

**TRANSLATIONS  
FROM LUCIAN'S  
DIALOGUES**

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Translations from Lucian's dialogues by A. M. W.

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**A. M. W.**

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TRANSLATIONS.

TIMON.

*T.* Jove! lightning-flashing! thunderer! and avenger  
Of deeds that violate the sacred hearth!  
Jove! cloud-compeller! guardian of the stranger!—  
Or by whatever title, in a dearth  
Of thought, moon-stricken Poets thee rehearse,  
To prop the structure of a falling verse,—  
  
Why sleeps thy thunderbolt? so eadent once,  
In ire destructive, and in sound terrific:  
It scarce retains a sparkle "for the nonce,"  
When impious men require its use specific:  
Nor fear they, from the menaced stroke recoiling,  
Aught but the scattered soot, their garments soiling.

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It was not so, at first : thy fervent hand  
 Bade lightnings frequent flash, and thunders rattle :  
 Hail fell like rocks, and earthquakes shook the land,  
 And perjured men expected instant battle :  
 Nay, in a deluge they had perished all—  
 But that a boat preserved a remnant small,—

Preserved for more flagitiousness, it seems ;  
 For who regard thee ?—or with gifts adore thee ?  
 Unless some victor at Olympia deems  
 It decent to display his wreaths before thee :  
 E'en *there*, thy curls were lately shorn away,  
 While thy ten-cubit bolt in thy dull right-hand lay.

Salmeoneus, hence—bold from thy inattention,—  
 Prompt to all ill the man, (so less the wonder.)  
 Boasting to equal thee by his invention,  
 Thundered against thee with his mimic thunder ;  
 And oaths, extortions, perjuries without number,  
 Fail to disturb thy mandragorean slumber.

But public grievances, for private, leaving—  
 See what Athenians, by my kindness gifted  
 With affluence—all who asked of me receiving—  
 And from a mean estate to power uplifted :  
 In fact, so prodigal was I of pelf,  
 To all I gave, till I had none myself.

And now these men,—who on my steps attended,  
 With flattery and with reverence wont to greet me,  
 As if their life were on my nod suspended,—  
 All onward pass, if they by chance should meet me,  
 As by the sepulchre of one long dead,  
 The pillar fallen and the name unread.

So, a hired labourer in this desert spot,  
 My dress the shaggy covering of a beast,  
 I dig, content that *here* I witness not  
 Those have most honours who deserve the least :  
 And, with my mattock, in this solitude,  
 Wisdom I woo, as ne'er before I wooed.

Now, son of Saturn and of Rhea! waking—  
 Longer than Epimenides thou sleepest—  
 Thyself to Etna strenuously betaking,  
 Re-light the brands that half-extinct thou keepest :  
 Unless, indeed, what Cretans say be true—  
 And *they* thy *sepulchre* expose to view !

*Jove.* Hermes! who is this person, at the base  
 Of Mount Hymettus, thus so loudly railing?  
 The rocky ground he digs, with downward face,  
 A general squalor in his mien prevailing :  
 Some Sophist he must be, pert and loquacious—  
 None but your Sophist would be thus audacious.



*H.* Why, father! you are surely not forgetting  
 Timon, the son of Echeeratides,  
 Who, perfect hecatombs before us setting,  
 Honoured so oft your high solemnities.

*J.* This *he!*—the slipperiness of high position!  
 But what reduced him to this mean condition?

*H.* 'Twas charity—philanthropy—civility,  
 That pushed him down from his exalted station;  
 Or rather, an unreasoning facility  
 That gave to all, without discrimination;  
 Till, fleeced, and flayed, and robbed of all his store,  
 Those he enriched, his very name ignore.

*J.* Well, this is not a man to be neglected:  
 Justly his case as cruel were regarded,  
 And we, of like ingratitude suspected,  
 Were his past sacrifices unrewarded.  
 What fat of bulls and goats! whilst I am speaking  
 The odour yet seems in my nostrils reeking!

But, on philosophy the declamations  
 From Attica ascending, and, o'er all,  
 The war of words, and endless altercations  
 About a something which they "virtue" call,  
 Forced me to stop my ears while these proceeded.  
 And thus the case of Timon passed unheeded.

But summon Plutus hither, with his treasures,  
 And bid him take to Timon all his stores ;  
 Nor leave him, though he seem, by foolish measures,  
 Resolved again to turn him out of doors,  
 The traitors, to his charity indebted,  
 Shall feel my anger, when my bolt is whetted.

Two of its longest rays are blunt, or broken :  
 At Anaxagoras I meant to aim it,  
 For bold discourse against our godship spoken—  
 Denying it to all of us who claim it :  
 But Pericles, his arm aloft extending,  
 With hand outstretched the Sophist's head defending.

Turned it aside—and winged by all my ire,  
 Full on the Anakeion\* down it clattered  
 With erring force,—and setting that on fire  
 Itself against the marble nearly shattered :  
 However, Timon's new-regained prosperity  
 Will sting these men, meanwhile, with some severity

*H.* Now what a thing it is, to boldly call,

And force attention by vociferous braying !  
 Nor in the courts, alone, where pleaders bawl ;  
 How useful too, to mortals when they're praying !  
 Timon might long that rock with mattock hammer,  
 But that he forced Jove's notice by his clamour.

\* The Anakeion was the Temple of Jupiter's two sons, Castor and Pollux.

*Enter PLUTUS.*

*P.* But, Jupiter, to Timon *I'm* not going.

*J.* Why not, best Plutus, when Jove bids thee go?

*P.* Because, my treasures out of windows throwing,  
 As burning coal men from their fingers throw,  
 And almost as by pitchfork me expelling—  
 His father's friend, he drove me from his dwelling.

*J.* Experience has to better manners brought him,  
 And from his mattock he had learned full well—  
 Had not his aching reins the lesson taught him—  
 How riches squalid indigence excel:  
 Fear not, henceforward, aught from him, of perilous,  
 But, surely, Plutus! you are somewhat querulous.

Timon you blame, that, neither strict nor jealous,  
 With open doors he left you free to roam;  
 Yet others you accuse as over-zealous,  
 Who lock you up and make you stay at home;  
 Windows and doors secure for ever keeping,  
 With scarce a glimpse of daylight through them peeping.

And want of exercise, and want of air,  
 Produces, you complain, your aspect squalid;  
 Throws o'er your brow its look of anxious care,  
 And sicklies over your complexion pallid;  
 And state yourself, by force or by evasion,  
 Resolved to fly them on the first occasion.