Gift of Publisher
OE D IPS;
King of Thebes:
A
TRAGEDY.

AMS PRESS
NEW YORK
OEDIPUS;
King of Thebes:
A
TRAGEDY.

Translated from Sophocles, with Notes.

By Mr. Theobald.

Senec. in OEdip.
Please note that due to the quality of the original edition of this book the best reprint possible has been made.

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AMS PRESS INC.
NEW YORK, N. Y.
TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
LEWIS
Earl of Rockingham;
Viscount Sondes of Leescourt, and Baron of Throwley.

MY LORD,

THE Honour I have obtained in being permitted to inscribe this Poem to your Lordship, has given me an Opportunity as well of

Publick
DEDICATION.

Publick Congratulation, as Acknowledgment; of rejoicing at the just Notice his Majesty has taken of your Lordship's Merits, as of expressing my Gratitude for those vast and singular Benefits, which I owe to your Lordship's Greatness of Soul.

This is the first Trifle, my Lord, of my Production, for which I have presum'd to beg your Protection; tho' your Lordship vouchsaf'd to patronize the Author, (if I may so call it) almost from the Hour of his Birth. It is peculiarly known of your Lordship, by all that can profess to be acquainted with your Character, that wheresoever you condescend to give your Name, as it is an immediate Honour to the Parent, so you make it a certain Earnest
DEDICATION.

Earnest of your future Favour to the Child.

From this early Claim, as I grew up, I became intitled to your Lordship's Countenance and Protection: And permit me, my Lord, to boast of that chearing Influence from your Goodness, which secured me against those Calamities, that might have crush'd me, tho' the Loss of a Father, and a decaying Fortune.

Generosity never can act more powerfully, than when it is centred in a Nobleman's Breast; 'tis there, like Light, imbodied in the Sun, that always refreshes the Object it shines on. Thus, my Lord, your Favour no sooner dawn'd on me, but it was seconded with real and solid Benefits. You bestow'd an Education
DEDICATION.

Education on me, I may justly style Liberal, since for above seven Years you were pleas'd to make me a Companion for your Noble Sons.

Nor has your Generosity been confin'd to the Date of my Childhood, I still enjoy the Honour of your Smiles, and feel the Effects of an unwearied Bounty. As it would be impossible for me to mention every Particular, so, I know, nothing could more displease your Lordship's Modesty.

Yet, my Lord, the Obligations I have confessed, are so literally true, that I hope I may appeal even to your Lordship's own Breast; whether I have not strictly obey'd your Commands, in abstaining
DEDICATION.

Staining from all Approaches to Flattery.

There was no Room for an Address of that kind, where I had so strong and substantial Grounds for Admiration. All that I have yet mention'd is entirely owing to a Sense I ought always to preserve of such Obligations: Nor ought I in Silence to pass over those Applauses, which stand on Record, and usher in his Majesty's beginning Favours.

The World, as well as your Friends, my Lord, will now be convinced, that, however greatly your Lordship's Ancestors have deserved either of the Crown or their Country, Nobility of Descent is the least of your Praises. That you
DEDICATION.

you are as true an Heir to the Virtues, as to the Dignities of your Family; and that by a firm and unwavering Constancy and Zeal for the Succession in the most Severe House of Hannover, by a hearty and pious Love of Liberty and Religion as by Law establish'd, by an ardent Desire and Activity in their Defence, your Lordship has increased and adorn'd the Lustre of your Line.

May his Majesty still with as great Discernment dispense his Promotions; and may your Lordship long live and flourish under these and greater Honours, to the Service of your Country, the Joy of your Offspring, and the Satisfaction of Numbers that stand indebted to
DEDICATION.

to your Lordship's Goodness; but of none more particularly than of,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's

most Devoted,

most Obedient, and

most Humble Servant,

Lew. Theobald.

Drama-
Dramatis Personæ.

OEdipus, King of Thebes.
Creon, Brother to the Queen.
Tiresias, the Prophet.
High-Priest of Jupiter.
Messenger, from Corinth.
A Theban Messenger.
Old Shepherd.
Chorus of Thebans.

Jocasta, the Queen.
Ismene and The two young Daughters of
           OEdipus and Jocasta.

SCENE, before the Palace at Thebes.

OEDIP
OEDIPUS

ACT I. SCENE I.

SCENE represents an Altar before the Palace: The High-Priests of Jupiter attended by a Crowd of Thebans, Young and Old, set ranged about the Altar.

OEDIPUS enters to them from the Palace.

OEDIPUS.

E Sons of Thebes, Descendants of old Cadmus,
Why sit you thus? Why all this Pomp of Sadness?
These Boughs of Supplication in your Hands,
And Garlands on your Heads? while Thebes around

From
From ev'ry Quarter sends up Clouds of Incense;
And Pray'rs and Groans promiscuous fill the Air!
I would not trust Report to learn your Wants;
But see, your OEdipus himself is come
To meet your Wishes, and redress your Suff'rances.
Speak, Rev'rend Father, (Age has mark'd thee out
To this becoming Task,) why fit you thus ?
Is there some instant Evil that you dread?
Or has the Hand of Fate already crush'd you?
My Soul is fond of using all your Sorrows.
Most stern of Heart and stubborn must I be,
If this Assembly did not strongly move me.

High-Priest. O Royal OEdipus, Monarch of Thebes,
Cast round your gracious Eyes; see, what a Train
Of blended Supplicants crowd to your Altars!
Here some, whom Infant Nature yet denies
Motion or Strength; here others, hallow'd Men,
Whom Age has robb'd of their once boasted Vigour;
'Mongst whom my self, the Priest of Jove, attend:
And here, a Band of Youths, the Flow'r of Thebes!
The Remnant of your People, crown'd like us,
Sit in the Forums, at Minerva's Shrines,
And the Prophetick Altars of Apollo.

For, as your self have seen, our lab'ring City
Sinks in the Storm of Fate; nor can she longer
Raise her sick Head, and rise above the Waves.
The fruitful Products of her Earth are blasted;
Her grazing Flocks on the rank Herbage drop:
And Mothers weep to see their Off-spring perish!
King of Thebes.

The Hand of Pestilence, stretch'd o'er our Heads,
Whirls round the fiery, all-consuming Sword;
And lays the suffer'd Land of Cadmus waste:
While riotous Hell grows rich in our Destruction!
Not therefore that we count thee more than Man,
Or, as't a God, do we approach thy Shrine;
But as we judge thee well the first of Men,
In Visitations of the angry Pow'rs,
To stand betwixt us and the Wrath of Heav'n;
For Thou already once hast rescued Thebes,
From the Exactions of voracious Sphynx;
In which unaided and untaught by us,
You gave the Proof of a concurring God;
And are esteem'd, and styl'd our Great Redeemer!
Wherefore, O sacred OEdipus, we now
With Pray'rs and prostrate Bodies turn to Thee,
To find out swift Releif, or from the Voice
Of some declaring God, or humane Knowledge:
For I observe the dark Events of Time
Live in the Breath, and Counsels of the Wife.
Go on, thou Best of Men; heal our sick State;
Go on, and in our Cause consult thy Fame;
The living Glory of thy former Acts,
That have aloud proclaim'd Thee Thebes's Saviour!
How shall the Mem'ry of those Virtues last,
If, once restor'd, we after fall to Earth?
But, Oh! confirm; and plant us round with Safety.
Thy Infant Reign was gay, and crown'd with Fortune;
Be still thy self, and shed diffusive Blessings!
If thou would'st still be King, 'tis better far
To rule a Populous than empty State;
What do our Tow'rs, or Naval Walls import,
If unemploy'd, and destitute of Men!

OEdip. O my afflicted Children, well I know,
Nor am a Stranger to, your pressing Anguish;
I see you All are hard beset by Fate:
But none of you, like Me, are bow'd with Sorrow.
For all your Griefs are centred in your King;
On Me alone the mighty Load is fall'n,
And for my self, and you, and all the State,
My Soul is wounded: Never have I slept,
When Thebes demanded I should wake for her;
But you are Witnesses how I have wept;
And rack'd each painful Thought to give her Ease.
One only Hope of Rescue did I find,
And that I put in Practice; to the Dome
Of Pythian Phæbus, Creon have I sent,
Meneses' Son, my Kinsman, to enquire
What Measures must be ta'en to free this City.
Th' appointed Day for his Return is past;
And I'm in pain to know what Cause detains him.
But, when He comes, accuse Me, think Me vile,
If I perform not what the God directs.

H. Priest. In good time, hast thou spoke; for now,
the Youths
In Whispers tell me, Creon is at hand.

OEdip. O dread Apollo! May his coming prove
As prosp'rous to us, as his Looks are cheerful!
King of Thebes

H. Priest. We may conjecture well, else had He not
With Laurel Chaplets thus adorn'd his Head.

OEdip. Soon shall we know; for hence I may address
Him;
O Royal Kinman, Son of brave Manecus,
What Tidings bring'st thou from th' oraculous God? 95

ACT I. SCENE II.

CREON, OEDIPUS, PRIESTS, and THEBANS.

Creo. Good:—Ev'n Calamities, aright dispos'd,
Turn their Complexion and become propitious.

OEdip. What mean those Accents which, forbidding
Fear,
Permit me not to hope?—

Creo. Would you, my Liege,
That here I should disclose the God's Command; 100
Or shun the Croud, and in the Palace hear it?

OEdip. To All proclaim it;—It concerns the Publick;
And I have most at Heart the gen'ral Welfare.

Creo. Then thus the God directs; In Terms ex-
press,
He bids us drive Pollution from the Land; 105
The Curse we cherish; and no longer strive
With Ills that cannot otherwise be cur'd.

OEdip. What is the Curse? And how to be remov'd?

Creo.
6

OE D I P U S,

Creo. By Banishment or Death, to purge his Crime;
For Murther unreaveng'd pollutes the City. 110
OEEdip. Whose Crime? Where is the Man these
Horrors threaten?

Creo. My Lord, before you fill'd the Throne of
Thebes,
Laius was King.——

OEEdip. —— Much of his Fame, I've heard;
Tho' never I beheld his Royal Face.

Creo. The Murtherers of Him, 'tis plain, the God 115
Commands us now to punish.——

OEEdip. ——— But where are they?
How shall we backward tread the Maze of Fate,
To trace the Marks of antiquated Guilt?

Creo. Apollo says, the Murth'ers lurk in Thebes;
Let us but beat their Bush, and out they bolt; 120
Unsearch'd, they'll keep their Hold, and sleep in Safety!

OEEdip. Did Laius in his Palace, or abroad,
Or in some distant Country, meet his Death?

Creo. He went from Home in quest of Oracles;
(For so 'twas said) but ne'er return'd to Thebes. 125

OEEdip. Did there no Messenger come back alive,
None of his Train, who could report his End?

Creo. All were destroy'd but One, who fled for Life;
And could but little vouch of what he saw.

OEEdip. Each little Circumstance leads on to more, 130
When once our Hopes pursue the Tract of Truth.

Creo. He said, the King by Robbers was encounter'd,
And fell oppreß'd by Numbers.——
King of Thebes.

OEdip. Did not Hire,
And promise of Reward, provoke the Dogs
To touch his Life?

Creo. It was suspected so;
But Laius dead, the Matter rested there.

OEdip. When Royal Blood was shed, what instant
Curse
Stept in to intercept enquiring Justice?

Creo. Just at that time, pernicious Sphynx began
Her riddling Malice; and our present Care
Forced us to quit the Thoughts of past Afflictions.

OEdip. But I will lift this Matter from the Top:
Well has the God begun, and well has Creon
Discharged his Duty, for an injur'd King.
I will assist his Vengeance, will confirm
Apollo's Words, and rescue thee, O Thebes!

Nor is the Office of a distant kind;
But for myself, I'll drag their Guilt to Light.
The sacrilegious Hands that struck at Laius,
At Oedipus may aim their second Blow:
Thus aiding Him, I shall myself secure.

