal Night, And Furies in the underworld
are called.

ATHENA I know your lineage now and eke your name.

LEADER Yea, and eftsoons indeed my rights shalt know.

ATHENA Fain would I learn them; speak them clearly forth.

LEADER We chase from home the murderers of men.

ATHENA And where at last can he that slew make pause?

LEADER Where this is law- All joy abandon here.

ATHENA Say, do ye bay this man to such a flight? LEADER Yea,
for of choice he did his mother slay.

ATHENA Urged by no fear of other wrath and doom? LEADER
What spur can rightly goad to matricide? ATHENA Two stand to
plead- one only have I heard.

LEADER He will not swear nor challenge us to oath.

ATHENA The form of justice, not its deed, thou willest.

LEADER Prove thou that word; thou art not scant of skill.

ATHENA I say that oaths shall not enforce the wrong.

LEADER Then test the cause, judge and award the right.

ATHENA Will ye to me then this decision trust? LEADER Yea,
reverencing true child of worthy sire.

ATHENA (to ORESTES) O man unknown, make thou thy plea in turn.
Speak forth thy land, thy lineage, and thy woes; Then, if thou
canst, avert this bitter blame If, as I deem, in confidence of right
Thou sittest hard beside my holy place, Claspings this statue, as
Ixion sat, A sacred suppliant for Zeus to cleanse, To all this answer
me in words made plain.

ORESTES O queen Athena, first from thy last words Will I a great
solicitude remove.

Not one blood-guilty am I; no foul stain Clings to thine image from
my clinging hand; Whereof one potent proof I have to tell.

Lo, the law stands- The slayer shall not plead, Till by the hand of
him who cleanses blood A suckling creature's blood besprinkle
him.

Long since have I this expiation done, In many a home, slain beasts
and running streams Have cleansed me. Thus I speak away that
fear.

Next, of my lineage quickly thou shalt learn:

An Argive am I, and right well thou know'st My sire, that
Agamemnon who arrayed The fleet and them that went therein to
war That chief with whom thy hand combined to crush To an
uncitied heap what once was Troy; That Agamemnon, when he
homeward came, Was brought unto no honourable death, Slain by
the dark-souled wife who brought me forth To him,- enwound and
slain in wily nets,

Blazoned with blood that in the laver ran.

**And I, returning from an exiled youth, Slew her, my mother- lo,
it stands avowed!**

With blood for blood avenging my loved sire; And in this deed
doth Loxias bear part, Decreeing agonies, to goad my will, Unless
by me the guilty found their doom.

Do thou decide if right or wrong were done Thy dooming,
whatsoe'er it be, contents me.

ATHENA Too mighty is this matter, whosoe'er Of mortals claims
to judge hereof aright.

Yea, me, even me, eternal Right forbids To judge the issues of
blood-guilt, and wrath That follows swift behind. This too gives
pause, That thou as one with all due rites performed Dost come,
unsinching, pure, unto my shrine.

Whate'er thou art, in this my city's name, As uncondemned, I take
thee to my side.

Yet have these foes of thine such dues by fate, I may not banish
them: and if they fail, O'erthrown in judgment of the cause,
forthwith

Their anger's poison shall infect the land A dropping plague-spot
of eternal ill.

Thus stand we with a woe on either hand:

Stay they, or go at my commandment forth, Perplexity or pain
must needs befall.

Yet, as on me Fate hath imposed the cause, I choose unto me judges
that shall be An ordinance for ever, set to rule The dues of blood-
guilt, upon oath declared.

But ye, call forth your witness and your proof, Words strong for
justice, fortified by oath; And I, whoe'er are truest in my town,
Them will I choose and bring, and straitly charge, Look on this
cause, discriminating well, And pledge your oath to utter nought
of wrong.

(ATHENA withdraws.)

CHORUS (singing)

strophe 1 Now are they all undone, the ancient laws, If here the
slayer's cause

Prevail; new wrong for ancient right shall be If matricide go free.

