PROMETHEUS BOUNDM, AND OTHER POEMS; INCLUDING SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE, CASA GUIDI WINDOWS, ETC.

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Prometheus Boundm, and Other Poems; Including Sonnets from the Portuguese, Casa Guidi Windows, Etc. by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

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ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

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POEMS

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PROMETHEUS BOUND.

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PROMETHEUS BOUND.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

PRONETHEUS.

Zeus's will

HIPBESTOS.

OCEANDS. DERNES. lo, daughter of leaches. STRENGTH and PORCE.

CHORUS of Ocean Nymphs.

Scene.—Streeners and Force, Heybreston and Pronestanus, at the Rocks.

Strength.

WE reach the utmost limit of the earth,
The Seythian track, the desert without man,—
And now, Hephastus, thou must needs fulfill
The mandate of our father, and, with links
Indissoluble of adamantine chains,
Fasten against this beetling precipice,
This guilty god! Because he filched away
Thine own bright flower, the glory of plastic fire,
And gifted mortals with it,—such a sin,
It doth behoove he expiate to the gods,
And learn free service to the rule of Zeus,
And leave disused his trick of loving man.

Hephastus. O Strength and Force,—for you, our

Presents a deed for doing.—No more!—but I, I lack your daring, up this storm-rent chasm, To fix with violent hands a kindred god, Howbeit necessity compels me so

That I must dare it,—and our Zeus commands
With word as heavy as bolts—inevitable!
Ho!—lofty son of Themis, who is sage,
Thee loth, I loth, must rivet fast in chains
Against this rocky height unclomb by man,
Where never human voice nor face shall find
Out thee, who lov'st them!—where thy beauty's
flower.

Scorched in the sun's clear heat, shall fade away, And night come up with garniture of stars. To comfort thee with shadow, and the sun Disperse, with retrickt beams, the morning frosts; And through all changes, sense of present woe Shall vex thee sore, because, with none of them There comes a hand to free. Such fruit is plucked From love of man!—for in that thou, a god, Didst brave the wrath of gods, and give away Undue respect to mortals; for that crime Thou art adjudged to guard this joyless rock, Erect, unslumbering, bending not the knee, And many a cry and unavailing moan To utter on the air! For Zeus is stern, And new-made kings are cruel.

Strength. Be it so.
Why loiter in vain pity? Why not hate
A god the gods hate?—one too who betrayed
Thy glory unto men?

Hephastus. An awful thing Is kinship joined to friendship.

Strength. Grant it be;

Is disobedience to the Father's word

A possible thing? Dost quail not more for that?

Hephæstus. Thou, at least, art a stern one! ever bold!