Therefore, my People, rise, your Suit is heard,
And throw your supplicating Boughs away:
Go, summon all my Thebans to the Court,
Nought shall be left untry'd in your Redress:
I will pursue the Dictates of the God,
Will once again redeem, or perish with you!

[Exeunt: OEdipus and Creon]
ACT I. SCENE III.

HIGH-PRIESTS and THEBANS.

H. Priest. Come, let us rise, my Sons, for this alone,
Your gracious King has promis'd, came we here:
And may the God, whose Answer you have heard, prove
Our Preserver, and avert our Suff'ring's!

[Exeunt Priest with Thebans following.

ACT I. SCENE IV.

Enter the Chorus of Old Men of Thebes.

CHORUS.

I.

Thou mystick Child of Jove, how art thou come
In Terror, from the Pythian Dome!
Fear does my doubting Sp'rits control,
And Horrors chill my trembling Soul;
Great God of P'ans! Thou that dost dispence
Thy universal healing Influence,
Delian Monarch! we adore
Thy saving Pow'r;
But, Oh! — What untry'd Vengeance hast thou still in store?

Daughter
King of Thebes.

Daughter of Hope, to thee we make our pray'rs;
Immortal Oracle! Do thou declare:

Eternal Pallas, come away;
Thou Goddess of the Lawns and Groves, advance;
Whose Oval Dome does in our Forum stand,
Proteus of the Theban Land!

And Thou, dread Phoebus, bring thy pow'rfult Lance;
To Triple Guardians, in Array
Descend! Confess your heav'nly Love,
As once you did sweet Mercy show,
And snatch'd us from devouring Woe;
Again the same ador'd Proteus prove!

II.

For ev'ry Form of wild Distress
Does the devoted Soil of Thebes oppress;
Thro' all the Land a swift Contagion flies,
That unprevailing Art defies;
The pois'rous Taint hale Nature overpaw's,
Blasph all her Buds, her Grain, and Flow'rs.
And on the Stalk, the Fruit unripen'd dies!

Our Nymphs invoke Lucina's Aid in vain,
And of unknown Pangs complain;
Our Men in Numbers drop, they sudden die,
And hasten to the Realms of gloomy Night:
Swift, as the Lightning darts across the Sky,
And thick, as Birds in Clusters wing their Flight!

Pale Death, in heaps, o'er-spreads our Plains,
And ev'ry Street of Thebes prophanes:

E 5
OE DIPUS,

Abortive Infant on the Pavement lie,
The agonizing Mothers by,
Scarce mourn their Children, e'er themselves they

die.

Whilst others to the Altars go,
To deprecate the common Woe,
The Voice of Sorrow, Praise, and Pray'r,
Together mount, and swell the lab'ring Air!

III.

Wherefore, thou venerable Child of Jove,
Attend our Sufferings, and the Curse remove,
That lays us waste: This God of War,
That kills without a Sword or Spear.

Goddes! thy sacred Aid dispence,
And chase the pestilent Demon hence;
Plunge him in Amphitrite's Oozy Bed,
Or where the rugged Seas of Thrace

Eternal Tempests raise,
Force him to hide his ignominious Head!

With ruthless Rage his venom'd Shafts he deals,
Laden with Ruins, and if e'er

Th' unactive-Nights in Mercy spare,
The rising Morn redoubled Horrors feels!

IV.

O sacred Jove! Thy Bolts of Terror throw,
Thy farcest Lightnings on Him spend;
And thou, O Lycian King, prepare thy Bow,
And instant Rescue send.
King of Thebes.

Join to thy side Diana’s Pow’rs,
The Goddess that o’er Lycian Mountains scourst;
Who whirls her Darts that never stray,
And bears down ev’ry Beast of Prey.
Thee, ruddy Bacchus, I invoke, around
Whose Temples is a Golden Fillet bound;
Who dost thy Birth from Thebes derive:
And th’ Enthusiastic Train
To Nocturnal Orgies drive;
Approach with thy Torch,
And the Demon scorch;
The God, whom Men abhor and Gods disdain?

End of the First ACT.
ACT II. SCENE I.

OEDIPUS and CHORUS.

OEdip. YOU pray with Fervor. But, if you will hear

The Counsel I shall lend, you may perhaps Obtain your Wishes and avert your Iils.
'Tis true, I come a Stranger to the Fact, Its Time and Manner; yet I would not waste Th' important Hour in unsuccessful Search, Unless some Marks led on to the Discov'ry. But now my self a Denizen of Thebes, Do thus pronounce to all my Fellow Thebans. Whoe'er amongst you be a Witness, how Laius, the Son of Labdacus, was slain; I charge him to discover all he knows. And lest he fear, that to confess his Guilt, Be to incur the Rigour of the Law; Behold, I bid him throw that Fear to Earth. No further Sentence shall affect his Crime, Than, quiet and unhurt, to quit the Land. Or if there be amongst you one that knows Some foreign Hand in this black Deed concern'd; Let him produce the Traytor, and receive
King of Thebes.

The Favour, Thanks, and Bounty of a King.

But if thro' Fear, or for your selves, or Friends,
A disobedient Silence bind your Tongues,

Hear then what I pronounce! Let none presume,
Where OEdipus bears Rule, the horrid Wretch

To harbour or approach; but let his Presence
Break off your Pray'rs, prevent your Sacrifice,
And your intended Expiations stop:

With him, no Commerce hold; but from your Houses
All drive him out; for he's the Plague of Thebes,
And so the Delphian God, but now, has spoke him.

Thus then have I decreed, the God t' obey,
And a King's Blood t' atone: But for the Man
Who, single or assisted, did the Deed;
Let him drag out a weary Life curst!
And may the same dire Imprecation light,
In all its full Extent, on me and mine;
If I am conscious that the Murth'rer lurks
Within these Walls. Now I agen conjure you,
Unite your Counsels to detect the Villain,

For Me, and for the God, and this poor Land
Which Pestilence o'er-runs, and makes a Desart!
Nay, had Apollo not enjoyn'd the Task,
Yet when the best of Men, a Monarch too,
Was impiously destroy'd; It was not just
To leave his Death unquestion'd, unreeng'd,

But search the Traytor out. It lyes on me;
Me, who succeed him in his Throne and Bed,
Enjoy his Confort; and had Fate allow'd
Him,
Him Issue, should have been their common Sire! 50
But since the niggard Pow'rs deny'd him Sons,
I will supply the Want; and in his Vengeance
Labour, as for my Father, till I find
The Authors of his Death: And hear me, Gods,
Give Sanction to my Wish! Who'er opposes,
Or to his Pow'r afflicts not my Design,
The gen'ral Curse of Barrenness fall on him,
And blast his Land and Bed! Our present Plague
Shed its collected Venom on his Head;
Or, if there be a worse, be that his Portion! 60
But, to those loyal Thebans who approve
The Course of my Revenge; Eternal Justice,
And all the Pow'rs of heav'n, be still propitious! —

Chor. My gracious Lord, t' evade th' extensive Curse
Which you have fix'd on all, I must declare
I'm guiltless of the Fact, nor know its Authors;
But Phæbus, that enjoyn'd the dark Enquiry,
Should have inform'd our Doubts. —

OEdip. ——— Yet grant, he should;
Gods are not to be forc'd, against their Wills.

Chor. I could perhaps a second Means propose.

OEdip. Spare not to tell what'er thy Thoughts suggest.

Chor. Next to th' Oraculous God, my Liege, I know
Tiresias stands acquainted with the Fates;
From whom whoe'er enquires Mysterious Truth
Departs not uninform'd.

OEdip. ——— In this, my Friends,
My Care has not been wanting; Creon counsell'd;
And twice have I the Prophet summon'd hither:
'Tis strange, he comes not yet.—
Chor. ———— For, what Report
In common vents, is wild and Inconsistent.
OEdip. To what Report dost thou allude? By Hea-
ven,
I will examine every Breath of Fame.
Chor. It has been said, he fell attack'd by Men
That met him on the Road.
OEdip. ———— I heard the same:
But none that saw the Fact have yet appear'd.
Chor. The Wretch that's conscious to himself of
Guilt,
Hearing the dreadful Curse you have denounc'd,
Will fly t' unload the Horrors of his Breast.
OEdip. Whom Guilt could never scare, Words will
not fright!
Chor. He comes, that can detect the latent Traytor;
Behold, they lead the sacred Prophet on.
Who only of Mankind knows hidden Truth.

ACT II. SCENE II.

OEdipus, Chorus, and Tiresias led.

Oedip. Divine Tiresias! whose all-searching Mind
Dives into Mystick Fate's remotest Councils;
Soars up to Heav'n, or pierces to the Centre.
OE D I P U S,

Who, tho' thou see'st not with frail mortal Eye,
Yet with more perfect and internal Light
View'st the Distress of thy distemper'd Thebes;
Of which from Thee alone she hopes a Cure.
For Phæbus, if perchance thou hast not heard,
When late we to the Tripos sent, reply'd,
Our only Expectation of Redress,
Must be to find the Murthers of Laius;
And found, with Death or Banishment to punish!
Therefore with-hold not Aid; but urge thy Skill;
Provoke thy chatt'ring Birds, and ev'ry Pow'r
Of Divination rowze, to rescue Thebes,
Thy self, and me, from Guilt, Pollution, Blood!
On thee, our last Reserve of Hope is fix'd;
And glorious is the Task, when in our Pow'r,
To succour the Distress'd, and raise from Ruine!

Tire. Alas!—How burthenfome is Knowledge then;
When it is more expedient not to know!
Foreseeing, I have plung'd into the Snare,
And ought not to have come.—

OEdip.——What means this Sadness?
Haft thou a Cause to grieve at coming here?
Tire. Permit me to depart; be counsell'd, Sir;
We both shall better bear our wayward Fates.

OEdip. Justice and Gratitude forbid, Tirefias,
By Silence to deprive your Native Soil
Of that Redress, your knowing Voice might give.

Tire. For I foresee your Words are out of time;
And fear to fall into the like Offence:
King of Thebes.

Chor. Now, by the Gods conceal not what you know:
Humbly we throw our Bodies at your Feet,
And beg you to disclose the Fate of Thebes.

Tires. By Heav'n, you are not wise; nor shall you urge me
To wound your Ears with Words of piercing Horror.

OEdip. What say'st thou? Dost thou know, and
wilt not speak;
But art determin'd to betray the Land,
And obstinately give us up to Ruine?

Tires. Because I would not grieve thee, or my self,
Why is it rashly turn'd to my Reproach?
When, should I speak, thou would'st not lend an Ear.

OEdip. Thou stubborn, vile old Wretch! (for thou
would'st move
A Stone to Wrath;) wilt thou not yet declare?

But, unconcern'd, persist in dumb Destruction?

Tires. 'Tis you persist to load me with Reproach;
To call Me Dumb and Stubborn; but are blind
To your own Weakness, and unjust Resentment!

OEdip. What Mortal can keep down his struggling
Soul,
That hears thee trifle, thus? that sees thee bent
On Ruine, and Dishonour to thy Country?

Tires. For Fate will work its way, tho' I am silent.

OEdip. You ought then to declare, what must be
known.

Tires. I will no more reveal, tho' still thou rage,
And kindle up a-fresh Difdain and Anger.
OE D I P U S,

OEdip. Then Passion shall have room: I will no longer
Suppress my Thoughts; but know,—I hold thee, Traytor,
A foul Complotter of this horrid Deed;
Laden with all the Guilt, but of the Act;
And only free of that, by wanting Eyes;
Could'ft thou have seen, thy self alone had done it!

Tire. O Righteous Imputation!—Hear me, King;
I tell thee, thou art fall'n within the reach
Of thy own Imprecation; from this Day
'Twill be a Crime in Thebes, a Crime in me,
To change a Word with guilty OEdipus;
Who stands accurst, and is his Country's Bane.

