

**THE PLAYS
OF AESCHYLUS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649672523

The Plays of Aeschylus by Aeschylus & Robert Porter & Henry Morley

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

AESCHYLUS & ROBERT PORTER & HENRY MORLEY

THE PLAYS OF AESCHYLUS

O
THE PLAYS
OF
ÆSCHYLUS

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY

ROBERT POTTER

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY HENRY MORLEY

LL. D., PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE AT
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON

THIRD EDITION

LONDON
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS, LIMITED
BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL,
MANCHESTER AND NEW YORK

1892

MORLEY'S UNIVERSAL LIBRARY.

1. *Sheridan's Plays.*
2. *Plays from Molière.* By English Dramatists.
3. *Marlowe's Faustus* and *Goethe's Faust.*
4. *Chronicle of the Cid.*
5. *Rabelais' Gargantua and the Heroic Deeds of Pantagruel.*
6. *Machiavelli's Prince.*
7. *Bacon's Essays.*
8. *Defoe's Journal of the Plague Year.*
9. *Locks on Civil Government* and *Filmer's "Patriarcha."*
10. *Butler's Analogy of Religion.*
11. *Dryden's Virgil.*
12. *Scott's Demonology and Witchcraft.*
13. *Herrick's Hesperides.*
14. *Coleridge's Table-Talk.*
15. *Boccaccio's Decameron.*
16. *Sterne's Tristram Shandy.*
17. *Chapman's Homer's Iliad.*
18. *Medieval Tales.*
19. *Voltaire's Candide,* and *Johnson's Rasselas.*
20. *Jonson's Plays and Poems.*
21. *Hobbes's Leviathan.*
22. *Samuel Butler's Hudibras.*
23. *Ideal Commonwealths.*
24. *Cavendish's Life of Wolsey.*
- 25 & 26. *Don Quixote.*
27. *Burlesque Plays and Poems.*
28. *Dante's Divine Comedy.* LONGFELLOW'S Translation.
29. *Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield, Plays, and Poems.*
30. *Fables and Proverbs from the Sanskrit. (Hitopadesa.)*
31. *Lamb's Essays of Elia.*
32. *The History of Thomas Ellwood.*
33. *Emerson's Essays, &c.*
34. *Southey's Life of Nelson.*
35. *De Quincey's Confessions of an Opium-Eater, &c.*
36. *Stories of Ireland.* By Miss EDDYBORTH.
37. *Frere's Aristophanes: Acharnians, Knights, Birds.*
38. *Burke's Speeches and Letters.*
39. *Thomas à Kempis.*
40. *Popular Songs of Ireland.*
41. *Potter's Æschylus.*
42. *Goethe's Faust: Part II.* AMSTER'S Translation.
43. *Famous Pamphlets.*
44. *Franklin's Sophocles.*
45. *M. G. Lewis's Tales of Terror and Wonder.*
46. *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation.*
47. *Drayton's Barons' Wars, Nymphidia, &c.)*
48. *Cobbett's Advice to Young Men.*
49. *The Banquet of Dante.*
50. *Walker's Original.*
51. *Schiller's Poems and Ballads.*
53. *Peele's Plays and Poems.* Harrington's *Oceana.*
54. *Euripides: Alcestis and other Plays.*
55. *Fraud's Essays.*
56. *Traditional Tales.* ALLAN CUMMINGHAM.
57. *Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity. Books I.-IV.*
58. *Euripides: The Bacchantes and other Plays.*
59. *Isaac Walton's Lives.*
60. *Aristotle's Politics.*
61. *Euripides: Hecuba and other Plays.*
62. *Rabelais—Sequel to Pantagruel.*
63. *A Miscellany.*

"Marvels of clear type and general neatness."—*Daily Telegraph.*

9a9.512.10



Grates

INTRODUCTION.

ÆSCHYLUS was born in the year 525 before Christ. He was born in Eleusis, a town of Attica, placed on a height near the sea, and opposite the island of Salamis. The river Cephissus flowed through the surrounding plain. Eleusis was a town sacred to the worship of Demeter (Latin, Ceres), Mother Earth, and her daughter Persephone (Proserpine) in whom Pluto took a share typical of the change from summer to winter in the seasons. From Athens to Eleusis there was a Sacred Way with monuments on either side of it, and a Temple of Apollo. Once a year a great procession travelled on that way from Athens to the celebration of the Eleusinian mysteries, the most sacred in all Greece. The old temple of Demeter in Eleusis was standing in the time of Æschylus, whose father Euphorion is supposed to have been one of its priests. That temple was burnt by the Persians in the year 484 before Christ, in the lifetime of the poet, who was then forty-one years old. The struggle with Persia brought out the full energy of Greece. Literature, which is the expression of the highest life of man, always rises with the energies of which it comes. A people battling strenuously for what it cares for, and should care for, with its entire mind, lifts its thought up to the heights on which alone true poets can be bred. Such energies make strength in every way, and with it the force that creates wealth: then

follows luxury, by which men are tempted to rival one another in misuse of time; then literature comes down from the heights, descends to satire, or else babbles elegant and empty criticism on the regions she has left. But *Æschylus* was born among the mysteries that felt God's presence in the very earth he trod, and in a day of conflict that could put heroic life into the common citizen of Greece. When thirty-five years old, *Æschylus* not only fought at Marathon, but earned public distinction there "among the bravest of the brave." He was born poet, and poet born into the light of noble days. An old fable tells that when *Æschylus* was a boy *Dionysus* (Latin, *Bacchus*) appeared in dream to him. The boy had fallen asleep while watching a vineyard, the god in his dream bade him write tragedy, and when he awoke his first verses were made. His first public appearance as a tragic writer was at the age of twenty-five, but he was not victorious over competitors until the year in which the Persians burnt the temple of *Demeter* in *Eleusis*, when *Æschylus* was forty-one years old. He was fifty-three years old when he gained (B.C. 472) the prize at Athens with a trilogy, a set of three connected pieces of which "*The Persians*" was the first. And this is the earliest of the plays of *Æschylus* that has come down to us. He is said to have written seventy plays; but there remain to us only the seven which are here translated.

