

GLAUKE.

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Glauke. by William John Rous

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WILLIAM JOHN ROUS

GLAUKE.

GLAUKÉ.

BY

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ARGUMENT.

THE hero, Jason, who was residing in Korinth with his wife Medea, divorced her, in order to marry Glauké, who is sometimes also called Kreusa, daughter of Kreon, king of that city. Medea, who was a proficient in the magic art so much practised in Kolchis, her native country, prepared a robe, or according to Hyginus in his book of fables, a crown with a subtle mixture of inflammable ingredients.

Either or both she sent as a present to Glauké, who, as she put them on, burst out in a flame that could not be quenched.

The fire communicated itself to her father, and from him to the palace and the city, which was entirely consumed.

GLAUKÉ.

IT was ill done what I this day have done,
And evil guerdon follows evil deed ;
Their fore-appointed course the seasons run,
And chilling frosts to summer heat succeed.
Imperious nature's mandates they fulfil,
Their alternations blindly they await,
But mortals weak in force, perverse of will,
Imagine fondly they can cope with fate.
It was ill done what I have done this day,
And I have wedded whom I should not wed ;
I march upon a blood-bedabbléd way,
I trample on the ashes of the dead.
For Jason ne'er from Korinth's royal tree
Had gathered to himself ill-omened fruit,
Had not Absyrtus mangled by the sea
Detained Æetes in his fierce pursuit.
And now recurs a vision to my mind,
For visions ever are from heaven sent ;
'Twas in the long ago, and I was blind
And careless, heeding no presentiment.

Long, long forgotten, why must I recall
That dream, if dream it were, with new affright ?
I was reclining in the silent hall,
As evening slowly faded into night,
My father entered softly, Korinth's king,
And with a smile that was not all a smile,
And tuneless voice that had no mirthful ring,
Stood strangely gazing on me for a while.
A bird, my Glauké, hither o'er the seas
Hath flown, or skimmed along the billows' crest ;
Perchance in search of the Hesperidés
He roamed, or some bright island of the west.
That know I not in sooth, but this I know,
He cometh from the land of rising sun ;
Such radiant guest can never token woe,
And were it so, our fate we cannot shun.
So from my father I received the bird,
His feathers coruscated like a star
In fitful change of light, and I had heard
That such the bearers of great Heré's car.
But as to take the bird I bent me down
In overflow of childish frolic gay,
And smoothed upon his head the ruffled crown,
And from his plumage dried the glist'ning spray,

There pealed upon the air an awful cry
As though came rushing foes through bursten gate,
Or factious citizens were hurrying by
To slake in kindred blood their murd'rous hate.
The heavens quivered with a lurid glare,
And o'er my shrinking form burst fiery rain,
One long long pang of anguish and despair,
And horror numbed in vacancy my brain.
Now am I wise when to be wise 'tis late,
For Jason, like the bird, o'er eastern sea
Came wafted—warnéd I have challenged fate ;
Though what the sudden horror-cry may be,
And what the fiery rain I cannot tell.
Lo! Jason cometh, he must not surprise,
Where he had fondly deeméd all was well,
A lurking terror mirrored in my eyes.
She turned, on Jason cast one hasty glance,
And then her heart grew chill with sudden fear,
His words, as though she heard them in a trance,
Half comprehended fell upon her ear.
To all the Gods high praise, to Heré first
My guardian on the distant Kolchian shore,
For she the fetters of enchantment burst,
And winged to Hellas the returning oar.
With heavy meed of suffering, grievous toil,