OEdip. Ha! Dar'ft thou with audacious Terms to
brand
The Dignity of Kings? And can'ft thou hope,
Licentious as thou art, to 'scape unpunish'd?

Tire. Yes:—I am arm'd in Truth, and laugh at Dan-
ger.

OEdip. Where did'ft thou learn this contumelious Out-
rage?
Tis not thy Divination dictates this.

Tire. No, thou didst dictate to me; urge me on,
Against my Will, to speak th' unwelcome Truth.

OEdip. What Truth? Pronounce again, instruct me
further.

Tire. Hast thou not understand its dire Import,
Or is the Repetition meant t' ensnare?

OEdip. I have not understand; proceed t'inform me.

Tire. I said, thou wert the Murth'rer of the Man,
Whose
King of Thebes

Whose Murtherer thou seek'st—

**OEdip.** Thou shalt not boast

Of having twice insulted me, unpunish'd.

**Tire.** Nay then, to raise thy Anger higher, know—

**OEdip.** Speak, what thy Malice dares; It shall have way.

**Tire.** Unknowing, thou dost act abhor'd Pollutions

With thy own Blood; art fall'n into the Snare

Of winding Fate, nor seest the Cords that hold thee!

**OEdip.** Think'st thou to triumph still in Insolence?

**Tire.** If there be Strength in mighty Truth, I do. 180

**OEdip.** Strength is in Truth, but Truth is not in thee;

Thou trebly blind, in Eyes, in Ears, and Soul!

**Tire.** Weak Man! t' upbraid me with that want of Sight,

Which ev'ry one shall soon reproach in thee.

**OEdip.** Thy Darkness is thy Guard; but had'st thou Eyes,

Thou should'st not long enjoy their cheering Light:

Nor live to taunt at me, or ought besides.

**Tire.** It is not in my Fate, to fall by thee;

**Phæbus** alone is Master of my Days.

**OEdip.** Yet tell me, dost thou from thy self divulge

This canker'd Tale, or is it **Creon**'s Fiction?

**Tire.** Lay not on Creon, what belongs to thee.

**OEdip.** O Wealth! O Royalty! and thou great Art

Of Wisdom, above Arts! ye specious Blessings,

That lift your Fav'rites to superior Glory;

What Envy does pursue th' uneasy Rife?

Thus from the Throne to which, by me unsought,
OE D I P U S,

I by the gen'ral Suffrage was preferr'd,

Creon, my faithful, honest, prim'tive Friend,

Burns in his treach'rous Soul, to thrust me down: 200

Suborning this Magician's Hireling Voice,

This juggling, envious, Market-hunting Wizard;

Who blind to Knowledge of pretended Art,

Gropes only after Gain; For tell me, Dotard,

In what art thou a Prophet? wherenfore then,

When rav'nous sphynx propos'd her fatal Riddles,

Did not thy Art redeem the lab'ring Land?

Yet this was Divination's proper Task,

And not the Province of a vulgar Man;

But Augury was mute, your Gods perverse,

And Knowledge at a stand!—till I advanc'd,

Plain OEdipus, unskill'd in future Fate,

And rude of Divination; yet inspir'd

'To rescue Thbes, I trusted to my self;

Exerted all my Energy of Soul;

And, deaf to Birds prognosticating Nonsense,

Solv'd the dark Myst'ry, and preserv'd your Land:

Yet Me you would dethrone; big with an Hope,

'That thou shalt sit at Creon's Royal Elbow;

And be the worthy Substitue of Pow'r!

But thou, and the Complotter of thy Treason,

Shall dearly rue the sought Preheminence;

And did not Pity plead for hoary Age,

'Thou should'st e'er this have felt the weight of Justice.

Chor. If we our humble Thoughts might inter-

pose,

Rage
King of Thebes.

Rage seems on either side to fill your Breasts;
And dictate to your irritated Tongues.
It ought not to be thus. You rather both
Should bend your Wisdoms to unravel Fate,
And extricate the God's mysterious Meaning.

Tires. What thou' ye awe the Crowd with Regal Pow'r,
I have a right of Speech, as uncontroul'd,
And large, as any boasted Lord of Empire!
I serve not thee, but am Apollo's Priest,
Nor e'er shall court the Patronage of Creon.

But thou, that hast reproach'd my Want of Eyes,
Because thy Sight feasts on gay Nature's Objects,
Yet to thy self and Miseries art blind;
Not conscious where thou dwell'st, nor yet with whom:
Know'lt thou the Parents that begot thee, King?
And that thou liv'st a Cause of Execration
Both to thy Race, that draw the vital Air,
And those that howl below and rue thy Birth?
A Father's, and a Mother's how'ring Curse
Surround, and soon shall chase thee from the Land:
Not glaring on the chearful Sun, as now;
But lost in Night, and curst, like me, with Darkness!
And then what Shores, what Vales, what new Citharon,
What Mountains shall not echo to thy Groans!
When thou art taught the Horrors of thy Wedlock;
How thou art wreck'd on Love's forbidden Coast:
When all the Train of Mischiefs, yet unknown,
Confront thy startled Soul, and set to view

The
a: 03 D I P U S,
The Plagues that wait thee, and thy fatal Offspring.
Now rave, and dart thy frantick Accusations
At me and Creon; but the Pow'rs ne'er form'd
A Wretch more horrid, more accurs'd than thou art.
OEdip. Gods! Must I bear all this, and still be pa-
tient?
Why does not swift Perdition overtake,
And rid me of the Garb-protected Railer?
Get thee to Hell, or any where from hence;
Back to thy hated House, and mutter there.
Tire. Hadst thou not sent, I scarce had sought for
Thee.
OEd. Could I have dreamt, thou hadst ingender'd
Poisons,
Thou should'st not here have shed thy envious Folly.
Tire. Howe'er my Folly may appear to thee
Thy Parents thought me wise.—
OEdip. ——Who were they? speak;
I charge thee, stay, inform me whence I sprang.
Tire. This Day shall clear thy Birth, and prove thy
Bane.
OEdip. How intricate and dark are all thy Words!
Tire. Thou art the best Interpreter of Riddles!
OEdip. Am I reproach'd for what has been my Glory?
Tire. The Fate that rais'd thee, but prepar'd thy Ruin.
OEdip. If, saving Thebes, I fall, then welcome Ruin!—
Tire. I will return: —— conduct me homewards,
Boy.
OEdip. 'Tis well: ——for, present, thou disturb'st our
Work;
Remov'd,
King of Thebes.

Remov'd, we shall again obtain Repose.

Tirė. Fear not, I'll leave you, now I have reveal'd
What I came here to speak; without Regard,
Or Awe of Grandeur; for thou can't not kill me. 280
In thee, I have produc'd the Wretch you sought,
With Menaces pursued and furious Edicts,
For Laius Death, and Thou alone art He:
A Foreigner, and Stranger falsely deem'd,
For strait thou shalt appear a Theban born, 285
And Native to the place; nor shalt thou taste
A light Affliction, or enjoy Distress;
Then shall thy Beams of Sight be quench'd, and dark;
Thy self, thrown from thy Pow'r and stript of Plenty,
Shalt on a Staff support thy guilty Age; 290
To foreign Lands bend thy devoted Steps;
And at each Door seek thy dependant Morfel!
For to thy Children thou at once shalt be
A Brother, and a Sire! to Her that bore thee
An Husband, and a Son! and to thy Father
A Parricide, and foul Adulterer!
Go now, and mule on these predicted Horrors;
And, if thou find'st me, in a Tittle, false,
Proclaim me void of Knowledge, and no Prophet.

[Exeunt OEdip. and Tirefas led, severally.

ACT.
Where is the Wretch, whom from his dark Abode
The Delphian Prophet has arraign'd;
Whose horrid Hands and Soul are stain'd
With a sacred Monarch's Blood.
'Tis time, he mount his fiery Steed,
Or outfly the Whirlwind's Speed:
For, arm'd with Lightning, the fierce God of Day,
Jove's Son, pursues his hunted Prey,
Vengeful Fates, and Curses strong
Attend, and with the Godhead scour along!

A strict Injunction does Apollo send
From high Parnassus' snowy Head;
And thro' the Land the Charge is spread
To detect the latent Fiend.
Where he in Woods, or Mountains roves,
Lurks in Dens, or Gloomy Groves:
And, like a Bull stray'd from the Pasture, bounds;
And traverses the lonely Grounds,
From the Orac'long Horrors fled
Which, shun'd, pursue; and flutter round his Head!

III. The
King of Thebes.

III

The learned Augur, skill'd in Fate,
Does a dreadful Scene relate;
Can we the guilty Tale receive?
May we the Prophet disbelieve?
My wav'ring Soul floats on the uncertain Tide,
Hopes erect, and Doubts divide!
Officious Fame did never yet declare
That any Wars were wagg'd,
Or insensible Discord rag'd,
'Twixt Labdacus's Son, and Corinth's Heir.
Where shall my anxious Faith repose,
How the World Tale disclaim,
How rescue OEdipus from Shame,
And Laius'. Murthiers to the World displace!

IV.

Immortal Jove, and his great Son
Working Fate discern alone:
But whether Prophets better ken
Its dark Decrees, than vulgar Men,
My doubting Judgment cannot well decide.
The' in Wisdom some may pride,
And a superior Wit and Genius share,
Till stronger Proofs attest,

C

Shall
QEDIPUS,

Shall I lend my cred'rous Breast?
To such as would the Royal Name impair?
I saw, when Sphynx attack'd the Land
   How his Wisdom sav'd the State;
His Virtues shone! I ne'er can rate
Him ill, who did the Wreck of Thebes withstand.

End of the Second ACT.
ACT III. SCENE I.

CREON and CHORUS.

CREO. Y

E Men of Thebes, I heard the furious King
Had, in opprobrious Terms, with heavy Crimes
Traduc'd my suff'ring Virtue; and I come
To shake the heinous Imputation off:
If he suspects that I, in Word or Act,
Have added to the Weight of his Distress;
I am no longer covetous of Life
O'erwhelm'd with Accusations. 'Tis a Charge
Brands my fair Name with Infamy and Horror,
If Thebes, or you, my Friends, account me vile.

CHOR. Perhaps his Soul believes not the Reproach,
But hasty Passion struck out harsh Expressions.

CREO. Did he not say, that I suborn'd the Priest
To falsify his Art, and blacken him?

CHOR. But yet perhaps he meant not what he said.

CREO. Why? Did he not with stern and steadfast Eye
Confirm his labour'd Phrase, and urge my Falsehood?

CHOR. A Prince's Thoughts are sacred to himself,
And ought not to be scan'd: But He appears.

C 2

ACT
ACT III.  SCENE II.

OEDEIPUS, CREON, AND CHORUS.

OEDEIPUS. Ha! Traitor, art thou here? Has pow'rful
Guilt
So braz'd thy Conscience that thou dar'ft approach
My injur'd Roof, and triumph in Dishonour?
'Tis plain, thou wert the Murtherer of Laius,
And slyly hast conspir'd t'usurp my Throne.
Now, in the Name of all the righteous Gods,
When thou didst set on foot this rash Design,
Did OEDEIPUS appear a Fool or Coward,
To countenance thy Fraud? Or couldst thou think
I should not trace thy Treasons, or repel them?
Dost thou not blush to own the mad Attempt
Of grasping at a Crown, without the Aid
Of Friends or Armies to espouse Rebellion?
The Nerves of Pow'r, and Spurs to Usurpation!

CREO. Are you a Man, whom Reason ought to sway?
Let me be heard, my Lord, and then be censur'd.
OEDEIPUS. I know your Rhett'rick's good, but I am ill
At list'ning to the dawb'd Defence of Him
Who still has bore me hard, and scorn'd my Pow'r.
CREO. But lend me for a while your patient Ear.
OEDEIPUS. But strive not then to shuffle off your Treason.
King of Thebes.