Henceforth a deed like his by all shall stand, Too ready to the
hand:

Too oft shall parents in the aftertime Rue and lament this crime,
 Taught, not in false imagining, to feel Their children's thrusting
 steel:

No more the wrath, that erst on murder fell From us, the queens of
 Hell, Shall fall, no more our watching gaze impend Death shall
 smite unrestrained.

antistrophe 1 Henceforth shall one unto another cry Lo, they are
 stricken, lo, they fall and die Around me! and that other answers
 him, O thou that lookest that thy woes should cease, Behold, with
 dark increase They throng and press upon thee; yea, and dim Is all
 the cure, and every comfort vain!

strophe 2 Let none henceforth cry out, when falls the blow Of
 sudden-smiting woe, Cry out in sad reiterated strain O Justice, aid!
 aid, O ye thrones of Hell!

So though a father or a mother wail New-smitten by a son, it shall
 no more avail, Since, overthrown by wrong, the fane of Justice fell!

antistrophe 2 Know, that a throne there is that may not pass away,
 And one that sitteth on it- even Fear, Searching with steadfast eyes
 man's inner soul:

Wisdom is child of pain, and born with many a tear; But who
 henceforth, What man of mortal men, what nation upon earth, That
 holdeth nought in awe nor in the light Of inner reverence, shall
 worship Right As in the older day? strophe 3 Praise not, O man,
 the life beyond control, Nor that which bows unto a tyrant's sway.

Know that the middle way Is dearest unto God, and they thereon
 who wend, They shall achieve the end; But they who wander or to
 left or right Are sinners in his sight.

Take to thy heart this one, this soothfast word Of wantonness
 impiety is sire; Only from calm control and sanity unstirred
 Cometh true weal, the goal of every man's desire.

antistrophe 3 Yea, whatso'er befall, hold thou this word of mine:

Bow down at Justice' shrine, Turn thou thine eyes away from
 earthly lure, Nor with a godless foot that altar spurn.

For as thou dost shall Fate do in return, And the great doom is
 sure.

Therefore let each adore a parent's trust, And each with loyalty
 revere the guest That in his halls doth rest.

strophe 4 For whoso un-compelled doth follow what is just,

He ne'er shall be unblest; Yea, never to the gulf of doom That man shall come.

But he whose will is set against the gods, Who treads beyond the law with foot impure, Till o'er the wreck of Right confusion broods, Know that for him, though now he sail secure, The day of storm shall be; then shall he strive and fail Down from the shivered yard to furl the sail, antistrophe 4 And call on Powers, that heed him nought, to save, And vainly wrestle with the whirling wave.

Hot was his heart with pride I shall not fall, he cried.

But him with watching scorn The god beholds, forlorn, Tangled in toils of Fate beyond escape, Hopeless of haven safe beyond the cape Till all his wealth and bliss of bygone day Upon the reef of Rightful Doom is hurled, And he is rapt away Unwept, for ever, to the dead forgotten world.

(ATHENA enters, with TWELVE ATHENIAN CITIZENS. A large crowd follows.)

ATHENA O herald, make proclaim, bid all men come.

Then let the shrill blast of the Tyrrhene trump, Fulfilled with mortal breath, thro' the wide air Peal a loud summons, bidding all men heed.

For, till my judges fill this judgment-seat, Silence behoves,- that this whole city learn, What for all time mine ordinance commands, And these men, that the cause be judged aright.

(APOLLO enters.)

LEADER OF THE CHORUS O king Apollo, rule what is thine own, But in this thing what share pertains to thee? APOLLO First, as a witness come I, for this man Is suppliant of mine by sacred right, Guest of my holy hearth and cleansed by me Of blood-guilt: then, to set me at his side And in his cause bear part, as part I bore

Erst in his deed, whereby his mother fell.

Let whoso knoweth now announce the cause.

ATHENA (to the CHORUS) 'Tis I announce the cause- first speech be yours; For rightfully shall they whose plaint is tried Tell the tale first and set the matter clear.

LEADER Though we be many, brief shall be our tale.

(To ORESTES)

Answer thou, setting word to match with word; And first avow-
hast thou thy mother slain? ORESTES I slew her. I deny no word
hereof.

LEADER Three falls decide the wrestle- this is one.

ORESTES Thou vauntest thee- but o'er no final fall.

LEADER Yet must thou tell the manner of thy deed.

ORESTES Drawn sword in hand, I gashed her neck. 'Tis told.

LEADER But by whose word, whose craft, wert thou impelled?

ORESTES By oracles of him who here attests me.

LEADER The prophet-god bade thee thy mother slay? ORESTES
Yea, and thro' him less ill I fared, till now.

LEADER If the vote grip thee, thou shalt change that word.

