

**THE CONSOLATION
OF PHILOSOPHY OF
BOETHIUS**

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The consolation of philosophy of Boethius by Anonymous .

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THE CONSOLATION
OF
PHILOSOPHY

ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἐν τοῦτοις διαλάμπει τὸ καλόν,
ἐπειδὴν φέρη τις εὐκόλως πολλὰς καὶ μεγάλας
ἀτυχίας, μὴ δὲ ἀναληψίαν, ἀλλὰ γεννάδας
ὦν καὶ μεγαλόψυχος.

Aristotle's *Ethics*, I, xi, 12.

THE
Consolation of Philosophy
of Boethius

TRANSLATED BY
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PREFACE

THE book called *The Consolation of Philosophy* was throughout the Middle Ages, and down to the beginnings of the modern epoch in the sixteenth century, the scholar's familiar companion. Few books have exercised a wider influence in their time. It has been translated into every European tongue, and into English nearly a dozen times, from King Alfred's paraphrase to the translations of Lord Preston, Causton, Ridpath, and Duncan, in the eighteenth century. The belief that what once pleased so widely must still have some charm is my excuse for attempting the present translation. The great work of Boethius, with its alternate prose and verse, skilfully fitted together like dialogue and chorus in a Greek play, is unique in literature, and has a pathetic interest from the time and circumstances of its composition. It ought not to be forgotten. Those who can go to the original will find their reward. There may be room also for a new translation in English after an interval of close on a hundred years.

I have to thank my brother, Mr L. James, of Radley College, for much valuable help and for correcting the proof-sheets of the translation. The text used is that of Peiper, Leipsic, 1874.

PROEM

ANICIUS MANLIUS SEVERINUS BOETHIUS lived in the last quarter of the fifth century A.D., and the first quarter of the sixth. He was growing to manhood, when Theodoric, the famous Ostrogoth, crossed the Alps and made himself master of Italy. Boethius belonged to an ancient family, which boasted a connection with the legendary glories of the Republic, and was still among the foremost in wealth and dignity in the days of Rome's abasement. His parents dying early, he was brought up by Symmachus, whom the age agreed to regard as of almost saintly character, and afterwards became his son-in-law. His varied gifts, aided by an excellent education, won for him the reputation of the most accomplished man of his time. He was orator, poet, musician, philosopher. It is his peculiar distinction to have handed on to the Middle Ages the tradition of Greek philosophy by his Latin translations of the works of Aristotle. Called early to a public career, the highest honours of the State came to him unsought. He was