



THE TROJAN WOMEN

EURIPIDES

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THE TROJAN WOMEN

BY
EURIPIDES

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH RHYMING VERSE WITH EXPLANATORY
NOTES BY GILBERT MURRAY

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The Trojan Women by Euripides.

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The Trojan Women

HECUBA: Ah, me! and is it come, the end of all,
 The very crest and summit of my days?
 I go forth from my land, and all its ways
 Are filled with fire! Bear me, O aged feet,
 A little nearer: I must gaze, and greet
 My poor town ere she fall.

Farewell, farewell!
 O thou whose breath was mighty on the swell
 Of orient winds, my Troy! Even thy name
 Shall soon be taken from thee. Lo, the flame
 Hath thee, and we, thy children, pass away
 To slavery . . . God! O God of mercy! . . . Nay:
 Why call I on the Gods? They know, they know,
 My prayers, and would not hear them long ago.
 Quick, to the flames! O, in thine agony,
 My Troy, mine own, take me to die with thee!

[She springs toward the gates, but is seized and held by the Soldiers]

TALTHYBIUS: Back! Thou art drunken with thy miseries,
 Poor woman!--Hold her fast, men, till it please
 Odysseus that she come. She was his lot

Chosen from all and portioned. Lose her not!

[He goes to watch over the burning of the City. The dusk deepens]

CHORUS: Divers Women.

Woe, woe, woe!

Thou of the Ages, O wherefore fleest thou,

Lord of the Phrygian, Father that made us?

'Tis we, thy children; shall no man aid us?

'Tis we, thy children! Seest thou, seest thou?

Others: He seeth, only his heart is pitiless;

And the land dies: yea, she,

She of the Mighty Cities perisheth citiless

Troy shall no more be!

Others: Woe, woe, woe!

Ilion shineth afar!

Fire in the deeps thereof,

Fire in the heights above,

And crested walls of War!

Others: As smoke on the wing of heaven

Climbeth and scattereth,

Torn of the spear and driven,

The land crieth for death:

O stormy battlements that red fire hath riven,

And the sword's angry breath!

[A new thought comes to HECUBA; she kneels and beats the earth with her hands]

HECUBA: [Strophe] O Earth, Earth of my children; hearken! and O mine own,

Ye have hearts and forget not, ye in the darkness lying!

LEADER: Now hast thou found thy prayer, crying to them that are gone.

HECUBA: Surely my knees are weary, but I kneel above your head;

Hearken, O ye so silent! My hands beat your bed!

LEADER: I, I am near thee;

I kneel to thy dead to hear thee,
Kneel to mine own in the darkness; O husband, hear my crying!

HECUBA: Even as the beasts they drive, even as the loads they bear,

LEADER: (Pain; O pain!)

HECUBA: We go to the house of bondage. Hear, ye dead, O hear!

LEADER: (Go, and come not again!)

HECUBA: Priam, mine own Priam,
Lying so lowly,
Thou in thy nothingness,
Shelterless, comfortless,
See'st thou the thing I am?
Know'st thou my bitter stress?

LEADER: Nay, thou art naught to him!

Out of the strife there came,
Out of the noise and shame,
Making his eyelids dim,
Death, the Most Holy!

[The fire and smoke rise constantly higher]

HECUBA: [Antistrophe] O high houses of Gods, beloved streets of my birth,
Ye have found the way of the sword, the fiery and
blood-red river!

LEADER: Fall, and men shall forget you! Ye shall lie in the
gentle earth.

HECUBA: The dust as smoke riseth; it spreadeth wide its wing;
It maketh me as a shadow, and my City a vanished thing!

LEADER: Out on the smoke she goeth,
And her name no man knoweth;

And the cloud is northward, southward; Troy is gone for ever!

[A great crash is heard, and the Wall is lost in smoke and darkness]

HECUBA: Ha! Marked ye? Heard ye? The crash of the towers that fall!

LEADER: All is gone!

HECUBA: Wrath in the earth and quaking and a flood that sweepeth all,

LEADER: And passeth on!

[The Greek trumpet sounds]

HECUBA: Farewell!-O spirit grey,

Whatso is coming,

Fail not from under me.

Weak limbs, why tremble ye?

Forth where the new long day
Dawneth to slavery!

CHORUS: Farewell from parting lips,
Farewell!--Come, I and thou,
Whatso may wait us now,
Forth to the Iong Greek ships
And the sea's foaming.

[The trumpet sounds again, and the Women go out in the darkness]
