

COMPLETE WORKS OF **EURIPIDES**

ILLUSTRATED



**ALCESTIS, MEDEA
HERACLEIDAE, HIPPOLYTUS
ANDROMACHE, ELECTRA
HERACLES AND OTHERS**

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**ALCESTIS, MEDEA,
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HERACLES AND OTHER**

Along with Aeschylus and Sophocles, Euripides is one of the three ancient Greek tragedians for whom any plays have survived in full.

Euripides is identified with theatrical innovations that have profoundly influenced drama down to modern times, especially in the representation of traditional, mythical heroes as ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances.

His contemporaries associated him with Socrates as a leader of a decadent intellectualism. But he was also the literary ancestor of comic dramatists as diverse as Menander and George Bernard Shaw.

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HERACLEIDAE

HIPPOLYTUS

ANDROMACHE

HECUBA

THE SUPPLIANTS

ELECTRA

HERACLES

THE TROJAN WOMEN

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS

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THE TRANSLATIONS

ALCESTIS

Translated by Theodore Alois Buckley

Alcestis was first produced at the City Dionysia festival in 438 BC as the final part of a tetralogy of unconnected plays in the competition of tragedies, for which Euripides won second prize. It is most likely the oldest surviving work by Euripides, although at the time of its first performance he had been producing plays for seventeen years.

The drama concerns the unusual bargain arranged for King Admetus in return for a longer life. Admetus was granted by the Fates the privilege of living past the allotted time of his death. Apollo wished to repay Admetus' hospitality and so offered him this gift. However, it came with the condition that Admetus must find someone to take his place when Death came to claim him. At the time of his death, he had still not found a willing substitute. Even his father, Pheres, was unwilling to volunteer, believing it was ludicrous that he should be asked to give up the life he enjoyed so much to humour the strange arrangement. Finally, Admetus' devoted wife Alcestis agreed to be taken in his place, as she wished not to leave her children fatherless or be bereft of her husband. The drama focuses on Alcestis' sacrifice and the effect it has on her family and the other characters, with a subtle exploration of male and female differences in Euripides' contemporary society.

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Apollo desired of the Fates that Admetus, who was about to die, might give a substitute to die for him, that so he might live for a term equal to his former life; and Alcestis, his wife, gave herself up, while neither of his parents were willing to die instead of their son. But not long after the time when this calamity happened, Hercules having arrived, and having learned from a servant what had befallen Alcestis, went to her tomb, and having made Death retire, covers the lady with a robe; and requested Admetus to receive her and keep her for him; and said he had borne her off as a prize in

wrestling; but when he would not, he unveiled her, and discovered her whom he was lamenting.

ALCESTIS

APOLLO. O mansions of Admetus, wherein I endured to acquiesce in the slave's table, though a God; for Jove was the cause, by slaying my son Æsculapius, hurling the lightning against his breast: whereat enraged, I slay the Cyclops, forgers of Jove's fire; and me my father compelled to serve for hire with a mortal, as a punishment for these things. But having come to this land, I tended the herds of him who received me, and have preserved this house until this day: for being pious I met with a pious man, the son of Pheres, whom I delivered from dying by deluding the Fates: but those Goddesses granted me that Admetus should escape the impending death, could he furnish in his place another dead for the powers below. But having tried and gone through all his friends, his father and his aged mother who bore him, he found not, save his wife, one who was willing to die for him, and view no more the light: who now within the house is borne in their hands, breathing her last; for on this day is it destined for her to die, and to depart from life. But I, lest the pollution come upon me in the house, leave this palace's most dear abode. But already I behold Death near, priest of the dead, who is about to bear her down to the mansions of Pluto; but he comes at the right time, observing this day, in the which it was destined for her to die.

DEATH, APOLLO.