ORESTES Strong is my hope; my buried sire shall aid.

LEADER Go to now, trust the dead, a matricide!

ORESTES Yea, for in her combined two stains of sin.

LEADER How? speak this clearly to the judges' mind.

ORESTES Slaying her husband, she did slay my sire.

LEADER Therefore thou livest; death assoils her deed.

ORESTES Then while she lived why didst thou hunt her not?

LEADER She was not kin by blood to him she slew.

ORESTES And I, am I by blood my mother's kin? LEADER O
cursed with murder's guilt, how else wert thou The burden of her
womb? Dost thou forswear Thy mother's kinship, closest bond of
love? ORESTES It is thine hour, Apollo- speak the law, Averting if
this deed were justly done; For done it is, and clear and undenied.

But if to thee this murder's cause seem right Or wrongful, speak-
that I to these may tell.

APOLLO To you, Athena's mighty council-court, Justly for justice
will I plead, even I, The prophet-god, nor cheat you by one word.

For never spake I from my prophet-seat One word, of man, of
woman, or of state, Save what the Father of Olympian gods
Commanded unto me. I rede you then, Bethink you of my plea,
how strong it stands, And follow the decree of Zeus our sire, For
oaths prevail not over Zeus' command.

LEADER Go to; thou sayest that from Zeus befell The oracle that
this Orestes bade With vengeance quit the slaying of his sire, d
hold as nought his mother's right of kin!

APOLLO Yea, for it stands not with a common death, That he
should die, a chieftain and a king

Decked with the sceptre which high heaven confers
 Die, and by female hands, not smitten down
 By a far-shooting bow, held stalwartly
 By some strong Amazon. Another doom
 Was his: O Pallas, hear, and ye who sit
 In judgment, to discern this thing
 aright!

She with a specious voice of welcome true
 Hailed him, returning from the mighty mart
 Where war for life gives fame, triumphant
 home; Then o'er the laver, as he bathed himself,
 She spread from head to foot a covering net,
 And in the endless mesh of cunning
 robes Enwound and trapped her lord, and smote him down.

Lo, ye have heard what doom this chieftain met,
 The majesty of Greece, the fleet's high lord:

Such as I tell it, let it gall your ears,
 Who stand as judges to decide this cause.

LEADER Zeus, as thou sayest, holds a father's death
 As first of crimes,- yet he of his own act
 Cast into chains his father, Cronus
 old:

How suits that deed with that which now ye tell?

O ye who judge, I bid ye mark my words!

APOLLO O monsters loathed of all, O scorn of gods,
 He that hath bound may loose: a cure there is.

Yea, many a plan that can unbind the chain.

But when the thirsty dust sucks up man's blood
 Once shed in death, he shall arise no more.

No chant nor charm for this my Sire hath wrought.

All else there is, he moulds and shifts at will,
 Not scant of strength nor breath, whate'er he do.

LEADER Think yet, for what acquittal thou dost plead:

He who hath shed a mother's kindred blood,
 Shall he in Argos dwell, where dwelt his sire?
 How shall he stand before the city's shrines,
 How share the clansmen's holy lustral bowl?
 APOLLO This too I answer; mark a soothfast word
 Not the true parent is the woman's womb
 That bears the child; she doth but nurse the seed
 New-sown: the male is parent; she for him,

As stranger for a stranger, hoards the germ
 Of life, unless the god its promise blight.

And proof hereof before you will I set.

Birth may from fathers, without mothers, be:

See at your side a witness of the same,
 Athena, daughter of Olympian Zeus,
 Never within the darkness of the womb
 Fostered

nor fashioned, but a bud more bright Than any goddess in her breast might bear.

And I, O Pallas, howsoe'er I may, Henceforth will glorify thy town, thy clan, And for this end have sent my suppliant here Unto thy shrine; that he from this time forth Be loyal unto thee for evermore, O goddess-queen, and thou unto thy side Mayst win and hold him faithful, and his line, And that for aye this pledge and troth remain To children's children of Athenian seed.

ATHENA Enough is said; I bid the judges now With pure intent deliver just award.

LEADER We too have shot our every shaft of speech, And now abide to hear the doom of law.

ATHENA (to APOLLO and ORESTES) Say, how ordaining shall I 'scape your blame? APOLLO I spake, ye heard; enough. O stranger men, Heed well your oath as ye decide the cause.

