Classics

From the Renaissance to the nineteenth century, Latin and Greek were compulsory subjects in almost all European universities, and most early modern scholars published their research and conducted international correspondence in Latin. Latin had continued in use in Western Europe long after the fall of the Roman empire as the lingua franca of the educated classes and of law, diplomacy, religion and university teaching. The flight of Greek scholars to the West after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 gave impetus to the study of ancient Greek literature and the Greek New Testament. Eventually, just as nineteenth-century reforms of university curricula were beginning to erode this ascendancy, developments in textual criticism and linguistic analysis, and new ways of studying ancient societies, especially archaeology, led to renewed enthusiasm for the Classics. This collection offers works of criticism, interpretation and synthesis by the outstanding scholars of the nineteenth century.

Alcestis of Euripides

T.W.C. Edwards's edition of Monk's 1816 translation of Euripides's Alcestis was published in 1824. Edwards used the earlier work to form the basis of a parallel pedagogic text, adding copious notes for the use of students of ancient Greek. Alcestis is Euripides's earliest surviving play; a 'problem play' that shares much with tragedy, but has a happy ending. Admetus marries Alcestis who offers to die in his place after he angers the goddess Artemis. She is rescued from death by Heracles who returns her in disguise to her husband. Admetus refuses to marry this unknown woman, having vowed celibacy after what he believed was his wife's death, but she is revealed as Alcestis to much rejoicing. The play was originally performed at the Athenian Dionysia in 438 BC, where it formed the final part of an otherwise lost tetralogy of plays, replacing the traditional satyr play.
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Alcestis of Euripides

Literally Translated into English Prose from the Text of Monk with the Original Greek, the Metres, the Order, and English Accentuation

T.W.C. Edwards
THE

ALCESTIS OF EURIPIDES,

LITERALLY TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH PROSE;

FROM

THE TEXT OF MONK.
ΕΥΡΙΠΙΔΟΣ ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΣ.

THE

ALCESTIS OF EURIPIDES,

LITERALLY TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH PROSE;

FROM

THE TEXT OF MONK:

WITH

THE ORIGINAL GREEK, THE METRES, THE ORDER, AND ENGLISH ACCENTUATION.

TO WHICH ARE SUBJOINED

NUMEROUS EXPLANATORY NOTES.

FOR THE USE OF STUDENTS.

BY

T. W. C. EDWARDS, M.A.

LONDON:

MATTHEW ILEY, SOMERSET ST. PORTMAN SQ.

SOLD BY TALBOYS, OXFORD; NEWBY, CAMBRIDGE; AND BELL AND BRADFUTE, EDINBURGH.

1824.
TO

JOHN SCOTT, M.D.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS,
&c. &c. &c.

BEDFORD SQUARE, LONDON.

DEAR SIR,

The warm interest you have ever taken in the success of my Works, from the period of their first appearance, and the kind exertions you have made to promote that success, I feel with the liveliest pleasure,—and acknowledge with the most unfeigned thankfulness.

The elevated rank you hold in society, in your Profession, and in the world of letters has greatly enhanced the value of your friendship, and determined me to lay myself under further obligations to you, by constituting you Patron of the following Play, The Alcestis of Euripides.

In it I have endeavoured to profit by the judicious hints you some time ago had the condescension to give me, respecting idiomatic phrases and the use of particles, particularly of expletives, which in Greek Poetry are often redundant to the sense, although necessary to the rhythm. As, however, I profess to abide in my Translations as nearly as I can by the original, and as, in general, I offer some meaning for every word of the text, I have still been unable to adhere so closely to the strict signification of those and other parts of speech, as either your friendly suggestions or my own ardent wish prompted. For less, then, I lament to say, has it been in my power, with all my striving, to put in practice the most excellent advice with which I was recently honored by the Lord Bishop of St. David’s, namely, “To adopt as much as possible the phraseology of Shakespeare.” The desirableness of so doing is great, but the difficulty of accomplishing it is greater!

Most happy should I have been to have had the ability (for the will was not wanting) to effect my Versions in a manner more worthy of your patronage, and of the approbation of the Right Reverend Prelate above named: but in the absence of such ability, I must content myself with the consciousness of having possessed the will, and with the certainty that both you and he, not less distinguished for your acquirements and zeal in the cause of learning, than remarkable for a spirit of candor, will examine the
DEDICATION.

following pages with the lenity they require,—and that ye will throw a veil over minor imperfections—recollecting that the object of the Work is the facilitation of a very difficult, but most useful, branch of classical knowledge.