DEA. Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! What dost thou at the palace? why tamest here, Phœbus? Art thou again at thy deeds of injustice, taking away and putting an end to the honors of the powers beneath? Did it not suffice thee to stay the death of Admetus, when thou didst delude the Fates by fraudulent artifice? But now too dost thou keep guard for her, having armed thine hand with thy bow, who then promised,

in order to redeem her husband, herself, the daughter of Pelias, to die for him?

AP. Fear not, I cleave to justice and honest arguments.

DEA. What business then has your bow, if you cleave to justice?

AP. It is my habit ever to bear it.

DEA. Yes, and without regard to justice to aid this house.

AP. Ay, for I am afflicted at the misfortunes of a man that is dear to me.

DEA. And wilt thou deprive me of this second dead?

AP. But neither took I him from thee by force.

DEA. How then is he upon earth, and not beneath the ground?

AP. Because he gave in his stead his wife, after whom thou art now come.

DEA. Yes, and will bear her off to the land beneath.

AP. Take her away, for I know not whether I can persuade thee.

DEA. What? to slay him, whom I ought? for this was I commanded.

AP. No: but to cast death upon those about to die.

DEA. Yes, I perceive thy speech, and what thou aim'st at.

AP. Is it possible then for Alcestis to arrive at old age?

DEA. It is not: consider that I too am delighted with my due honors.

AP. Thou canst not, however, take more than one life.

DEA. When the young die I earn the greater glory.

AP. And if she die old, she will be sumptuously entombed.

DEA. Thou layest down the law, Phœbus, in favor of the rich.

AP. How sayest thou? what? hast thou been clever without my perceiving it?

DEA. Those who have means would purchase to die old.

AP. Doth it not then seem good to thee to grant me this favor?

DEA. No in truth; and thou knowest my ways.

AP. Yes, hostile to mortals, and detested by the Gods.

DEA. Thou canst not have all things, which thou oughtest not.

AP. Nevertheless, thou wilt stop, though thou art over-fierce; such a man will come to the house of Pheres, whom Eurystheus hath sent after the chariot and its horses, *to bring them* from the wintry regions of Thrace, who in sooth, being welcomed in the mansions of Admetus, shall take away by force this woman from thee; and there will be no obligation to thee at my hands, but still thou wilt do this, and wilt be hated by me.

DEA. Much though thou talkest, thou wilt gain nothing. This woman then shall descend to the house of Pluto; and I am advancing upon her, that I may begin the rites on her with my sword; for sacred is he to the Gods beneath the earth, the hair of whose head this sword hath consecrated.

CHORUS.

SEMICH. Wherefore in heaven's name is this stillness before the palace? why is the house of Admetus hushed in silence?

SEMICH. But there is not even one of our friends near, who can tell us whether we have to deplore the departed queen, or whether Alcestis, daughter of Pelias, yet living views this light, who has appeared to me and to all to have been the best wife toward her husband.

CHOR. Hears any one either a wailing, or the beating of hands within the house, or a lamentation, as though the thing had taken place? There is not however any one of the servants standing before the gates. Oh would that thou wouldst appear, O Apollo, amidst the waves of this calamity!

SEMICH. They would not however be silent, were she dead.

SEMICH. For the corpse is certainly not gone from the house.

SEMICH. Whence this conjecture? I do not presume this. What is it gives you confidence?

SEMICH. How could Admetus have made a private funeral of his so excellent wife?

CHOR. But before the gates I see not the bath of water from the fountain, as is the custom at the gates of the dead: and in the vestibule is no shorn hair, which is wont to fall in grief for the dead; the youthful hand of women for the youthful *wife* sound not.

SEMICH. And yet this is the appointed day, —

SEMICH. What is this thou sayest?

SEMICH. In the which she must go beneath the earth.

SEMICH. Thou hast touched my soul, hast touched my heart.

SEMICH. When the good are afflicted, he must mourn, who from the beginning has been accounted good.