ATHENA O men of Athens, ye who first do judge The law of bloodshed, hear me now ordain.

Here to all time for Aegeus' Attic host Shall stand this council-court of judges sworn, Here the tribunal, set on Ares' Hill Where camped of old the tented Amazons, What time in hate of Theseus they assailed Athens, and set against her citadel A counterwork of new sky-pointing towers, And there to Ares held their sacrifice, Where now the rock hath name, even Ares' Hill.

And hence shall Reverence and her kinsman Fear

Pass to each free man's heart, by day and night Enjoining, Thou shalt do no unjust thing, So long as law stands as it stood of old Unmarred by civic change. Look you, the spring Is pure; but foul it once with influx vile And muddy clay, and none can drink thereof.

Therefore, O citizens, I bid ye bow In awe to this command, Let no man live, Uncurbed by law nor curbed by tyranny; Nor banish ye the monarchy of Awe Beyond the walls; untouched by fear divine, No man doth justice in the world of men.

Therefore in purity and holy dread Stand and revere; so shall ye have and hold A saving bulwark of the state and land, Such as no man hath ever elsewhere known, Nor in far Scythia, nor in Pelops' realm.

Thus I ordain it now, a council-court Pure and unsullied by the lust of gain, Sacred and swift to vengeance, wakeful ever To champion men who sleep, the country's guard.

Thus have I spoken, thus to mine own clan

Commended it for ever. Ye who judge, Arise, take each his vote,
mete out the right, Your oath revering. Lo, my word is said.

(The twelve judges come forward, one by one, to the urns of
decision; the first votes; as each of the others follows, the LEADER
and APOLLO speak alternately.)

LEADER I rede ye well, beware! nor put to shame, In aught, this
grievous company of hell.

APOLLO I too would warn you, fear mine oracles From Zeus they
are,- nor make them void of fruit.

LEADER Presumptuous is thy claim, blood-guilt to judge, And
false henceforth thine oracles shall be.

APOLLO Failed then the counsels of my sire, when turned Ixion,
first of slayers, to his side? LEADER These are but words; but I, if
justice fail me,

Will haunt this land in grim and deadly deed.

APOLLO Scorn of the younger and the elder gods Art thou: 'tis I
that shall prevail anon.

LEADER Thus didst thou too of old in Pheres' halls, O'erreaching
Fate to make a mortal deathless.

APOLLO Was it not well, my worshipper to aid, Then most of all
when hardest was the need? LEADER I say thou didst annul the
lots of life, Cheating with wine the deities of eld.

APOLLO I say thou shalt anon, thy pleadings foiled, Spit venom
vainly on thine enemies.

LEADER Since this young god o'errides mine ancient right, I tarry
but to claim your law, not knowing If wrath of mine shall blast
your state or spare.

ATHENA Mine is the right to add the final vote, And I award it to
Orestes' cause.

For me no mother bore within her womb, And, save for wedlock
evermore eschewed, I vouch myself the champion of the man, Not
of the woman, yea, with all my soul, In heart, as birth, a father's
child alone.

Thus will I not too heinously regard A woman's death who did her
husband slay, The guardian of her home; and if the votes Equal do
fall, Orestes shall prevail.

Ye of the judges who are named thereto, Swiftly shake forth the lots from either urn.

(Two judges come forward, one to each urn.) ORESTES O bright Apollo, what shall be the end? LEADER O Night, dark mother mine, dost mark these things? ORESTES Now shall my doom be life, or strangling cords.

LEADER And mine, lost honour or a wider sway.

APOLLO O stranger judges, sum aright the count Of votes cast forth, and, parting them, take heed Ye err not in decision. The default Of one vote only bringeth ruin deep, One, cast aright, doth stablish house and home.

ATHENA Behold, this man is free from guilt of blood, For half the votes condemn him, half set free!

ORESTES O Pallas, light and safety of my home, Thou, thou hast given me back to dwell once more In that my fatherland, amerced of which I wandered; now shall Grecian lips say this, The man is Argive once again, and dwells Again within his father's wealthy hall, By Pallas saved, by Loxias, and by Him, The great third saviour, Zeus omnipotent Who thus in pity for my father's fate

Doth pluck me from my doom, beholding these, Confederates of my mother. Lo, I pass To mine own home, but proffering this vow Unto thy land and people: Nevermore, Thro' all the manifold years of Time to be, Shall any chieftain of mine Argive land Bear hitherward his spears for fight arrayed.