The language is that in which your favorite Hippocrates of Cos wrote his Aphorisms, upwards of seventy generations ago: it is the language, through the medium of which we moderns have derived much instruction, and have reaped varied delight, and have received the message of the gladdest of tidings.

If the heroes, and sages, and geniuses of antiquity have long since crumbled to dust, so we to dust must crumble:—but in the message of glad tidings we have the consoling hope that the crumbled and scattered dust of our earthly tenements shall be re-vivified, and be again united to the soul to be dis-united no more.

This thought and this consoling hope serve as a check to our pride upon the one hand, and as a spur to the faithful discharge of our several duties on the other. But some men there are who stand in little or no need either of check or spur, being naturally of mild and unassuming manners; and incapable, from an innate love of virtue, of practising vice: these merit the greatest commendation; and fortunate would it be for the world that folks of this description were more numerous. Where, however, nature proves defective, education will frequently succeed in restraining the passions, and in bettering the heart. Indeed few can read the writings of Euripides, particularly his Alcestis, without feeling the strongest inducement to lean to the side of virtue, and to detest vice; so full are they of morality, and of tenderness, and of exquisite sensibility, that even the most hardened are melted to tears at the representation of so much suffering and of so much wo: they possess, besides, the power of charming those who peruse them, not merely once, but again and again.

This pleasure you have often experienced:—that you may very long continue to experience it, and to enjoy all the happiness arising from domestic comfort, a cultivated mind, the blessing of health, the smile of fortune, the esteem of your countrymen, the consciousness of having done your duty, and the pious hope of eternal felicity, is the hearty wish of,

Dear Sir,

Your obliged and obedient Servant,

London, Sept. 23rd 1824.

T. W. C. Edwards
TO

THE READER.

There are many, who, possessing in reality very little knowledge, yet wishing withal to be thought extremely erudite, are constantly yelping that “the interests of sound learning are in danger,” whenever they hear of any Work, of which the object is to render the attainment of any branch of literature easy: and these are joined in the cry by another set, whose bread indeed depends on their making a vast secret of the scanty knowledge they have themselves picked up, (viz. a smattering of the Greek and Roman languages, with little or nothing besides,) dealing it out in miserably small portions at a very enormous price.

All such persons are unworthy of the name they assume: for, in the first place, an intimate acquaintance with the Classics is, in itself, an acquisition of comparatively small value: and what, then, must the worth of a smattering be? An acquaintance with the Classics, I say, is comparatively of very small value of itself, being merely an Introduction to Grammar and to Refinedness of Taste: whereas, sound learning, as I understand the expression, means a thorough knowledge of all or most of the Arts and Sciences. In the second place, these yelpers are unworthy of the name they assume, because literature, which is calculated to ennoble the mind, and to inspire liberal ideas, ought not, like the petty secrets of some scurvy trade, or the tricks of jugglers, to be wrapped in mystery and darkness; but it ought to be made plain and easy of acquirement, that “they who run may read.”

I have long made up my own mind upon this subject, and whenever I hear the cry of “sound learning in danger;” I know from what quarter it comes, because no man of sound learning ever raised such a cry.

Any attempt, (how unsuccessful soever it may prove,) to facilitate the acquirement of useful knowledge, is, in my opinion, laudable: and I am well convinced that this is the sentiment of every liberal-minded and well-informed man, without exception.

Impressed with this conviction, I continue to come from time to time before the public:—and I have the pleasure of knowing, that notwithstanding the humbleness of my efforts, and the opposition of no in formidable party, I am, upon the whole, well received. The liberal make every allowance for the very great difficulty which there necessarily is in translating Greek Poetry into Literal English Prose; and for the silliness of diction, as well as (I beg pardon of the yelping guardians of sound learning,) total absence of genius in many parts of the original.

In the following Edition of the Alcestis, the Greek Text has been copied from Monk’s second Edition of that Play, which I believe is the last that has appeared, printed at Cambridge in 1618.
viii

TO THE READER.

As there are, however, in Monk’s Text, several gross mis-spellings, (as πόσος for νόσος, verse 87, —μαθήσας for μεθύσας, verse 175, —ΠΡΑ-
ΚΑΗΣ for ΠΡΑΚΑΗΣ, verse 492;) and many mis-accentuations, (as ἡ-
δειν for ἡδειν, verse 136; ἰττι for ἵττι, verse 140, and similarly in verses
45 and 147; ποτι for ποτί, verses 340 and 715; τίν for τίν, verse 497;
ταξι for ταξί, verse 555; μετε for μετή, verse 797; καῖ for καλ, verse 1034;
and σπονδας for σπονδάς, verse 1035; with very many others,) I have, of
course, corrected these: — and the uncius or brackets, which disfigure
Monk’s text, I have discarded.