CHOR. But there is not whither in the earth any one having sent naval equipment, or to Lycia, or to the thirsty site of Hammon's temple, can redeem the unhappy woman's life, for abrupt fate approaches, and I know not to whom of those that sacrifice at the hearths of the Gods I can go. But only if the son of Phœbus were viewing with his eyes this light, could she come, having left the darksome habitations and the gates of Pluto: for he raised up the dead, before that the stroke of the lightning's fire hurled by Jove destroyed him. But now what hope of life can I any longer entertain? For all things have already been done by the king, and at the altars of all the Gods abound the victims dropping with blood, and no cure is there of these evils.

CHORUS, FEMALE ATTENDANT.

CHOR. But here comes one of the female attendants from the house, in tears; what shall I hear has happened? To mourn indeed, if any thing happens to our lords, is pardonable: but whether the lady be still alive, or whether she be dead, we would wish to know.

ATT. You may call her both alive and dead.

CHOR. And how can the same woman be both alive and dead?

ATT. Already she is on the verge of death, and breathing her life away.

CHOR. Oh wretched man, being what thyself of what a wife art thou bereft!

ATT. My master knows not this yet, until he suffer.

CHOR. Is there no longer hope that she may save her life?

ATT. No, for the destined day makes its attack upon her.

CHOR. Are not then suitable preparations made for these events?

ATT. Yes, the adornments are ready, wherewith her husband will bury her.

CHOR. Let her know then that she will die glorious, and by far the best of women under the sun.

ATT. And how not the best? who will contest it? What must the woman be, who has surpassed her? and how can any give greater proof of esteeming her husband, than by being willing to die for him? And these things indeed the whole city knoweth. But what she did in the house you will marvel when you hear. For, when she perceived that the destined day was come, she washed her fair skin with water from the river; and having taken from her closets of cedar vesture and ornaments, she attired herself becomingly; and standing before the altar she prayed: "O mistress, since I go beneath the earth, adoring thee for the last time, I will beseech thee to protect my orphan children, and to the one join a loving wife, and to the other a noble husband: nor, as their mother perishes, let my children untimely die, but happy in their paternal country let them complete a joyous life." — But all the altars, which are in the house of Admetus, she went to, and crowned, and prayed, tearing the leaves from off the myrtle boughs, tearless, without a groan, nor did the approaching evil change the natural beauty of her skin. And then rushing to her chamber, and

her bed, there indeed she wept and spoke thus: "O bridal bed, whereon I loosed my virgin zone with this man, for whom I die, farewell! for I hate thee not; but me alone hast thou lost; for dreading to betray thee, and my husband, I die; but thee some other woman will possess, more chaste there can not, but perchance more fortunate." — And falling on it she kissed it; but all the bed was bathed with the flood that issued from her eyes. But when she had satiety of much weeping, she goes hastily forward, rushing from the bed. And oftentimes having left her chamber, she oft returned, and threw herself upon the bed again. And her children, hanging to the garments of their mother, wept; but she, taking them in her arms, embraced them, first one and then the other, as about to die. But all the domestics wept throughout the house, bewailing their mistress, but she stretched out her right hand to each, and there was none so mean, whom she addressed not, and was answered in return. Such are the woes in the house of Admetus. And had he died indeed, he would have perished; but now that he has escaped death, he has grief to that degree which he will never forget.

CHOR. Surely Admetus groans at these evils, if he must be deprived of so excellent a wife.

ATT. Yes, he weeps, holding his dear wife in his hands, and prays her not to leave him, asking impossibilities; for she wastes away, and is consumed by sickness, but fainting a wretched burden in his arms, yet still though but feebly breathing, she fain would glance toward the rays of the sun; as though never again, but now for the last time she is to view the sun's beam and his orb. But I will go and announce your presence, for it is by no means all that are well-wishers to their lords, so as to come kindly to them in their misfortunes; but you of old are friendly to my master.

SEMICH. O Jove, what means of escape can there in any way be, and what method to rid us of the fortune which attends my master?