Creo. To think that stubborn Obstinance's good
In any Cause, by Reason unmaintain'd,
Argues a Mind distemper'd and unsound.

OEdip. To think thou may'st betray thy Trust and
Friend,
And 'scape the Fury of his just Resentment,
Argues a Mind more sickly and unsound.

Creo. I grant the Maxim; but wherein, my Lord,
Have I deserv'd your Hate?

OEdip. ___________ Didst thou persuade me,
Or didst thou not, that it was fit I sent
To that old, doting, venerable Wizard?

Creo. I did; and still persist that it was fit.

OEdip. How long do you compute it since that Lais—

Creo. Did what? I apprehend you not.

OEdip. ____________________ Was slain?

Creo. A Race of circling Years have interven'd.

OEdip. Did then the Prophet exercise this Art?

Creo. Ev'n then, as wise and as rever'd as now.

OEdip. Did he'in former times ever mention me?

Creo. Never that I have heard.

OEdip. ____________________ But yet you did
Enquire, and search to find th'Assasins out?

Creo. Enquire we did, but never could detect.

OEdip. Why did not then his Wisdom trace the
Authors?

Creo. I know not; Silence therefore best becomes me.

OEdip. But what concerns yourself, you can, but know;
And if you would oblige me, might confess.
OE D I P U S,

Cre. Of what? I'll not deny the thing I know. 65
OEdip. That if Timotheus had not join'd with you
In envious Counsel, and complotted Slander,
He had not tax'd me with the Blood of Laius!
Cre. You best can tell, if he have own'd as much:
But now let me have room to question you. 70
OEdip. Go on; you cannot make me an Assassin.
Cre. Is not my Sister Partner of your Bed?
OEdip. 'Tis granted.
Cre. ------ And with her, in equal Sway,
You rule the Land of Thebes?
OEdip. ------ So large her Pow'r,
She need but wish, and in that With command. 75
Cre. And I, with both, enjoy the Thirds of Pow'r?
OEdip. Ay, there thy specious Friendship stands confess,
And Treach'ry, and abhor'd Ambition blaze!
Cre. Not so, if you with Reason weigh the point;
Knock at your Breast, and ask your conscious Heart,
If it would chuse a Crown posses'd with Fear,
Rather than hold the same degree of Pow'r,
And sleep in Ease and unmolested Safety.
My Soul feels not so wild a Lust of Rule,
As to prefer the empty Name of King
To truly Regal Sway. No modest Spirit
But must prefer the blissful downy State.
So now from thee I all the Sweets enjoy,
Preheminence could yield: Nay, if I reign'd,
Perhaps the strict necessity of Pow'r

Might
King of Thebes.

Might drive me on some Acts I most abhor’d.
How then can Royalty have greater Charms
Than equal Rule, without the Thorns of Empire?
I bear not so deprav’d an Appetite,
As not to prize the Good, which beass its Gain.

Now Dignity and Pleasure flow around me,
All court th’Advantage of my exalted State:
And making me their Advocate to you,
Thro’ my Address hang on the Royal Ear,
And have their Wishes crown’d! Shou’d I then quit
These real Blessings for a painful Gewgaw?
Who hunts a false Ambition is not wise:
For me, I never hearken’d to its Lure,
Nor would assist the Man that would pursue it.

If farther you require to be convin’d
From Delphi be resolv’d; ask of the God,
If I aight his Oracle reported:
And if you find I have complotted ought
Against you with Tiresias, let me fall,
Not by your Suffrage only, but my own.
But for a light ungrounded Jealousy,
Hold me not disaffected to your Throne.
It is not just to cenfure Men at random,
And of their Faults or Virtues rashly judge:
For lightly to displace a worthy Friend,
Is ’gainst our selves to turn the murthering Sword,
And dispossess our Souls. Time must determine,
Time only can the virtuous Man declare;
But a short Day unmasks the shallow Villain!

Chor.
OEDIPUS,

Chor. Well has he spoke; O sacred Sir, avoid
Rash Errors: For unsafe is sudden Wisdom.

OEdip. If sudden Snares are laid to catch my Life,
I must as swiftly guard against the Danger:
For if Prevention sleep, the active Train
Will work its Ends, and frustrate my Revenge.

Creo. Dost thou attempt to chase me from the Land?
OEdip. No; for I would not have thee 'scape, but dye.
Creo. When you can shew that I deserve my Death.
OEdip. Still art thou insolent, perverse and stubborn?
Creo. Because I see thee take unwholsome Coun-

sels.

OEdip. Most wholesome for my self.

Creo. Justice commands
Thou shouldst as equally consult for me.

OEdip. But thou hast been a Traitor.

Creo. How if you
In jealous Thought have only coin'd me such?

OEdip. Still I 'se a Monarch's Right to rule thy
Fate.

Creo. No lawful Right o'er me, a Prince, as thou art.

OEdip. Thebes! Thebes!

Creo. I likewise have a Share in Thebes.

Chor. Be calm, my Princes; See, in happy time
Royal Jocasta from the Palace comes;
Whose Presence must allay this hot Debate.

ACT
ACT III. SCENE III.

Jocasta, OEdipus, Creon and Chorus.

Joc. Ye wretched Men, wherefore is all this Rage?
Why is Dissonion kindled to a Flame?
Do you not blush, when all the Land is sick,
To quarrel, and indulge a private Grief?
Retire, my Lord; and, Creon, quit the place; Let us not aggravate a light Distress,
And swell it to a Storm.

Creo. Sister, the King
Is pleas'd t'inforce me to a rigid Choice;
Or to forfacke the Land, or staying Die.

OEdip. I urge it: O Jocasta, I have found him
Practise against my Life, my Fame, and Honour.

Creo. Let me not prosper, Gods! but fall accurs,
If e'er I had a Thought of what you tax me!

Joc. O by the heav'ly Pow'rs, my Lord, believe him;
Let the great Gods he has invok'd, and me.

And these our Friends be Vouchers of his Truth.

Chor. My Liege, let us intreat you to be calm.

OEdip. What! would'st thou have me servilely submit?

Chor. Regard the Man whom Foily never yet
Seduc'd to rash Misdeeds; and who, but now,
Has call'd the Gods to witness to his Faith.

OEdip. Doft know what thou would'st have?

Chor. I do, my Lord.
OE D I P U S,

OEdip. What is't?

Chor. Not with Dishonour to discard
A trusty Friend, upon a light Suspicion.

OEdip. Be certain; what thou'rt urg'd giv's me up
To instant Death, or Banishment from Thebes.

Chor. No, by the sacred and all-seeing Sun:
So let me be forsaken by all Friends,
And hated by the unassisting Gods;
Feel all the dire Extremes of sharp Affliction,
If I would urge it on a Thought like that.
But oh! the Sorrows of the suffering Land
Sit heavy on my Soul: and in your Discord
The Wounds of Thebes are rent, and bleed afresh.

OEdip. Do what you will: if OEdipus must fall,
Or in Dishonour be expell'd the Land;
Yielding to you, I run the desperate Hazard:
For Him, where-e'er he goes, my Hate pursues.

Creo. Rigid Compliance! Where would end this Hate,
Wert thou to give a loose to frantick Passion?
Nature, like thine, is to it self a Burthen.

OEdip. Wilt thou not then depart and give me Peace?

Creo. I go; and from this Moment I renounce
All Tyes of Blood, Faith, or Allegiance to thee:
But to my Countrymen, shall still be Creon.

[Exit Creon.]

ACT
ACT III. SCENE IV.

OEDIPUS, JOCASTA, and CHORUS.

Chor. My royal Mistress, will you not persuade
Your troubled Lord to seek Repose within?

Joc. Yes, when I have enquir'd his Cause of Anguish.

Chor. Ill-grounded Rumors kindled up Unkindness,
And causeless Accusations vex'd their Souls.

Joc. Did mutual Provocations feed Dissension?

Chor. Too much, I fear.

Joc. ——— What Terms of Anger rose?

Chor. O, let the private Perturbation cease,
The Griefs of Thebes will take up all our Souls.

OEdip. Take heed, old Man, how thou disturb'st my
Mind,
Nor with Neglect look on thy King's Afflictions.

Chor. How have my Words giv'n way to a Distrust?
Have I not labour'd to disclose my Breast?
O! I must bid adieu to Sense and Reason,
When I the Royal OEdipus neglect.
Thou, when poor Thebes lay gasping, half destroy'd,
Didst from the Gripe of Ruin snatch her back,
And raise her up to Life: So would'st thou now,
If it might be, restore the fainting State.

Joc. Let me conjure you by the Gods, my Lord,
Disclose the fatal Cause of your Resentments.

OEdip. I'll tell thee (for in Thee my Cares are centred)
OE D I P U S,

What Treasons Creon had devis'd against me.

Joe. Ay, tell me, if you know that he was vile.

OEdip. He says, I am the Murtherer of Laius. 210

Joe. Spoke it he from himself; or as he heard?

OEdip. He had suborn'd the Prophet to the Lyce;
And practis'd on ev'ry Tongue in Thebes
To spread the same detested Defamation.

Joe. Think on't no more, my Lord, but list to me, 215
And learn a Truth, of which I shall produce
A noted Instance, that no Mortal Pow'r
Can certainly divine of things to come.

Laius had once an Oracle (but whether
Giv'n by the God, or by his Priests, I know not) 220
That from a Son to spring from him and me,
'Twas in the Fates that he should meet his Death:
Yet him, as Fame reported, Robbers flew
Where three 'Ways met. The dreaded Son, when born,
E'er the third Night descended on his Cradle, 225
Was, with a Cord bor'd thro' his Infant Feet,
Giv'n out to be expos'd on some bleak Mountain.
Thus were Apollo's Menaces o'erthrown;
The guilty Infant could not live to kill
His Sire, or Laius: dread the threatened Fate. 230
Yet Oracles had firmly doom'd his Murther:
Therefore, my Lord, mind not their idle Terrors.
What Heav'n has in his Wisdom said, Shall be,
His own performing Hand, with Ease, full'sis.

'OEdip. Fatal Joseph! O thy Words have rais'd 235
An Earthquake here, and shatter'd all my Soul.

Joe.
King of Thebes.

Joc. What new Commotion heaves thy troubled Breast?

OEdip. Methoughts I heard thee say, Laius was slain

Where three Ways met ———

Joc. ——— For so Report was current,

And holds the same.

OEdip. ——— But say, where lyes the place, 240

In which this most accursed Act was done?

Joc. In Phocis, where the triple-cleaving Roads

Unite from thence, from Delphi, and from Daulius.

OEdip. How long is't since?

Joc. ——— The Tidings came to Thebes,

But just e'er you arry'd and sav'd the State. 245

OEdip. Immortal Gods! what do your Pow'rs intend?

Joc. But why these Starts, and sudden Thought, my Lord?

OEdip. Enquire not yet, but tell me of this Laius;

What was his Mien, his Stature, and his Age?

Joc. Big made; and Time had just o'er-snow'd his Head;

In Features not unlike my OEdipus.

OEdip. Wretch that I am! How ignorantly rash,

Have I denounc'd a Curse upon my self!

Joc. O! fright me not, my Lord; your Looks are wild.

OEdip. Alas! I fear the Prophet sees too much; 255

But one thing yet remains to clear my Doubts.

Joc. I tremble, yet will answer what I know.

OEdip. Did he go forth in private, thinly follow'd;

Or like himself, incircled with a Guard? 260
OEDIPUS

Joc. They were in all but Five, his Herald One; and Laius singly in his Chariot rode.

OEdip. O murth'ring Demonstrations! one thing more; Who brought the News of his Disaster back?

Joc. One of his Foll'wers, who escap'd unhurt.