For we, though lapped in earth we then shall lie, By thwart adversities will work our will On them who shall transgress this oath of mine, Paths of despair and journeyings ill-starred For them ordaining, till their task they rue.

But if this oath be rightly kept, to them Will we the dead be full of grace, the while With loyal league they honour Pallas' town.

And now farewell, thou and thy city's folk Firm be thine arms' grasp, closing with thy foes, And, strong to save, bring victory to thy spear.

(ORESTES and APOLLO depart.)

CHORUS (chanting) Woe on you, younger gods! the ancient right Ye have o'erridden, rent it from my hands.

I am dishonoured of you, thrust to scorn!

But heavily my wrath Shall on this land fling forth the drops that
blast and burn, Venom of vengeance, that shall work such scathe
As I have suffered; where that dew shall fall, Shall leafless blight
arise, Wasting Earth's offspring,- Justice, hear my call!

And thorough all the land in deadly wise Shall scatter venom, to
exude again In pestilence on men.

What cry avails me now, what deed of blood, Unto this land what
dark despite? Alack, alack, forlorn Are we, a bitter injury have
borne!

Alack, O sisters, O dishonoured brood Of mother Night!

ATHENA Nay, bow ye to my words, chafe not nor moan:

Ye are not worsted nor disgraced; behold, With balanced vote the
cause had issue fair, Nor in the end did aught dishonour thee.

But thus the will of Zeus shone clearly forth, And his own prophet-
god avouched the same, Orestes slew: his slaying is atoned.

Therefore I pray you, not upon this land Shoot forth the dart of
vengeance; be appeased, Nor blast the land with blight, nor loose
thereon Drops of eternal venom, direful darts Wasting and marring
nature's seed of growth.

For I, the queen of Athens' sacred right, Do pledge to you a holy
sanctuary Deep in the heart of this my land, made just By your
indwelling presence, while ye sit Hard by your sacred shrines that
gleam with oil Of sacrifice, and by this folk adored.

CHORUS (chanting) Woe on you, younger gods! the ancient right
Ye have o'erridden, rent it from my hands.

I am dishonoured of you, thrust to scorn!

But heavily my wrath Shall on this land fling forth the drops that
blast and burn, Venom of vengeance, that shall work such scathe
As I have suffered; where that dew shall fall,

**Shall leafless blight arise, Wasting Earth's offspring,- Justice,
hear my call!**

And thorough all the land in deadly wise Shall scatter venom, to
exude again In pestilence on men.

What cry avails me now, what deed of blood, Unto this land what
dark despite? Alack, alack, forlorn Are we, a bitter injury have
borne!

Alack, O sisters, O dishonoured brood Of mother Night!

ATHENA Dishonoured are ye not; turn not, I pray, As goddesses
your swelling wrath on men, Nor make the friendly earth
despiteful to them.

I too have Zeus for champion- 'tis enough I only of all goddesses
do know To ope the chamber where his thunderbolts Lie stored
and sealed; but here is no such need.

Nay, be appeased, nor cast upon the ground The malice of thy
tongue, to blast the world; Calm thou thy bitter wrath's black
inward surge,

For high shall be thine honour, set beside me For ever in this land,
whose fertile lap Shall pour its teeming firstfruits unto you, Gifts
for fair childbirth and for wedlock's crown:

Thus honoured, praise my spoken pledge for aye.

CHORUS (chanting) I, I dishonoured in this earth to dwell, Ancient
of days and wisdom! I breathe forth Poison and breath of frenzied
ire. O Earth, Woe, woe for thee, for me!

From side to side what pains be these that thrill? Hearken, O
mother Night, my wrath, mine agony!

Whom from mine ancient rights the gods have thrust And brought
me to the dust Woe, woe is me!- with craft invincible.

ATHENA Older art thou than I, and I will bear With this thy fury.
Know, although thou be More wise in ancient wisdom, yet have I
From Zeus no scant measure of the same, Wherefore take heed
unto this prophecy

If to another land of alien men Ye go, too late shall ye feel longing
deep For mine. The rolling tides of time bring round A day of
brighter glory for this town; And thou, enshrined in honour by the
halls Where dwelt Erechtheus, shalt a worship win From men and
from the train of womankind, Greater than any tribe elsewhere
shall pay.