SEMICH. Will any appear? or must I cut my locks, and clothe me even now in black array of garments?

SEMICH. 'Tis plain, my friends, too plain; but still let us pray to the Gods, for the power of the Gods is mightiest.

SEMICH. O Apollo, king of healing, find out some remedy for the evils of Admetus, procure it, O! procure it. For before this also thou didst find *remedy*, and now become our deliverer from death, and stop the murderous Pluto.

SEMICH. Alas! alas! woe! woe! O son of Pheres, how didst thou fare when thou wert deprived of thy wife?

SEMICH. Alas! alas! these things would even justify self-slaughter, and there is more, than whereat one might thrust one's neck in the suspending noose.

SEMICH. For not a dear, but a most dear wife, wilt thou see dead this day.

SEMICH. Behold, behold; lo! she doth come from the house, and her husband with her. Cry out, O groan, O land of Pheres, for the most excellent woman, wasting with sickness, *departing* beneath the earth to the infernal Pluto. Never will I aver that marriage brings more joy than grief, forming my conjectures both from former things, and beholding this fortune of the king; who, when he has lost this most excellent wife, will thenceforward pass a life not worthy to be called life.

ALCESTIS, ADMETUS, EUMELUS, CHORUS.

ALC. Thou Sun, and thou light of day, and ye heavenly eddies of the fleeting clouds —

ADM. He beholds thee and me, two unhappy creatures, having done nothing to the Gods, for which thou shouldst die.

ALC. O earth, and ye roofs of the palace, and thou bridal bed of my native Iolcos.

ADM. Lift up thyself, unhappy one, desert me not; but entreat the powerful Gods to pity.

ALC. I see — I see the two-oared boat — and the ferryman of the dead, holding his hand on the pole —

Charon even now calls me— “Why dost thou delay? haste, thou stoppest us here” — with such words vehement he hastens me.

ADM. Ah me! a bitter voyage this thou speakest of! Oh! unhappy one, how do we suffer!

ALC. He pulls me, some one pulls me — do you not see? — to the hall of the dead, the winged Pluto, staring from beneath his black eyebrows — What wilt thou do? — let me go — what a journey am I most wretched going!

ADM. Mournful to thy friends, and of these especially to me and to thy children, who have this grief in common.

ALC. Leave off supporting me, leave off now, lay me down, I have no strength in my feet. Death is near, and darkling night creeps upon mine eyes — my children, my children, no more your mother is — no more. — Farewell, my children, long may you view this light!

ADM. Ah me! I hear this sad word, and more than any death to me. Do not by the Gods have the heart to leave me: do not by those children, whom thou wilt make orphans: but rise, be of good courage: for, thee dead, I should no longer be: for on thee we depend both to live, and not to live: for thy love we adore.

ALC. Admetus, thou seest both thy affairs and mine, in what state they are, I wish to tell thee, ere I die, what I would have done. I, honoring thee, and causing thee at the price of my life to view this light, die, it being in my power not to die, for thee: but though I might have married a husband from among the Thessalians whom I would, and have lived in a palace blessed with regal sway, was not willing to live, bereft of thee, with my children orphans; nor did I spare myself, though possessing the gifts of bloomy youth, wherein I delighted. And yet thy father and thy mother forsook thee, though they had well arrived at a point of life, in which they might have died, and nobly delivered their son, and died with glory: for thou wert their only one, and there was no hope, when thou wert dead, that they