In verse 77, where, on no authority whatever, the learned professor
gives ποτις for ποτις, that the penult of μεθύσας, which follows, may
remain short, I have retained ποτις, fully convinced that the vulgate
lection is the best, and that the poet intended the penult of μεθύσας
be long. Again, in verse 905, where Monk after mature consideration
thought proper to transpose the words, and to read ᾧχδος μετρων, to
the entire destruction of the rhythm, I have re-transposed them, and
edited, consenting with all MSS. and editions before Monk’s, μετρων
ᄒχδος. The word νίκε, of verse 94, I have rejected,—entertaining no
doubt whatever of its spuriousness.

Monk’s punctuation, too, I have frequently altered: — and although
I have followed him in the distribution of character, I have done so in
several instances at the expense of the sense: for who can tolerate, for
example, Semichorus for Chorus, verses 77 and 79; and Chorus for Se-
micchorus, verses 86 and 89? And yet Barnes and Monk have deemed
this arrangement the best,—in opposition to the most unquestionable
authority, and the voice of common intellect.

In verse 605, I have restored ὅμικ, disapproving in toto of Monk’s
ἵμικ, for which there does not appear to me to be the smallest neces-
sity, and certainly no warrant whatever.

The verb ἔλαυ, fléo, which Monk (consentingly, it is true, with Por-
sor,) has uniformly written ἐλαυ, frango, as being (they tell us) more
strictly Attic, I have continued to spell in the old way: and the coalesce-
cence of καλi with a long syllable aspirated, as in the words ἄδι, ἄδι, (as
Monk gives them) for καὶ ἄ and καὶ ἅ, I consider (but this is mere mat-
ter of opinion) to be more properly written and printed ἄδι and ἄδι.

Where καλi coalesces with an initial diphthong as in καῖτα for καὶ λι-
ta, I have with Monk and Porson (on the recommendation of Dawes)
retained the і' subscript, and in all other instances, as καῖπιτα for καὶ ἑ-
πιτα, I have with them rejected it, contrary to the practice of Brunck
and many other celebrated editors.

Respecting the Translation and other parts of the Work, I have no-
things new to offer,—and take the liberty of referring to the Preface of
the King ὈEdipus of Sophocles, and of the other Plays I have already
published, for a full development of my plan.

London, Sept. 23rd 1824.
SUMMARY
OF
FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES CONNECTED WITH THE PLAY.

ESCUΛAΠIUS, a beloved son of Ὀλυμπίων, and physician of old, who was considered by the ancients to be so intimately acquainted with the medicinal properties of every plant, that he was called the inventor and god of medicine, having, by his extraordinary skill, restored many recently dead persons to life, Πύθων, whose rights were thereby infringed, and whose subjects were in consequence diminished in number, complained to Jupiters of conduct so ultravermis of the natural order of things. The father of the gods being incensed, struck Αἴαντίς with lightning, and killed him; whereupon Ὀλυμπίων, to be revenged for the death of his son, slew the Σελήνη who had made the thunderbolts.

This daring act of injustice and of contempt, Jupiters punished by banishing his son Ὀλυμπίων from heaven, and sentencing him to the drudgeries of a menial on the earth for a limited time. In conformity, therefore, to the will and command of his father, Ὀλυμπίων went into exile: — and, having come into Greece, hired himself to Ἀδμήτου, king of Πηρεα, in Θέσσαλι, cheerfully submitting to rank as a servant, and faithfully discharging the duties of a shepherd for nine years.

During this sojourn of Ὀλυμπίων in the house and service of Ἀδμήτου, he was treated with uncommon kindness, and became so warmly attached to the family by the ties of gratitude and the feelings of respect, that he felt inclined to confer on his master some extraordinary favor in token of his regard, and as a mark of his entire satisfaction with the treatment he had experienced.

As Ἀδμήτου was most singularly averse to death, the greatest favor that could in any way be bestowed on him, was the means of escape from his king of terrors and terror of kings:— accordingly Ὀλυμπίων solicited the Fates in his behalf, and obtained from them, that Ἀδμήτου should never die, provided that always, when it came to his turn to die, some other person would die in his stead.

Ἀδμήτου, after the death of his first wife, had married Ἀλκεσίς, called also Ἀλκέςις, daughter of Πέλας, king of Ιζελκής. Two children, Εὖμες and Περιμέν, were the offspring of this marriage, and had not arrived at puberty when it came to their father's turn to die.