OEdip. And does he still attend our Court and Service?

Joc. No; But returning with the fatal News, And seeing you fix'd on his Master's Throne, He took me by the Hand, and humbly beg'd I would dismiss him to some Rural Office; That he but rarely might be seen in Thebes. I granted his Request; for that and more Was due to his Deserts and faithful Service.

OEdip. Give Orders that he do attend us 'strait.

Joc. He shall be sent for; but for what, my Lord?

OEdip. I'm haunted with bad Fears, Things have been said Disturb me, and I must be satisfied.

Joc. Well, he shall come; But may I not have leave To ask what Cares torment your anxious Mind?

OEdip. Since you have giv'n Assurance to my Hopes, I will disclose my Pain; for oh! Jocasta, Where can I rest my Sorrows but on thee? Know, Polybus of Corinth was my Sire; My Mother Morep, of Dorian Extract: I at their Court in high account was held As Son, and eldest Subject: till it happen'd, (A Chance, that ministered to my Surprize, Because
King of Thebes.

Because my Bearing gave no Scope to Slander;
That, at a Banquet, one, o'er-wrought with Wine,
In the blunt rudeness of his Cups reproach'd me,
And said, I was not Native to the Throne,
But only an adopted Heir of Corinth.
The matter gall'd me much; and all the Night
I struggled hard to keep Disquiet down:
Till the next Morn, I to my royal Parents
Disclos'd the thing that chaf'd me; They resented
The fland'rous Words, and rated the bold Drunkard.
Now, tho' their kind Indulgence pleas'd me much,
Yet the Surmise sunk deep into my Breast,
And fester'd all within; therefore unknown
To them, I journey'd to the Pythian Dome
To ease my doubting Heart; but the harsh God,
Dumb and regardless to the thing I sought,
Denounc'd a Series of undreaded Horrors:
That I was doom'd with Incest to pollute
My Mother's Bed, and thence produce a Race
Should startle Nature: Next, t'increase my Guilt,
I with my Father's Blood should stain my Soul.
With the fierce Threats alarm'd, I from that Hour
Made from the Stars that pointed my known Course
To the Corinthian Land; and fled t'avoid
The black Accomplishment of such Predictions.
But, flying, I approach'd that place of Guilt,
In which, you said, your King and Husband fell.
There, O Jocasta, I must tell thee all,
Scarce enter'd I the triple-wending Road,
OE D I P U S

E’er I an Herald met; and close behind
A Man, most like to him thou hast describ’d,
Drawn in a Chariot: When, th’officious Hind
That rode before the Carr, and next his Master,
Strove forcibly to rob me of the Path.

Stung with th’Affront, I struck the forward Slave,
And keeping onward, the inrag’d old Man
Twice on my Head lash’d with his rowel’d Whip.
Not so my unperforming Passion daily’d,
But, with my Staff, dealing a furious Blow
I fell’d him headlong from his Seat to Earth:
And then upon his Foll’wers wreak’d my Vengeance.

Now if the dire Resemblance of the Fact
Determine this for Laiss, does there live
On Earth a Wretch more; hated amongst Men?
Or more th’Abomination of the Gods?

For neither Foreigners, nor Thesame born,
Must in their hospitable Domes receive me;
Or greet me with a Word of soft Condolance!
But thrust from ev’ry Roof, I must endure
The Burthen of that Curse my self impos’d;
Then have I with Pollution wrong’d the Bed
Of him I flew? O the redoubled Horrors!

Am I not all one Stain? Ev’n if I fly,
It must be still, in Banishment, from home;
No, never must I that lov’d Soil revisit,
Left my fell Hands should do the destin’d Murther
On Polybus, my Father! Left I rush
With riotous Heat upon his widow’d Queen,

And
King of Thebes.

And where my Mother! Who that dares to censure, 345
But must on Fate, and on th' unequal Gods,
Lay all the Guilt, and OEdipus acquit?
Let me not, O ye sacred Pow'rs of Heav'n!
Let me not see the Day, but rather perish,
Be snatch'd from Earth, than live to be o'erwhelm'd 350
With Shame and unsupportable Pollution!

Chor. My Lord, we feel the Burthen of your Fears,
But till they're better grounded, hope the best.

OEdip. Alas! my Friends, all my reserves of Hope
Are fix'd on what this Herdsman shall report.* 355

Joc. What have you purpos'd, when he comes, my Lord?

OEdip. I'll tell thee, Love; if he but hold the Tale
I heard from thee, then all my Cares are hush'd.

Joc. What pleasing Circumstance did I produce?

OEdip. Thou said'st, that he reported Laius fell 360
By Robbers; if he still assert a Number
Concern'd in the Assault, then I am safe.
(For One, and Many, makes a wide Distinction!)
But if a single Hand destroy'd the King,
My Guilt is manifest, and Ruin follows! 365

Joc. Be certain his Relation answer'd mine:
Nor will he dare retract from a Report
Which not I only, but all Thebes have heard.
But should he deviate from its first Contents,
Yet Laius' Death, my Lord, will still be wide 370
From what the God foretold, that he should perish
Beneath a Son of mine: For that poor Infant,
OE D I P U S,

To disappoint Prediction, was destroy'd.
Wherefore, for what the Oracles have menac'd,
Lose not a Thought in search of Certainty.

OEdip. Right, my Jocasta; yet forget not, Love,
But send and summon this same Fellow hither.

Joc. With all Dispatch, but, good my Lord, retire;
Jocasta will not put a Thought in Act.
That is not grateful to her OEdipus.

(Exeunt OEdipus and Jocasta)

ACT III. SCENE V.

CHORUS.

I.
O may it ever be my Race,
Justly those sacred Truths to raise;
And those blest Laws that have their Rise
From Wisdom, lodg'd above the Skies.
Those, which th'Olympian King alone
Dictates from his eternal Throne,
(Unlike to those weak Mortals frame,)
Live unabolish'd, still the same!
Sprung from the God, replete with heav'nly Fire,
They baffle Time, and keep their Strength entire.

II.
The Tyrant, and illegal Man
From Pride, and rash Contempt began;
King of Thebes.

Pride and Contempt that lift him high
O'er Mountains of Impiety;
Till plac'd aloft he dazled grows,
And in his Fear his Hold foregoes.
O! may the City's Care succeed,
Nor envying Fates their Search mislead.
With ardent humble Pray'rs the Gods I'll move;
The Gods shall still my kind Prosectors prove!

III.

But who'er in Word or Deed
Does from the sacred Laws recede,
No divine Resolutions fearing,
Nor the hallow'd Shrines revering,
If licentious Ease beguile him,
If dishonest Gains defile him,
If he pursues corrupting Pleasure,
Or grasps at unpermitted Treasure,
Some rigid Doom his Guilt o'ertake!
Else who hereafter will controul
The Sallies of his impious Soul?
If no avenging Judgments shake
The Triumphs of the dissolute,
'Tis time th'instructive Choirs be mute.

IV.

Let mistaking Zeal no more
The Truth of Oracles adore;
OE D I P U S,

No more to th’ Lycian Temples pressing,
Or th’ Olympian God addressing,
If Apollo do not right him
On the impious Doubts, that slight him:

But thou, Eternal Jove! that hearest
Rule universal; if thou hearest
The dire Neglect, avenge thy Son.
For all th’ Orac’lous Truths of old,
That were so wretched Laius told,
Have lost their Credit and Renown.
Apollo’s Honours sink apace,
And all the Deity gives place!

End of the Third ACT.
ACT IV. SCENE I.

JOCASTA and CHORUS.

Joc. Ye Rev'rend Heads of Thebes, I have determin'd
With Incense, and these Chaplets to atone,
And supplicate the blest Celestial Pow'rs.
For Oedipus, opprest with many Cares,
Distraets his anxious Soul; nor like a Man
Furnish'd with Wisdom and superior Reason,
Collects, or rates the present by the past:
But hangs on ev'ry ghastly Tale of Horror.
Nor has Admonishment reliev'd his Mind;
But Pray'rs and friendly Comforts been rejected.
Therefore to thee, O Lycian King, I fly;
To thee, thou next Redress! I humbly bend,
And beg a Deprecation of his Sorrows.
For all the State sickens in his Distress,
And like a Ship, robb'd of her Pilot, mourns.

ACT
ACT IV. SCENE II.

JOCASTA, MESSENGER, and CHORUS.

MES. Can you instruct a Stranger, Sirs, to find
The Palace of the royal OEdipus?
Or rather, where himself is to be found?

CHOR. Within this regal Dome the King resides,
And thither is retir'd: But this fair Dame
Is call'd his Wife, and Mother of his Children.

MES. Blessings upon her! and surrounding Joys
Still glad the dwelling of his Royal Confort!

JOC. The like Prosperities return on thee,
The just Reward of thy fair omen'd Speech!
But say, what Cause of Moment brought thee hither?

MES. Joy to this House and its Imperial Lord.

JOC. What Joy dost thou infer, and whence descending?

MES. From Corinth, Lady; but, in brief, I bring
Pleasures corrected by a gentle Sorrow.

JOC. What are they? Speak, inform my doubting Mind.

MES. The Isthmos (as I heard on my Departure)
Design t'elect your OEdipus their King.

JOC. Does not old Polybus still govern there?

MES. The good old King rests in his peaceful Tomb.

JOC. What say'ft thou, Stranger? Is the Monarch dead?

MES. If I deceive you take my forfeit Life.

JOC. Fly, swift as Thought! Inform my royal

Lord [To her Attendant.

I have
King of Thebes.

I have a Secret will revive his Soul.

0, where are all th'Oraculous Terrors now,
And where the Faith we owe them? Scar'd by Trifles,
My Lord, in Exile, left his native Land.
T'avoid the Guilt of murth'ring Polybus:
Who still is dead, tho' OEdipus was absent.

ACT IV. SCENE III.

OEdipus, Jocasta, Messengar, and Chorus.

OEdip. Dearest Jocasta! O my Heart's sweet Pleasure!

Why haft thou call'd me forth, to what intent?

Joc. To listen to this Man, and from his Words
To learn th'Importance of Orac'ious Bugbears.

OEdip. Who is the Stranger? And what Tydings bears he?

Joc. He comes from Corinth, sent to let thee know 50
Thy Father Polybus no longer lives.


Meff. If Confirmation on my Words depends,
Be satisfied, my Lord, He is no more.

OEdip. Fell he beneath some Traytor's guileful Hand, 55
Or yielded to the Rage of harsh Dilempters?

Meff. Death need but lay his leaden Mace on Age,
And Slumbers follow——

OEdip. ———— Then he dy'd of Sickness?

Meff.
OEDIPUS,

Meff. Gently decaying; and born down with Years.

OEdip. O ye great Gods! Why should the World,

Jocasta,
Run madding after Prophecies and Fate,
From whispering Altars, or from cackling Birds;
When these vain Babblers, giving Fear th'Alarm,
Prefag'd that I was doom'd to kill my Father?

And yet he dy'd, and I have still been here;
Distant from him, and guiltless of his Fate:
Unless the Sorrow of his absent Son
Hasten'd his End; for so he dy'd by Me!
So, Polybus is slain! and with him dye
Th'important and accomplish'd Oracles!

Joc. Was I not then a Prophet?

OEdip. Oh! thou wert;
But Fears and Prepossession sway'd my Soul.

Joc. Shake off th' uneasie Guests for ever now.

OEdip. Must I not dread th' Embraces of a Mother?

Joc. What has the Man to fear whom Fate o'er-rules?

When Foresight cannot aid, but oft deceives,
'Tis best to live as thoughtless as we may.
You must not labour with imagin'd Incest:
Men oft have in their Sleep enjoy'd their Mothers;
Yet shaking off the guilty Dream with Night,
Laugh'd at the Coinage of fantastick Slumbers.