Cast thou not therefore on this soil of mine Whetstones that
sharpen souls to bloodshedding, The burning goads of youthful
hearts, made hot With frenzy of the spirit, not of wine.

Nor pluck as 'twere the heart from cocks that strive, To set it in the
breast of citizens Of mine, a war-god's spirit, keen for fight, Made
stern against their country and their kin.

The man who grievously doth lust for fame, War, full, immitigable,
let him wage Against the stranger; but of kindred birds I hold the

challenge hateful. Such the boon I proffer thee- within this land of lands, Most loved of gods, with me to show and share

Fair mercy, gratitude and grace as fair.

CHORUS (chanting) I, I dishonoured in this earth to dwell, Ancient of days and wisdom! I breathe forth Poison and breath of frenzied ire. O Earth, Woe, woe for thee, for me!

From side to side what pains be these that thrill? Hearken, O mother Night, my wrath, mine agony!

Whom from mine ancient rights the gods have thrust And brought me to the dust Woe, woe is me!- with craft invincible.

ATHENA I will not weary of soft words to thee, That never mayst thou say, Behold me spurned, An elder by a younger deity, And from this land rejected and forlorn, Unhonoured by the men who dwell therein.

But, if Persuasion's grace be sacred to thee, Soft in the soothing accents of my tongue, Tarry, I pray thee, yet, if go thou wilt.

Not rightfully wilt thou on this my town

Sway down the scale that beareth wrath and teen Or wasting plague upon this folk. 'Tis thine, If so thou wilt, inheritress to be Of this my land, its utmost grace to win.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS O queen, what refuge dost thou promise me? ATHENA Refuge untouched by bale: take thou my boon.

LEADER What, if I take it, shall mine honour be? ATHENA No house shall prosper without grace of thine.

LEADER Canst thou achieve and grant such power to me? ATHENA Yea, for my hand shall bless thy worshippers.

LEADER And wilt thou pledge me this for time eterne?

ATHENA Yea: none can bid me pledge beyond my power.

LEADER Lo, I desist from wrath, appeased by thee.

ATHENA Then in the land's heart shalt thou win thee friends.

LEADER What chant dost bid me raise, to greet the land?

ATHENA Such as aspires towards a victory Unrued by any: chants from breast of earth, From wave, from sky; and let the wild winds' breath Pass with soft sunlight o'er the lap of land, Strong wax the fruits of earth, fair teem the kine, Unfailing, for my town's prosperity, And constant be the growth of mortal seed.

But more and more root out the impious, For as a gardener fosters
what he sows, So foster I this race, whom righteousness Doth fend
from sorrow. Such the proffered boon.

But I, if wars must be, and their loud clash

And carnage, for my town, will ne'er endure That aught but
victory shall crown her fame.

CHORUS (chanting) Lo, I accept it; at her very side Doth Pallas bid
me dwell:

I will not wrong the city of her pride, Which even Almighty Zeus
and Ares hold Heaven's earthly citadel, Loved home of Grecian
gods, the young, the old, The sanctuary divine, The shield of every
shrine!

For Athens I say forth a gracious prophecy, The glory of the
sunlight and the skies Shall bid from earth arise Warm wavelets of
new life and glad prosperity.

ATHENA (chanting) Behold, with gracious heart well pleased I for
my citizens do grant Fulfilment of this covenant:

And here, their wrath at length appeased, These mighty deities
shall stay.

For theirs it is by right to sway The lot that rules our mortal day,
And he who hath not inly felt Their stern decree, ere long on him,
Not knowing why and whence, the grim Life-crushing blow is
dealt.

The father's sin upon the child Descends, and sin is silent death,
And leads him on the downward path, By stealth beguiled, Unto
the Furies: though his state On earth were high, and loud his boast,
Victim of silent ire and hate He dwells among the Lost.

CHORUS (chanting) To my blessing now give ear.

Scorching blight nor singed air Never blast thine olives fair!

Drouth, that wasteth bud and plant, Keep to thine own place.
Avaunt, Famine fell, and come not hither Stealthily to waste and
wither!

Let the land, in season due, Twice her waxing fruits renew; Teem
the kine in double measure; Rich in new god-given treasure; Here
let men the powers adore For sudden gifts unhop'd before!

ATHENA (chanting) O hearken, warders of the wall That guards
mine Athens, what a dower Is unto her ordained and given!