Authors are not agreed as to the precise sort of death which threatened Ἀδμήτου, but they all affirm that he found it very difficult to procure a substitute,— his aged father Πηρεα, and his mother Κληνη, having each of them peremptorily refused to redeem their son's life at the price of their own. But his noble queen Ἀλκεσίς, although yet in the flower of her youth, most generously volunteered to die for her husband.

The principal incidents of the Play are Ἀλκεσίς's death and funeral, with her restoration to life and to Ἀδμήτου by Χρήσις, who came to the palace of Πηρεα on a visit at this truly mournful, but eventually happy season; and who by dint of prowess and of sheer strength, succeeded in rescuing from the grasp of death and of the grave, the most worthy wife of the son of Πηρεα.

The pusillanimity of Ἀδμήτου, and his ingratitude and insolence to his father, are impressive of contempt for him personally,— notwithstanding the great stress laid by the Chorus on the hospitalableness of his disposition. And had Ἀλκεσίς said less of herself and of her act, she would have appeared to more advantage. Another great defect in the Fable, is the silence of Ἀλκεσίς after reawakening; although the poet accounts for it in a way not altogether unsatisfactory.

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THE ORDER, AND ENGLISH ACCENTUATION.

ΤΙΠΕΘΕΙΣ ΑΛΚΗΣΤΙΔΟΣ.

ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝ ἠσσατο πάρα τῶν Μούρων, ὡς οὐ “Ἀδμέτου, τιμεύτω μάλλον, παρά τέρα τῆς ὑπέρ ἄνωτοι στενιόμενος, ἵνα ἵνα τῷ προτέρχειν γη- σῇ” καὶ Ἀλκινώς ἡ γυνὴ ἐπίδειξεν ἴστατη, μουσικόν τῶν γονίων ἐξελάνθητος ὑπὲρ τοῦ παιδὸς ἀποβαίνει. Μετὰ ὑπὸ πολὺ, τῆς συμφωνεῖν ταύτης γενεμένης, ἡμικήλιον παραγωγομένος, καὶ μαθὼν παρὰ γεωνὶς θείαντος τὰ πε- γαὶ τῆς “Ἀλκηνῆς, ἱστορία ἦν τοῦ τάφον καὶ τῶν θαλάσσων ἀποτελοῦσα σει- θήματος, ἴστατη καλύπτει τῇ γυναικί: τῷ δὲ Ἀδμέτου ἐξίσου λαβώνα τα- ρίεις ἤλπιζεν ἵνα ἄνωτες ἄλλοι ὑπέρ μου βουλομένου δὲ ἔλημον, το- ποκαλούσας, εἶδες ὑπὲρ οὕς.

TRANSLATION.

ARGUMENT OF THE ALCESTIS.

APOLLO desired of the Fates, that Admētus, who was about to die, might give some one as a substitute to die for him, that so he might live for a term equal to his former life: — and Alcēstis his consort, neither of his parents being willing to die for their son, gave herself up. But not long after the time when this calamity took place, Hércules having arrived, and having learnt from a servant the particulars concerning Alcēstis, went to her tomb, and, having made Death retire, covers the lady with a robe: and he requested Admētus to receive and keep her for him; and said he had borne her off as a prize in wrestling: but when he would not, having unvelied her, he discovered to him whom he was lamenting.

Line 1. The Fates, called κατάξεις by the Greeks, and by the Latin, Păsca, were three most powerful Goddesses, daughters of Nox and Erebus, who were said to preside over the birth, life, and death of mankind. Their names, according to most authors, Faunusia indeed excepted, were Clōtho, Læchēsia, and Atropos. Clōtho, the youngest of the sisters, and whose office it was to regulate the time of coming into the world, was represented holding in her hand a distaff, from which Læchēsia span out the thread of human existence—teeming with action and fraught with vicissitude: Atropos, the eldest of the three, and who held in her hand a pair of scissors, snipped the thread at the moment appointed — and the pulse of life instantly ceased. — and thus to have obtained from them their compliance with his request in favor of Admētus. How much soever the Fates might have regretted the imprudence of their own conduct, and the improvidence of the concession they had made, yet they were in honor bound not to retract their promise.

Line 2. παρά τῷ ὑπὲρ ἄνωτος, might provide some person for him — might substitute some one in his stead — might furnish a deputy: — and ἵνα τῷ προτέρχειν γησῇ, literally, that he might live a time equal to his former time: that he might live as long as he had already lived.

Line 7. τῷ Ἀδμέτου ἐξίσου λαβώνα τηῆς, he requested Admētus, having received her, to keep her, i.e., to receive and keep her.

Line 8. με βουλομένου καὶνοι, he (namely, Admētus) not being willing.