OEdip. I might commend th' Advice, if she who

Were not in being; but as yet she lives,
Tho' thou wert all Persuasion, I must fear.
King of Thebbs.

Joe. Your Father's Death pleads strongly 'gainst your Fears.

OEdip. But Mother's Life awakens new Distrust!

Meff. Who is this Object of your Fears, my Lord?

OEdip. Why, Merops, old Man; late the chaste Wife Of Polybus —

Meff. ———- But whence these Fears of her?

OEdip. Because the God has threatened ugly Horrors.

Meff. May I enquire th'Import of his Predictions?

OEdip. Thou may'ſt. The scaring Oracle foretold That I was doom'd to spill my Father's Blood, And with incestuos Arms embrace my Mother: For this I have estrang'd my self so long

From fatal Corinth: Happily, I hope; 'Tho' sweet it be to dwell beneath the Smiles, And taste the Comforts of paternal Fondness.

Meff. Was this the Cause of your Retreat from Corinth?

OEdip. 'T'avoid the Guilt of Parricide, my Friend.

Meff. What if my coming set you free, my Lord, And disposes these Peace-disturbing Cares?

OEdip. Thus shall the Arms of Gratitude be stretch'd To clasp thee to my Bosom.——

Meff. ———— Sure I came T'invite you to a glad return to Corinth.

OEdip. Oh! never, whilst I have a Parent there.

Meff. My Lord, your jealous Fears o'erbear your Reason.


Meff. If you on these accounts decline our Land. D

OEdip.
OEdip. I tremble lest the God fulfill his Threats. 110
Meff. Left you commit an Outrage on your Parents?
OEdip. Ay, that, old Man, that gives me constant Anguish.

Meff. But are not your Suspicious light and groundless?
OEdip. How, if I am their Son? —

Meff. * * * * * But Polybus
Was not in Blood akin to you, my Lord. 115
OEdip. What sayst thou, Man? Why; did he not beget me?
Meff. No more than I did.
OEdip. * * * * * Could he be my Father,
And not beget me?

Meff. * * * * * Sir, indeed he did not.
OEdip. Why did he then vouchsafe to call me Son?
Meff. He, as a Gift, receiv'd you from these Hands: 120
OEdip. And lov'd me, 'cause receiv'd from other's Hands?

Meff. His Fondness from his want of Children follow'd.
OEdip. And was I bought, a Present for your King?
Or from your Children cull'd to this Promotion?
Meff. I found you in Citharon's woody Vales. 125
OEdip. What Cause had led you to that lonely Place?
Meff. I there presided o'er the Mountain Herds.
OEdip. Didst thou frequent it as an Hireling-Shepherd?
Meff. Blest was my Service that I rescu'd you!
OEdip. From what Misfortune? What oppressing Danger?

Meff. Thy wounded Feet bear Witness to thy Suffers.
King of Thebes.

OEdip. O! you have to my tortur'd Soul recall'd
The Mem'ry of that antiquated Sorrow!
Meff. I loos'd you from the painful falling Cords.
OEdip. O dirge Abuse! What did my Childhood suffer!
Meff. From that harsh Fortune was your Name impos'd.
OEdip. Say, did my Sire or Mother use me thus?
Meff. I know not; he, who brought you, best can tell.
OEdip. Did you receive me from another's Hands,
Or found you me your self?  
Meff. My Lord, I did not; another Herdman to my Care bequeath'd you.
OEdip. Canst thou remember who that other was?
Meff. He was reputed one of Laius' Servants.
OEdip. Of him who late possess'd the Theban Throne?
Meff. The same. He tended on the Monarch's Herds.
OEdip. Does he yet live? May I behold his Face?
Meff. You of the Land can best inform the King.
OEdip. If any present have e'er seen the Man,
The Shepherd whom he speaks of, either here
In Thebes, or on our Pastures, teach me, Sirs:
The Time demands him, and he must be found.

Chor. Doubtless, my Lord, 'tis he you sought but now;
That beg'd to be dismiss'd and lives retir'd:
But your Jocasta best can guide us here.
OEdip. Canst thou inform us, Love, if it be him?
This Man intends, whom we but now have summon'd?
Joc. Whom can he mean? O give not way, my Lord,
To fresh Distrusts, or credit rash Surmise.

OEdip
OE D I P U S.

OEdip. Forbid it, Heav'n, when I have trac'd so far,
That I should cease, e'er I my Birth have found. 160
Joc. Now, by the Gods, if you regard your Life
Or After-Peace, renounce the vain Enquiry:
Already I am sick of heavy Cares.
OEdip. Tho' I am found a Slave in three Descents,
Twill not reflect on thee; fear not, Jocasta. 165
Joc. Let me entreat you to forego your purpose.
OEdip. Not till I am resolv'd in every Doubt.
Joc. I have my Reasons, Sir; and counsel well.
OEdip. Counsel is Pothin that controls my Will.
Joc. Oh! OEdipus, my much unhappy Lord! 170
O may'lt thou ne'er discover who thou art!
OEdip. Go some, and bring this Herdsman to me strait,
But let Her still boast of Her high Descent.
Joc. O fatal Monarch! —But I can no more;
Tis the last Greeting of our mutual Sorrows. 175
[Exit Jocasta hastily.

A C T IV. S C E N E IV.

OEdipus, Messenger, and Chorus.

Chor. Why is the Queen, my Royal Lord, retir'd
With such disorder'd Speed, and inward Sadness?
Alas! I tremble lest some dire Event
Enfue from her conceal'd Distress of Soul.
OEdip. Let her high Spirit have way: I stand resolv'd, 180
However
However mean, to search my Parents out:
Perhaps she fears, lest some ignoble House
Should claim my Birth, and shock her Female Pride.
But looking on myself as Fortune’s Son,
I triumph in her Gifts, and can disdain
The Infamy of a Plebian Lot.
The Goddess may dispose her future Son;
And Time that made me Great reduce my Grandeur.
Since I have gone so far, I’ll not desist,
‘Till I have traced my dark Original.

Chor. If I foresaw the Will of Fate,
By the Regent of the Skies,
E’re the Morrow’s Sun arise,
Thou, Cithæron, shalt relate,
Whence our OEdipus arose:
And all the Honours of his Birth disclose,
Then shall our future Songs proclaim,
And ring to Heav’n Cithæron’s Name;
Cithæron! whence the lovely Tidings came.
Thou, Phæbus, didst the Search inspire;
Oh! fulfil thy blest Desire.

What Pow’r Divine beget thee, Son,
What fair Nymph of heav’nly Race,
Suff’ring Mountain Pan’s Embrace,
Bearing thee, the Thest did own;
For all Cliffs and steepy Heights
Are sacred to the rural God’s Delights.
Did Bacchus, or did Hermes rove
Some Heliconian Nymph torove,
And stamp'd thee in the Hour of yielding Love?
For Bacchus oft the Dryads courts,
And with blooming Beauty sports.

OEdip. If I from Circumstance and distant View
May guess, my Friends, the Shepherd we have sought
Now meets our Eyes: A long and suiting Age
Warrants my Thoughts, and says it must be He.
Besides that those, who lead him to our Presence,
I know to be my Servants. Thou perhaps
Hast elsewhere seen him, and canst better tell me.

Chor. My Lord, be certain that I know this Man
Was one of Laius's most faithful Herdrmen.

OEdip. Say, my Corinthian Friend, is this the Man
Your late Discourse concern'd?

Mess. ————- My Lord, 'tis he.

ACT IV. SCENE V.

OEdipus, Messenger, Shepherd, Attendants, and Chorus.

OEdip. Hear you, old Man; nay, turn your Eyes on me,
And answer me, to what I shall demand:
Did you not once belong to Royal Laius?

Shep. I was his Servant, not a purchas'd Slave;
But born and nourish'd in his friendly Household.

OEdip.
**King of Thebes.**

*OEdip.* How didst thou serve him? What was thy Employ?

*Shop.* The grazing Business was my greatest Care. 230

*OEdip.* Where didst thou chiefly tend thy num'rous Flocks?

*Shop.* On Mount Citharon, and the neigh'ring Lawns.

*OEdip.* Hast thou not then somewhere beheld this Man? 235

*Shop.* What Man, my Lord?

*OEdip.* This, who confronts thee here. Hast thou not once been conversant with him?

*Shop.* I cannot charge my Mem'ry with his Knowledge.

*Mess.* 'Tis not a Wonder, Royal Sir; but I,

By strict Occurrences of ancient Date,
Shall rowse the lost Remembrance of these Features.
I know, his 'waken'd Soul must recollect,
That when on wide Citharon's outstretch'd Plains
He o'er two Flocks presided, I o'er One,
Our Stations were most near; and we together
From blooming Spring to the decline of Autumn,
Spent the long friendly Days: and when the chill Approach of Winter warn'd us in our Cotts
To house the Herds, I to my private Fold
Drove my small Trust, but he his larger Flocks
In Lains' Coverts stabled. Speak, old Man,
Was it not thus, or do I talk in Fables?

*Shop.* Tho' far remote in Time, I own the Truth.

*Mess.* Come on then; you remember, to my Care
An Infant you intrusted, and with Pray'rs
Besought me, as a Foster-Child to rear it?
Oh! Wherefore is that Circumstance reviv’d?

This was that Infant, Friend, I took in Charge.

Perdition choak thee! Wilt thou not be silent?

Forbear these Execrations, rash old Man;

Thou rather dost deserve to stand accus’d.

Most Royal Master, how have I offended?

Why dost thou not confess that Infant-Charge?

He does not know th’Event of his rash Questions,

If fair Entreaties will not make thee speak,

Force shall oblige thee.—

Oh, for Mercy’s sake,

Do not with Tortures wound this Age-worn Body.

Bringe hither Irons; haste; bind the trifling Traytor.

O my distracting Thoughts! What must I say?

Did you that Infant to his Hands deliver?

I did; Would I had dy’d in that glad instant!

Slave, thou shalt die, unless thou speak the Truth.

Alas! my Lord, I said I gave it him.

From whence hadst thou the Boy? Was he thy own?

Or didst thou from some other’s Hand receive him?

He was not mine: I had him giv’n to me.

From whence? What House? Which of our Subjects Hands?

O let me, by the sacred Pow’rs above,

Let me conjure you, Sir, press me no farther.

Wretch, if I ask thee once again, thou dy’st.

Shop.
King of Thebes.

Shep. The Child was of the Family of Laion.

OEdip. Born of some Slave, or of the Royal Line?

Shep. Alas! What Horrors must I now disclose!

OEdip. And I be curst to hear! Yet hear I must.

Shep. 'Twas said to be the King's; but your Jocasta

Can best unravel this mysterious Secret.

OEdip. But did she give it thee?

Shep. She did, my Liege.

OEdip. And to what End?

Shep. With Orders to destroy it.

OEdip. What, her own Child?

Shep. Ah Oracle of Dread.

Percur his Birth, and authorize'd his Doom.

OEdip. As how?

Shep. 'Twas said, that he should kill his Parents.

OEdip. Why didst thou then deliver it to him?

Shep. Compassion for the Child had stir'd my Soul,

Thinking he to some foreign Land would bear it

Far from its native Soil: But he, it seems,

Has ill preserv'd, and rais'd it to Misfortunes:

For, oh! if thou art that once dreaded Infant,

A guilty Fate hangs o'er thy wretched Head.

OEdip. O cursed hour! Then all my Crimes are blown:

O hated Light, I will no more behold thee!

Who unpermitted stole into the World;

Defil'd my Soul with sacrilegious Murder,

And plung'd unseeing into incestuous Horrors.

[Exeunt OEdipus, Messenger, Shepherd and Attendants.

D 5

ACT.
ACT IV. SCENE VI.

CHORUS.