could have other children. And I should have lived, and thou, the rest of our time. And thou wouldst not be groaning deprived of thy wife, and wouldst not have to bring up thy children orphans. But these things indeed, some one of the Gods hath brought to pass, that they should be thus. Be it so — but do thou remember to give me a return for this; for never shall I ask thee for an equal one, (*for nothing is more precious than life,*) but just, as thou wilt say: for thou lovest not these children less than I do, if thou art right-minded; them bring up lords over my house, and bring not in second marriage a step-mother over these children, who, being a worse woman than me, through envy will stretch out her hand against thine and my children. Do not this then, I beseech thee; for a step-mother that is in second marriage is enemy to the children of the former marriage, no milder than a viper. And my boy indeed has his father, a great tower of defense; but thou, O my child, how wilt thou be, brought up during thy virgin years? Having what consort of thy father's? *I fear*, lest casting some evil obloquy on thee, she destroys thy marriage in the bloom of youth. For neither will thy mother ever preside over thy nuptials, nor strengthen thee being present, my daughter, at thy travails, where nothing is more kind than a mother. For I needs must die, and this evil comes upon me not to-morrow, nor on the third day of the month, but immediately shall I be numbered among those that are no more. Farewell, and may you be happy; and thou indeed, my husband, mayst boast, that thou hadst a most excellent wife, and you, my children, that you were born of a most excellent mother.

CHOR. Be of good cheer; for I fear not to answer for him: he will do this, if he be not bereft of his senses.

ADM. These things shall be so, they shall be, fear not: since I, when alive also, possessed thee *alone*, and when thou art dead, thou shalt be my only wife, and no Thessalian bride shall address me in the place of thee: there is not woman who shall, either of so noble a sire, nor otherwise

most exquisite in beauty. But my children are enough; of these I pray the Gods that I may have the enjoyment; for thee we do not enjoy. But I shall not have this grief for thee for a year, but as long as my life endures, O lady, abhorring her indeed that brought me forth, and hating my father; for they were in word, not in deed, my friends. But thou, giving what was dearest to thee for my life, hast rescued me. Have I not then reason to groan deprived of such a wife? But I will put an end to the feasts, and the meetings of those that drink together, and garland and song, which wont to dwell in my house. For neither can I any more touch the lyre, nor lift up my heart to sing to the Libyan flute; for thou hast taken away my joy of life. But by the cunning hand of artists imaged thy figure shall be lain on my bridal bed, on which I will fall, and clasping my hands around, calling on thy name, shall fancy that I hold my dear wife in mine arms, though holding her not: a cold delight, I ween; but still I may draw off the weight that sits upon my soul: and in my dreams visiting me, thou mayst delight me, for a friend is sweet even to behold at night, for whatever time he may come. But if the tongue of Orpheus and his strain were mine, so that invoking with hymns the daughter of Ceres or her husband, I could receive thee from the shades below, I would descend, and neither the dog of Pluto, nor Charon at his oar, the ferryman of departed spirits, should stay me before I brought thy life to the light. But there expect me when I die and prepare a mansion for me, as about to dwell with me. For I will enjoin these to place me in the same cedar with thee, and to lay my side near thy side: for not even when dead may I be separated from thee, the only faithful one to me!

CHOR. And I indeed with thee, as a friend with a friend, will bear this painful grief for her, for she is worthy.

ALC. My children, ye indeed hear your father saying that he will never marry another wife to be over you, nor dishonor me.

ADM. And now too, I say this, and will perform it

ALC. For this receive these children from my hand.

ADM. Yes, I receive a dear gift from a dear hand.

ALC. Be thou then a mother to these children in my stead.

ADM. There is much need that I should, when they are deprived of thee.

ALC. O my children, at a time when I ought to live I depart beneath.

ADM. Ah me; what shall I do of thee bereaved!

ALC. Time will soften thy grief: he that is dead is nothing.

ADM. Take me with thee, by the Gods take me beneath.

ALC. Enough are we *to go*, who die for thee.

ADM. O fate, of what a wife thou deprivest me!

ALC. And lo! my darkening eye is weighed down.

ADM. I am undone then, if thou wilt leave me, my wife.

ALC. As being no more, you may speak of me as nothing.

ADM. Lift up thy face; do not leave thy children.

ALC. Not willingly in sooth, but — farewell, my children.

ADM. Look on them, O! look.

ALC. I am no more.

ADM. What dost thou? dost thou leave us?