The Persian war came to an end in the year 470 B.C., and *Cimon*, the son of *Miltiades*, had sway in Athens. Two years afterwards, B.C. 468, *Æschylus*, who had then already produced the "*Seven against Thebes*," was defeated in the contest with a younger tragedian, *Sophocles*. Soon afterwards *Æschylus* went to the Court of *Hiero*, King of *Syracuse*. It is said that he had been accused at Athens of impiety for revealing some part of the *Eleusinian* mysteries in which he had been early initiated. *Hiero* died in the year 467 B.C., and *Æschylus* nine years later, at the age of sixty-seven, in the

year 458 B.C., produced his trilogy known as the *Oresteia*, the one remaining example of the practice of establishing a poetical connection by unity of subject and design in the three tragedies that had been frequently the number offered in competition. This practice Æschylus was first to adopt. The three plays of the *Oresteia* are the *Agamemnon*, the *Choëphoræ* and the *Eumenides*. But his plays showed that he was a hero of Marathon not in accord with the political life of Athens as it then stood. In the *Eumenides* there was an unpopular chorus of Furies, and Æschylus again left Athens, to die two years afterwards, aged sixty-nine, at Gela in Sicily, B.C. 456. An oracle is said to have foretold that Æschylus would die by a blow from heaven. This oracle is said to have been fulfilled by the manner of his death. An eagle wishing to crack the shell of a tortoise had carried it up to let it fall upon a stone. Mistaking the bald head of the poet for a stone, it let the tortoise fall on that. Spenser applied the tradition to Archbishop Grindal struck by the bolt of Elizabeth's wrath, the Queen being the eagle and the tortoise a political problem :

For sitting so with baréd scalp
 An eagle soared high
 That, weening his white head was chalk,
 A shell-fish down let fly.
 She weened the shell-fish to have broke
 But therewith bruised his brain :
 So now astonied with the stroke
 He lies in lingering pain.

Æschylus was the first of the three great tragedians of ancient Greece; first in time and highest in power. Sophocles said that he did what was right without knowing it. He himself spoke of his plays as fragments from the great banquet of Homer. His grandeur of thought becomes akin to the prophetic strain of an Isaiah, when in his "Prometheus Bound" he shadows out a Fate before which the old gods shall bow, and pierces to the sense of days that are not yet.

From dramatic recitations by a single actor, joined to song and dance of a trained chorus, Æschylus first passed to the employment of a second actor, each actor changing his mask to change his part. This was the first introduction of a true dramatic dialogue, and the dialogue then became the main part of the play, the use of the chorus being limited. But a second actor gave opportunity only for scenes of dialogue between two persons of the story at one time. Sophocles first introduced a third actor to take part in dialogue upon the stage, and Æschylus afterwards adopted this improvement. Æschylus also improved the masks in use, and the whole manner of representing persons of the story, and he taught the chorus to be actors, enforcing by their gestures and their dance movements the poetic purpose of each scene. To him a "well-trod stage" was a first necessity, if he was to show poetry in action.

We have come down from Olympus to the mole-hill—say, rather, the mud-heap—when we have left Prometheus for the Parisian stage villain in evening dress who lolls and lounges and lights cigarettes. But let Apollo answer it. The sun himself breeds maggots in a dead dog, being a god kissing carrion. From Æschylus to Monsieur Maquignon is it not change from free flight of the soul to lively rotting of the body it has left? In the name of Æschylus, their great forefather, let dramatists and actors dare to mount. Some dare; let others follow. Life is longer on the hill than by the marsh. There is not a poor super on the stage who has no day to mark with a victory in which he may find, like Æschylus, his Marathon, and through which he learns to flash, out of a true thought in himself, life giving fire into the true conception of the poet, consuming fire on the false offerings that scatter filth upon the altar of his Art.

H. M.

August 1886.

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

PROMETHEUS CHAINED.

ÆSCHYLUS wrote three Tragedies on the story of Prometheus: the first exhibited him as carrying the sacred gift of fire to men; the second as chained to Caucasus; the third as delivered from his chains. Of these the second only remains to us. The short account which Prometheus gives in this of the barbarous state of man before he taught them the civilizing arts makes us regret the loss of the first; and we have good reason to imagine that the portrait of Hercules in the third, delineated by this great master, must have been inimitable. There is in this remaining drama a sublimity of conception, a strength, a fire, a certain savage dignity peculiar to this bold writer. The scenery is the greatest that the human imagination ever formed: the wild and desolate rock frowning over the sea, the stern and imperious sons of Pallas and Styx holding up Prometheus to its rifted side whilst Vulcan fixes his chains, the Nymphs of the Ocean flying to its summit to commiserate his unhappy state, old Oceanus on his hippogriff, the appearance of Iō, the descent of Mercury, the whirlwind tearing up the sands, swelling the boisterous sea, and dashing its waves to the stars, the vollied thunders rolling all their fiery rage against the rock, and the figure of Prometheus unappalled at this terrible storm, and bidding defiance to Jupiter, would