Frayl State of Man! thy living Lot I deem
Like nothing, or a Shadow's Dream;
He who to Fortune spreads his Sails,
And swells with her successful Gales,
Who, in opinion grown, is Great,
Soon is becalmed and drops from all his State!
From thy Example, King, from thy Success,
And the strange Vicissitude
Of altering Time, I must conclude
Fate ne'er sincerely did a Mortal bless.
How the busy Voice of Fame
Did thy wondrous Worth proclaim!
How blest! How mighty! when thy Skill
Did the voracious Monster-Virgin kill!
When from the Ravager thou Thebes didst free,
Fortune smil'd, and Honour wo'd thee,
Glad Supremacy pursu'd thee,
Purple Pomp and Royalty!
But who more wretched in thy present State?
Who more o'erwhelm'd in a tempestuous Fate?
Spent and o'er-labour'd with inherent Woe?
Oh! OEdipus! How great, how blest but now!
But Incest and Pollution bear thee down:
The nuptial Bed, that held the Father and the Son! How could the injur'd Bed so long
In Silence bear the Father's Wrong?
All-seeing Time the latent Guilt reveals,
And the unlicensed Match repeats:
As once an Husband, and a Son,
Nature condemns the complicated One!
Offspring of Laius, would these Eyes
Had never seen thy Miseries;
To thy Distress these Plaints I owe,
And gushing Tears unbidden flow:
Once I thy Glories view'd with glad Surprize;
Now, startled at thy Shame, I downwards turn my Eyes.

End of the Fourth ACT.
ACT V. SCENE I.

Messer and Chorus.

Mess. Ye most honour'd Lords of wretched Thebes,
What horrid Acts must pierce your wounded Ears,
And blast your Eyes! What Sorrow swell your Breasts,
If Labdacus's House still claim your Care!
Not all the Streams of Ister, all the Waves
Of Phasis, can suffice to wash away
The rank Pollutions which this Roof infolds,
And covers yet from Knowledge: But too soon
The voluntary, yet compulsory Crimes
Shall force their way to Light, and stand disclos'd.
But Mischiefs, that from willing Rashness flow,
Still wound us deepest.

Chor. The severe Distress
We have already known oppress'd us much:
What dire Increase of Sorrow dost thou bring?

Mess. To keep your Pain no longer in Suspence,
Know, that divine Jocasta is no more.

Chor. O wretched Queen! What Fate hath snatch'd thee from us?

Mess. Her self undid her self; retir'd from View
Of ev'ry Eye, the fatal Act was done:

But
But as my Mem'ry serves to what I heard,
You shall be taught the Process of her Fury.
No sooner had her wild and frantic Rage
To the Imperial Chamber wing'd her Feet,
But on the Nuptial Bed she threw her Body,
And with her Hands tore off her lovely Hair.
Thence, starting up, flung to the jarring Door;
And with shrill Voice call'd on her murth'rd Laius:
Reproach'd him with the Fate-forbidden Son
By whom he fell; and left her widow'd Arms
To be usurp'd by Guilt, and clasp Pollution!
Then wept the fatal Bed, that had produc'd her
An Husband from an Husband! that had bore
Sons by her Son, the Fruits of impious Joys!
What after follow'd, e'er her Death I know not;
For OEEdiups, loud as the raging Seas,
Burst in upon us; call'd our Eyes from her,
And fasten'd 'em on his more portly Sorrow.
While with long Strides he travers'd the wide Room,
And with dipter'd Accents crav'd a Sword:
Ask'd for his Wife, his, and his Childrens Mother!
Thus as he say'd, whether some God inspir'd,
(For we, like Statuces, dumb and speechless stood;)
But with an hideous Cry, as if possess'd,
He from the Hinges threw the starting Doors,
And, to the inward Chamber forc'd his way:
There we the wretched Queen aloft beheld
Hanging, and strangled with an hated Cord.
Whom when he saw, he from his inward Soul
Fetch'd
OEDIPUS,

Fetch'd a deep Groan, and flew to break the Nose.
Then, on the Floor, he dash'd his prostrate Body,
With all the Anguish of distracted Sorrow.
There, O the force of horrid Resolution!
He, from the Breast of his Jocasta's Robes
Tearing the golden ornamental Hooks,
With their steel'd Points dug at his sacred Eyes;
Crying, he could no longer bear to see
Her, his own Woes, or impious Deeds that caus'd 'em!
But, that by Darkness-guarded from all Crimes,
He would hereafter banish and shut out
Each guilty Object, and impure Desire.
Thus, with repeated Clamours, he went on;
And from their Seats wrench'd out the Balls of Light,
Whose bleeding Strings stain'd all his mangled Face;
Nor did alone a Stream of putrid Gore
Follow the Wounds: but strong and gushing Show'rs
Of red discoulour'd Tears drove down his Cheeks!
Nor did a single Sorrow urge his Hands;
But for himself and Wife, himself he punish'd!
Their Joys, their Triumphs, and their real Glories,
That late inrich'd their Days, in one cruel Hour.
Are turn'd to Groans, Destruction, Death, and Shame,
And ev'ry Form of ills, that Man can think of!
Cho. How did you leave the wretched Prince employ'd?
Meas. He cries aloud 't have all the Portals open'd,
That Thebes may see the cruel Parricide!
Th'incestuous Wretch that stain'd his Mother's Bed!
With other horrid things I fear to utter.

Then
King of Thebes.

Then says, he must and will depart the Land; 53
Nor stay, in Thbes, accursd and self-devoted!
But begs th'Assistance of some leading Hand,
For his Afflictions bow him to the Earth.
But soft; you will be Witness of his Anguish;
The Doors are open'd, and you strait will see
A piteous object, that would melt the stern
And stiny Breast of Hate to. soft Compassion.

A C T V. S C E N E II.

The Scene opens from the Palace, and discovers OEdi-
pus led forsh; with his Eyes blinded and bloody. The
Chorus range themselves on eac:h side of the Stage.

OEdiPus and Chorus.

Chor. O Sight of Woe! O dire Effects of Rage,
More rueful than these Eyes e'er yet beheld!
What Fury seiz'd thee, most unhappy King?
What cruel Pow'rs have on thy former ills
Heap'd new Distress, and loaded thee with Griefs.
Beyond the Limits of Calamity?
Alas! I'm wounded with thy strong Afflictions.
I've many things to say, struggling for Vent;
Many, my Soul desires to know of thee;
But looking on thee, I my purpose lose;
Struck dumb with Fear and Pity.

OEdi. O, my Heart!
O wretched OEdiPus! where art thou now?

Where
Where do I wander? whither does the Voice
Of my tumultuous Mood ascend unheeded?
O my fair Fortunes, whither are you fled?

Chor. Sunk into dire, unutterable Horror!

OEdip. O this detested, never-ending Night!
O State of strong, unconquerable Darkness!
O doubly cursed! — Subdu’d with pricking Pains,
And stung with conscious, thought-tormenting Anguish!

Chor. Nor wonder, with such pressing Ills o’erwhelm’d,
That you should feel the Weight of both Afflictions!

OEdip. Art thou there, Friend? and canst thou still be kind?

Still hold the same untainted, loyal Duty,
And hover round this blind and helpless Man?
Lost to these Beamless Eyes, I know thee yet;
So well my Ear retains thy faithful Accents.

Chor. O dreadful Work of Rage! what angry God
Seduc’d thee to prophan these precious Eyes?

OEdip. Apollo, Friends; Apollo wrought these Ills!
And all my glaring Mischiefs set to view!
But these performing Hands alone fulfill’d
My stern Resolves: Wherefore should I have Eyes,
That, looking round, could view no Glimpse of Joy?

Chor. I must confess, Delight indeed was fled.

OEdip. Is there on Earth that thing that I could see,
Or hear, or covet, or address with Pleasure?
O, no, my Friends; — Quick, drive me from the Land,
Your worst Destruction; one that stands accurs’d.

Grievous
Grievous to Man, and hated by the Gods!

Chor. How Sorrow doubles when so sharply felt?
Had Heav’n so pleas’d, would I had never known thee!

OEdip. Curst be th’ officious Wretch, whoe’er he was,
That from my Feet loos’d the corroding Bands;
Snatch’d me from Death, and rear’d me to Dishonour!
Have I a Cause to thank him for my Rescue?
For then I should have dy’d, secure from Guilt;
Nor cost my self, or Friends, this pressing Anguish.

Chor. I with the Gods in Mercy had decreed it.

OEdip. Then I had kill’d no Father; nor with Incest,
Like a foul Thief, robb’d my fair Mother’s Virtues;
But now I am most vile, the Sire to Shame;
Who have begot a Race on her that bore me!
If Vice have its Degrees, behold the Fiend
In all her ugliest Shapes of Horror here!

Chor. I know not how t’approve your desp’rate Course,
’Twas better not to live, than live in Darkness.

OEdip. O say not, I have err’d in my Resentment;
Or strive to sooth my grimed Soul to Peace:
I know not with what Eyes I could have bore
To meet my injur’d Father’s Ghost below:
Or glare upon my pale dishonour’d Mother:
’Gainst whom, my Offences call for more than Death!
Could I with Joy gaze on my growing Children,
And not remember my once guilty Pleasures?
Could I with these polluted Eyes have view’d
The Walls, the Tow’rs, and awful Shrines of Thebes,
This Parent-Soil that has indulg’d my Manhood?

From
From which my own rash Sentence has expell'd me,
Charging you all to thrust th' unhallow'd forth; 155
The Man condemn'd by Heaven, and injur'd Laius!
Could I with upright Eyes, and daring Front,
Have fac'd my known and branded Infamy?
No, Thebans, no; Could I with angry Force
Have damm'd the Entrances of Hearing up,
And marr'd that Work of Nature; I would then
Have been as dull of Ear, as blind of Eyes:
For Loss of Sense is Sorrow's greatest Comfort.
O why, Citharos, didn't thou once receive me?
Or not with Frosts have kill'd me, when receiv'd? 165
Then the dire Secret of my Birth had slept!
O Polybus! O Corinth! And ye Realms,
I once thought Native! What a Leap'rous Soul!
Ye harbour'd, hid beneath a gracious Form?
But now I am one black, detected Horror;
O triple-wending Road, ye gloomy Woods!
Ye Shrubs, ye fatal and contracted Paths
That drank the Blood, the Father's Blood, I spilt;
Do you retain the Marks of that Pollution,
Or know the Crimes I've since committ'd here? 175
O fatal Womb! that gave me to the Light;
And after took me back to your dark Chambers,
Suff'ring me there t' engender Sons and Brothers,
Daughters and Sistars! Chaos of Relation!
Confus'd the Wife and Mother! Broke Distinction, 180
And tore up Nature, with promiscuous Love!
O therefore I conjure you by the Gods,
Haften
Haften to thrust me forth, to hide, or kill me,
Or hurl me down into the friendly depth
Of seas, that will not give me back to sight.
Come, dare to end a man o'ergone with woes;
Obey without a fear: I have a load
That none but OEdipus could bear, and live!

Chor. Creon, my lord approaches; he can best
Advise, or execute, what you require;
For all your pow'r devolves alone on him.

ACT V. SCENE III.

OEdipus, Creon, and Chorus.

OEdip. Alas! How can I frame my speech to him?
Or how rely on him to do me right,
Whom I have injur'd with unjust detractions?

Creon. I come not, OEdipus, t' insult your ills;
Or swell the weight of sorrow with reproach:
But, Men of Thebes, tho' slightly you regard
Your country's sanctity; O yet revere
The sacred Sun's all-feeding Hallow'd fires;
Nor let pollution thus uncover'd stand,
Which neither earth, the sky, or light can suffer:
But bear him to the palace with all speed.
'Tis fit, his kindred, with consoling eyes,
Alone should view the spectacle of woe.

OEdip. O Creon, since thy virtues have deceiv'd
My base opinion; and that thou, in goodness,
Do'ft condescend t' approach this vile, fall'n man;

By
OEDIPUS,

By the just Gods, I beg that you would hear me,
Since that which I would say, concerns you most.