ALC. Farewell!

ADM. I am an undone wretch!

CHOR. She is gone, Admetus' wife is no more.

EUM. Alas me, for my state! my mother is gone indeed below; she is no longer, my father, under the sun; but unhappy leaving me has made my life an orphan's. For look, look at her eyelid, and her nerveless arms. Hear, hear, O mother. I beseech thee; I, I now call thee, mother, thy young one falling on thy mouth —

ADM. Who hears not, neither sees: so that I and you are struck with a heavy calamity.

EUM. Young and deserted, my father, am I left by my dear mother: O! I that have suffered indeed dreadful deeds! — and thou hast suffered with me, my sister. O father, in

vain, in vain didst thou marry, nor with her didst thou arrive at the end of old age, for she perished before, but thou being gone, mother, the house is undone.

CHOR. Admetus, you must bear this calamity; for in no wise the first, nor the last of mortals hast thou lost thy dear wife: but learn, that to die is a debt we must all of us discharge.

ADM. I know it, and this evil hath not come suddenly on me; but knowing it long ago I was afflicted. But be present, for I will have the corse borne forth, and while ye stay, chant a hymn to the God below that accepteth not libations. And all the Thessalians, over whom I reign, I enjoin to share in the grief for this lady, by shearing *their locks* with steel, and by arraying themselves in sable garb. And harness your teams of horses to your chariots, and cut from your single steeds the manes that fall upon their necks. And let there be no noise of pipes, nor of the lyre throughout the city for twelve completed moons. For none other corse more dear shall I inter, nor one more kind toward me. But she deserves to receive honor from me, seeing that she alone hath died for me.

CHORUS.

O daughter of Pelias, farewell where thou dwellest in sunless dwelling within the mansions of Pluto. And let Pluto know, the God with ebon locks, and the old man, the ferryman of the dead, who sits intent upon his oar and his rudder, that he is conducting by far the most excellent of women in his two-oared boat over the lake of Acheron. Oft shall the servants of the Muses sing of thee, celebrating thee both on the seven-stringed lute on the mountains, and in hymns unaccompanied by the lyre: in Sparta, when returns the annual circle in the season of the Carnean month, when the moon is up the whole night long; and in splendid and happy Athens. Such a song hast thou left by thy death to the minstrels of melodies. Would that it rested with me, and that I could waft thee to the light from the

mansions of Pluto, and from Cocytus' streams, by the oar of that infernal river. For thou, O unexampled, O dear among women, thou didst dare to receive thy husband from the realms below in exchange for thine own life. Light may the earth from above fall upon thee, lady! and if thy husband chooses any other alliance, surely he will be much detested by me and by thy children. When his mother was not willing for him to hide her body in the ground, nor his aged father, but these two wretches, having hoary locks, dared not to rescue him they brought forth, yet thou in the vigor of youth didst depart, having died for thy husband. May it be mine to meet with another such a dear wife; for rare in life is such a portion, for surely she would live with me forever without once causing pain.

HERCULES, CHORUS.

HER. Strangers, inhabitants of the land of Pheres, can I find Admetus within the palace?

CHOR. The son of Pheres is within the palace, O Hercules. But tell me, what purpose sends thee to the land of the Thessalians, so that thou comest to this city of Pheres?

HER. I am performing a certain labor for the Tirynthian Eurystheus.

CHOR. And whither goest thou? on what wandering expedition art bound?

HER. After the four chariot-steeds of Diomed the Thracian.

CHOR. How wilt thou be able? Art thou ignorant of this host?

HER. I am ignorant; I have not yet been to the land of the Bistonians.

CHOR. Thou canst not be lord of these steeds without battle.

HER. But neither is it possible for me to renounce the labors *set me*.

CHOR. Thou wilt come then having slain, or being slain wilt remain there.

HER. Not the first contest this that I shall run.

CHOR. But what advance will you have made, when you have overcome their master?