For mighty is the Furies' power, And deep-revered in courts of heaven
And realms of hell; and clear to all They weave thy doom,
mortality!

And some in joy and peace shall sing; But unto other some they
bring Sad life and tear-dimmed eye.

CHORUS (chanting) And far away I ban thee and remove,
Untimely death of youths too soon brought low!

And to each maid, O gods, when time is come for love,
Grant ye a warrior's heart, a wedded life to know.

Ye too, O Fates, children of mother Night, Whose children too are
we, O goddesses Of just award, of all by sacred right Queens, who
in time and in eternity Do rule, a present power for righteousness,
Honoured beyond all Gods, hear ye and grant my cry!

ATHENA (chanting) And I too, I with joy am fain, Hearing your
voice this gift ordain Unto my land. High thanks be thine,
Persuasion, who with eyes divine Into my tongue didst look thy
strength, To bend and to appease at length Those who would not
be comforted.

Zeus, king of parley, doth prevail, And ye and I will strive nor fail,
That good may stand in evil's stead, And lasting bliss for bale.

CHORUS (chanting) And nevermore these walls within

Shall echo fierce sedition's din, Unslaked with blood and crime;
The thirsty dust shall nevermore Suck up the darkly streaming
gore Of civic broils, shed out in wrath And vengeance, crying
death for death!

But man with man and state with state Shall vow The pledge of
common hate And common friendship, that for man Hath oft made
blessing, out of ban, Be ours unto all time.

ATHENA (chanting) Skill they, or not, the path to find Of
favouring speech and presage kind? Yea, even from these, who,
grim and stern, Glared anger upon you of old, O citizens, ye now
shall earn A recompense right manifold.

Deck them aright, extol them high, Be loyal to their loyalty, And ye
shall make your town and land Sure, propped on Justice' saving
hand,

And Fame's eternity.

CHORUS (chanting) Hail ye, all hail! and yet again, all hail, O
Athens, happy in a weal secured!

O ye who sit by Zeus' right hand, nor fail Of wisdom set among
you and assured, Loved of the well-loved Goddess-Maid! the King
Of gods doth reverence you, beneath her guarding wing.

ATHENA (chanting) All hail unto each honoured guest!

Whom to the chambers of your rest 'Tis mine to lead, and to
provide The hallowed torch, the guard and guide.

Pass down, the while these altars glow With sacred fire, to earth
below And your appointed shrine.

There dwelling, from the land restrain The force of fate, the breath
of bane, But waft on us the gift and gain Of Victory divine!

And ye, the men of Cranaos' seed,

I bid you now with reverence lead These alien Powers that thus are
made Athenian evermore. To you Fair be their will henceforth, to
do Whate'er may bless and aid!

CHORUS (chanting) Hail to you all! hail yet again, All who love
Athens, gods and men, Adoring her as Pallas' home!

And while ye reverence what ye grant My sacred shrine and
hidden haunt Blameless and blissful be your doom!

ATHENA Once more I praise the promise of your vows, And now
I bid the golden torches' glow Pass down before you to the hidden
depth Of earth, by mine own sacred servants borne, My loyal
guards of statue and of shrine.

Come forth, O flower of Theseus' Attic land, O glorious band of
children and of wives, And ye, O train of matrons crowned with
eld!

Deck you with festal robes of scarlet dye In honour of this day: O
gleaming torch, Lead onward, that these gracious powers of earth
Henceforth be seen to bless the life of men.

(ATHENA leads the procession downwards into the Cave of the
FURIES, now Eumenides, under the Areopagus: as they go, the
escort of women and children chant aloud.)

CHANT With loyalty we lead you; proudly go, Night's childless
children, to your home below!

(O citizens, awhile from words forbear!) To darkness' deep
primeval lair, Far in Earth's bosom, downward fare, Adored with
prayer and sacrifice.

(O citizens, forbear your cries!) Pass hitherward, ye powers of
Dread, With all your former wrath allayed, Into the heart of this
loved land; With joy unto your temple wend, The while upon your
steps attend The flames that feed upon the brand

(Now, now ring out your chant, your joy's acclaim!) Behind them,
as they downward fare, Let holy hands libations bear, And torches'
sacred flame.

**All-seeing Zeus and Fate come down To battle fair for Pallas'
town!**

Ring out your chant, ring out your joy's acclaim!

THE END

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