HER. I will drive away the horses to king Eurystheus.

CHOR. 'Tis no easy matter to put the bit in their jaws.

HER. 'Tis, except they breathe fire from their nostrils.

CHOR. But they tear men piecemeal with their devouring jaws.

HER. The provender of mountain beasts, not horses, you are speaking of.

CHOR. Their stalls thou mayst behold with blood bestained.

HER. Son of what sire does their owner boast to be?

CHOR. Of Mars, prince of the Thracian target, rich with gold.

HER. And this labor, thou talkest of, is one my fate compels me to (*for it is ever hard and tends to steeps*); if I must join in battle with the children whom Mars begat, first indeed with Lycaon, and again with Cycnus, and I come to this third combat, about to engage with the horses and their master. But none there is, who shall ever see the son of Alcmena fearing the hand of his enemies.

CHOR. And lo! hither comes the very man Admetus, lord of this land, from out of the palace.

ADMETUS, HERCULES, CHORUS.

ADM. Hail! O son of Jove, and of the blood of Perseus.

HER. Admetus, hail thou too, king of the Thessalians!

ADM. I would I could *receive this salutation*; but I know that thou art well disposed toward me.

HER. Wherefore art thou conspicuous with thy locks shorn for grief?

ADM. I am about to bury a certain corse this day.

HER. May the God avert calamity from thy children!

ADM. My children whom I begat, live in the house.

HER. Thy father however is of full age, if he is gone.

ADM. Both he lives, and she who bore me, Hercules.

HER. Surely your wife Alcestis is not dead?

ADM. There are two accounts which I may tell of her.

HER. Speakest thou of her as dead or as alive?

ADM. She both is, and is no more, and she grieves me.

HER. I know nothing more; for thou speakest things obscure.

ADM. Knowest thou not the fate which it was doomed for her to meet with?

HER. I know that she took upon herself to die for thee.

ADM. How then is she any more, if that she promised this?

HER. Ah! do not weep for thy wife before the time; wait till this happens.

ADM. He that is about to die is dead, and he that is dead is no more.

HER. The being and the not being is considered a different thing.

ADM. You judge in this way, Hercules, but I in that.

HER. Why then dost weep? Who is he of thy friends that is dead?

ADM. A woman, a woman we were lately mentioning.

HER. A stranger by blood, or any by birth allied to thee?

ADM. A stranger; but on other account dear to this house.

HER. How then died she in thine house?

ADM. Her father dead, she lived an orphan here.

HER. Alas! Would that I had found thee, Admetus, not mourning!

ADM. As about to do what then, dost thou make use of these words?

HER. I will go to some other hearth of those who will receive a guest.

ADM. It must not be, O king: let not so great an evil happen!

HER. Troublesome is a guest if he come to mourners.

ADM. The dead are dead — but go into the house.

HER. 'Tis base however to feast with weeping friends.

ADM. The guest-chamber, whither we will lead thee, is apart.

HER. Let me go, and I will owe you ten thousand thanks.

ADM. It must not be that thou go to the hearth of another man. Lead on thou, having thrown open the guest-chamber that is separate from the house: and tell them that have the management, that there be plenty of meats; and shut the gates in the middle of the hall: it is not meet that feasting guests should hear groans, nor should they be made sad.

CHOR. What are you doing? when so great a calamity is before you, Admetus, hast thou the heart to receive guests? wherefore art thou foolish?

ADM. But if I had driven him who came my guest from my house, and from the city, would you have praised me rather? No in sooth, since my calamity had been no whit the less, but I the more inhospitable: and in addition to my evils, there had been this other evil, that mine should be called the stranger-hating house. But I myself find this man a most excellent host, whenever I go to the thirsty land of Argos.

CHOR. How then didst thou hide thy present fate, when a friend, as thou thyself sayest, came?

ADM. He never would have been willing to enter the house if he had known aught of my sufferings. And to him indeed, I ween, acting thus, I appear not to be wise, nor will he praise me; but my house knows not to drive away, nor to dishonor guests.

CHORUS.

O greatly hospitable and ever liberal house of this man, thee even the Pythian Apollo, master of the lyre, deigned to inhabit, and endured to become a shepherd in thine abodes, through the sloping hills piping to thy flocks his pastoral nuptial hymns. And there were wont to feed with them, through delight of his lays, both the spotted lynxes, and the bloody troop of lions came having left the forest of Othrys; disported too around thy cithern, Phœbus, the dappled

fawn, advancing with light pastern beyond the lofty-feathered pines, joying in the gladdening strain. Wherefore he dwelleth in a home most rich in flocks by the fair-flowing lake of Bœbe; and to the tillage of his fields, and the extent of his plains, toward that dusky *part of the heavens*, where the sun stays his horses, makes the clime of the Molossians the limit, and holds dominion as far as the portless shore of the Ægean Sea at Pelion. And now having thrown open his house he hath received his guest with moistened eyelid, weeping over the corse of his dear wife, who but now died in the palace: for a noble disposition is prone to reverence [of the guest]. But in the good there is all manner of wisdom. And confidence is seated on my soul that the man who reveres the Gods will fare prosperously.

ADMETUS, CHORUS.

ADM. Ye men of Pheræ that are kindly present, my servants indeed bear aloft the corse, having every thing fit for the tomb, and for the pyre. But do you, as is the custom, salute the dead going forth on her last journey.

CHOR. And lo! I see thy father advancing with his aged foot, and attendants bearing in their hands adornment for thy wife, due honors of those beneath.

PHERES, ADMETUS, CHORUS.

PHE. I am at present sympathizing in thy misfortunes, my son: for thou hast lost (*no one will deny*) a good and a chaste wife; but these things indeed thou must bear, though hard to be borne. But receive this adornment, and let it go with her beneath the earth: Her body 'tis right to honor, who in sooth died to save thy life, my son, and made me to be not childless, nor suffered me to waste away deprived of thee in an old age of misery. But she has made most illustrious the life of all women, having dared this noble action. O thou that hast preserved my son here, and hast raised us up who were falling, farewell, and may it be well with thee even in the mansions of Pluto! I affirm that such

marriages are profitable to men, or that it is not meet to marry.

ADM. Neither hast thou come bidden of me to this funeral, nor do I count thy presence among things acceptable. But she here never shall put on thy decorations; for in no wise shall she be buried indebted to what thou hast. Then oughtest thou to have grieved with me, when I was in danger of perishing. But dost thou, who stoodest aloof, and permittedst another, a young person, thyself being old, to die, weep over this dead body? Thou wert not then really the father of me, nor did she, who says she bore me, and is called my mother, bear me; but born of slavish blood I was secretly put under the breast of thy wife. Thou showedst when thou camest to the test, who thou art; and I deem that I am not thy son. Or else surely thou exceedest all in nothingness of soul, who being of the age thou art, and having come to the goal of life, neither hadst the will nor the courage to die for thy son; but sufferedst this stranger lady, whom alone I might justly have considered both mother and father. And yet thou mightst have run this race for glory, hadst thou died for thy son. But at any rate the remainder of the time thou hadst to live was short: and I should have lived and she the rest of our days, and I should not, bereft of her, be groaning at my miseries. And in sooth thou didst receive as many things as a happy man should receive; thou passedst the vigor of thine age indeed in sovereign sway, but I was thy son to succeed thee in this palace, so that thou wert not about to die childless and leave a desolate house for others to plunder. Thou canst not however say of me, that I gave thee up to die, dishonoring thine old age, whereas I was particularly respectful toward thee; and for this behavior both thou, and she that bare me, have made me such return. Wherefore you have no more time to lose in getting children, who will succor thee in thine old age, and deck thee when dead, and lay out thy corse; for I will not bury thee with this mine hand; for I in sooth