Cres. What is it, you so earnestly would have?

OEdip. That thou wouldst speed me hence to some lone Place,
Where I may quite be lost to Human Commerce.

Cres. Be sure, it must have been so; but that I
Have first determin'd to consult the God,
How we must treat you.

OEdip. Wherefore that Delay?

Cres. Is not the dreadful Oracle most plain?
Th' unhallow'd Parricide must be destroy'd!

Cres. But yet the present State of things requires,
That we should take the Counsel of the God.

OEdip. What? on a Wretch as I am?

Cres. For thy Fate

Has given a Sanction to Apollo's Words.

OEdip. Let me conjure thee then, (command, I cannot;)
Give her, that lies within, some decent Burial:
(To thee the Kindred Obsequies belong.)
Nor let the State of Thebes e'er condescend
Me living to admit within her Walls:
But suffer me to spend my remnant-Days
On my Citharon; on the Mount design'd,
Of old, by both my Parents, for my Tomb:
And leave me there to dye, as they decreed.

But well I know, Sickness, nor raging Pain,
The Hand of Robbers, nor the Teeth of Lions,
Could have destroy'd me, e'er I had fulfill'd

The
The destin'd Mischiefs I was born to do.
Now, let my future Fate be what it will;
But, Creon, burthen not my helpless Age
With my Sons Care: their sturdy Sex will strive,
And buffet thro' Adversity for Bread:
But for my Girls, those poor and tender Orphans,
That still have known the Sweets of Regal Plenty,
And been the Partners of my flowing Fortunes;
My Heart bleeds for 'em! — O permit me, Creon,
To fold them in these Arms, and mourn their Sufferings:
Grant it, O King of Thebes; thou gen'rous Youth!

[Creon makes Signs to a Servant, who goes out.

Touching 'em, I shall feel a Father's Joy,
As great as when I saw.—Ha! by the Gods,
My Ears are false, or I already hear
The poor afflicted little ones in Tears;
And Creon, pitying a Father's Fondness,
Has sent my dearest Children?—Tell me, Friends.

ACT V. SCENE IV.

OEdipus, Creon, Servant with Antigone and Ismene, the two young Daughters of OEdipus, and Chorus.

Creo. You're not deceiv'd: knowing the tender Love
You always bore 'em, I have brought 'em to you.
OEdip. Heav'n's bless you for this Kindness! And the Gods

Proteō
OEDIPUS,

Protect you better than they e'er did me!
Where are you, Daughters! O come near and touch 255
These Brother's Hands, that made your Father's Eyes
Thus dark; whose Balls were once, like yours, trans-
sparent!

Your Father, that unknowing of his Guilt,
Got you on her, of whom my self was born!
Tho' see I cannot, yet I weep your Fortunes; 260
To think, how storm'd your after Days must prove;
To what Assemblies, to what Theban Feasts,
Shall you repair, but that, returning home,
You shall in Tears pay for the short-liv'd Pleasure!
And when your ripen'd Years inspire your Breasts 265
With Love, where shall you find a willing Confort?
Who will so lightly hold his Son's fair Name,
As to receive Dishonour to his House?
The Portion of intall'd Disgrace, which hangs
Upon you from your Sire! - What Branch of Shame 270
Attends us not? your Father kill'd his Father!
Defil'd his Mother with licentious Love,
And receiv'd you, the Products of his Incest!
This shall be your Reproach: Who then will court
Your ignominious Nuptials? None, my Girls; 275
But Desolate, and Barren shall you live;
And to the Grave descend unblest with Offspring!
But Oh! forbid it Heav'n; forbid it, Creon;
(For thou art all the Parent now is left them; 280
Those that they had from Nature, are no more.)
Let 'em not grow distress'd and needy Wand'lers;
Contemn'd
Contemn'd for Want; or solitary Virgins.
Nor let 'em feel the Burthen of my Sorrows!

But view their Infant Years, their helpless Childhood;
And stretch the Hand of Pity o'er their Weakness. 285

They have no Help, but what must come from thee.
O therefore reach to me thy gen'rous Hand;
And plight thy Faith for their assured Protection.

O Daughters, were your Years and Judgments ripe
For Counsel, much I could advise your Youth. 290

But pray to the Great Gods, that they may shed
Successive Blessings on your future Years;

And make you happier than your wretched Sire;

Creo. No more, my Lord; suppress this Head-strong

Sorrow:

Let us go in.

OEdip. Tho' loth, I must obey. 295

Creo. We must submit to what the Times require.

OEdip. Can'st thou divin'e, with what Desire I labour?

Creo. Your Tongue can best interpret your Desires.

OEdip. O, I would fain be banish'd from this Land!

Creo. You ask no more than what the God enjoins. 300

OEdip. But I am grown the Hatred of the Gods;

Creo. Therefore the sooner must obtain your Doom.

OEdip. May I believe you?

Creo. Never have I yet

Suffer'd my Tongue to wander from my Heart.

OEdip. O then conduct me from this fatal Place: 305

Creo. Come on! let go the Children.

OEdip. Take not from me

These
These Comforts.—

Creo. — Nay, indulge not fond Desires:
The Pleasures you have tasted, had their End.

[Creon leads OEdipus into the Palace;
Servant follows with the Children.]

Chor. Thebans, behold this OEdipus; whose Name,
Once Glorious, was the darling Theme of Fame:
Who the dark Riddles of dire Sphynx explain'd,
And the decreed Reward of Empire gain'd:
Who of Desert and Regal Honours proud,
Look'd down on Fortune, and the ignoble Crowd.
Till the rough Tempest of unsteady Fate
Rush'd on his Grandeur, and o'erwhelm'd his State!
Taught by the Change, let no rash Man depend
On Fortune's present Smiles, but mark his End:
Howe'er renown'd, we none must happy rate,
Till Death secures 'em from th' Insults of Fate.
NOTES
UPON
OEdipus, King of Thebes.

His Play of OEdipus had the additional Title of (ο θέατρον) the king, given it by the Grammarians of later Times; to distinguish it from the Second OEdipus of Sophocles call'd Colonae. The Subject of this Tragedy is, the Enquiry after the Murtherers of Laius, the Discovery that it was OEdipus alone did the Fact, and the Consequences of that Discovery in OEdipus's Misfortunes. I cannot give a better Abstract of the Contents of this Poem, than is already done to my Hand by Mr. Dacier in his Notes upon Aristotle's Art of Poetry. The Scene opens, says he, with a Sacrifice which a great Number of Thebans are making in the Court of OEdipus's Palace. That Prince enters, and to comfort the People, tells them, that he had sent Creon a long time ago to enquire of Apollo's Oracle at Delphos, the means of making the devouring Pestilence cease; upon which Creon arrives and relates what the Oracle had said: OEdipus sends for Tiresias to explain it. The Prophet at first refus'd to do it; but provok'd at last by the severe Carriage of OEdipus, he accuses him of the Murther of Laius: OEdipus imagines that 'twas Creon made him do this: Creon complains of this Injustice, to the two Princes quarrel: Jocasta comes in to appease them, and endeavours to remove the Uneasiness, which the Reproach that was cast on OEdipus gave him; but all that she said serv'd only to augment his Trouble.
Notes upon OEDIPUS,

Trouble. A Messenger enters from Corinth, who brings the News of the Death of King Polybus, who was thought to be his Father; and to remove some Fears which he had upon account of his supposed defiling his Mother's Bed, he tells him, that the King and Queen of Corinth were not his Parents; he was resolved to know that Matter throughly, and enquires of the Shepherd, who alone was able to give him a perfect Account of his Misfortune: The Shepherd leaves him no room to doubt of all his Crimes, and then he punishes himself.

OEdipus is look'd upon by Mr. Dacier to be the best Subject for Tragedy that ever was; for whatever happen'd to that unhappy Prince, has this Character; 'tis managed by Fortune; but every Body may see, that all the Accidents have their Causes, and fall out according to the Design of a particular Providence. He has in another place call'd it the finest Tragedy of all Antiquity. And Mr. Kennet in his Lives and Characters of the ancient Greek Poets, speaking of Sophocles's Conduct and Expressions, subjoins, that the first of these Virtues has made his OEdipus the general Rule and Model of true Plotting. However as excellent as it is in its kind, and as much as it has been esteem'd by the Ancients, he had the Prize bore from him by Philocles, as Dicaearchus relates.

As the scenery of this Tragedy is mark'd by the Scholiafs to be very artful, and the Constitution applauded; so there are great Improbabilities in the Subject: of both which I shall take Notice in the Course of the subsequent Notes.

Notes upon the First ACT.

Verse 1. Ye Sons of Thebes.] The Scholiast observes that the Poet has distinguished OEdipus, in his Manners, to be a Lover of his People, and studious of their Welfare; which Character express'd at the opening of the Scene, begot the Esteem of the Audience, and bespoke their Compassion.
King of Thebes.

γ. 3. These Boughs of Supplication.] It was the general Custom amongst the Ancients for their Petitioners both to Gods and Men, to go adorned with Garlands, or with Green Boughs in their Hands; sometimes both, as in this Instance. The reason of which Ceremony the second Scholiast tells us, was ἵνα αἰδόσιμοι δοκῆν τοις ἐς ἱερὰς, to beg Repect from those whom they addressed: And these Boughs were either of Laurel or Olive, because both those kinds are ἀνθαλάς, not subject to wither; and the Laurel was a Sign of Prevailing, the Olive, of Appeasing.

γ. 44. From the Exactions.] As the Rise of OEdipus's Power in Thebes is built upon the Fable of Sphynx, and that her Riddles are frequently alluded to by Sophocles in this Poem: I will give my self a little more Scope in examining this Fiction from the Opinions of those Authors, who have entred into the Enquiry after her. To trace her first in her Fabulous Existence, we must begin with the Description of her Person from the second Scholiast on our Author, who says, ἵνα ἵνα ἡ Ἑφίγνη ἐν τῇ περὶ τῇ κόρῃς, ἵνα τοῖς πλεῖστοι ἐν τῷ ὄντες, ἵνα τοῖς τῶν ἔσχατοι, τοῖς τοῖς ἱεράς, ἵνα τοῖς ἱεράς. You must know that Sphynx had the Face and Head of a Virgin, the Body of a Dog, the Wings of a Bird, the Voice of a Man, and the Claws of a Lion. Thus she stands for a direct Monster of Prey, and such has Mr. Dryden represented her in the first Act of his and Mr. Lee's OEdipus. But the Scholiast upon Hesiod tells us, that in Reality she was a Female Robber, and had many Assistants in Rapine with her; προματιῶν ἡ γυνὴ ἰδές καὶ ἐκεῖ ἂν ἐκείνη τῶν ὑπό τῆς ὑποστασιών. Thus upon Lycophron is of the same Opinion, and teaches us further, that her monstrous Form was only given her significantly from her Qualities, ἐνδειγματω τῇ ἐν τῇ λίμιναν, διὰ τὸ φοῖνικα, ἐν τῇ γενεσις ἐκείνη διὰ τῇ ἁρπακτικά, πλεγματική, διὰ τῇ καὶ αὐτή λα-

E 2 Blood
Notes upon OE DIPUS,

Blood: with the Claws of a Griffin, from her rapacious Course of living; and with the Wings of an Eagle, from the celerity of her Comrades in surrounding and surprising all Passengers: Not to trouble my self with what Diodorus (lib. 14.) avers, that the Sphinges, were a Species of Animals, of the Ape Kind, &c. I shall proceed to relate that Sphynx took up her Quarters on the high and craggy Mountain Sphingium, near Thebes, and from thence made her Attempts on Travellers: Not but that, by the way, this Mountain derived its Names of Sphingium; Spicium, & Phiccum, in all probability from her Residence thereon; for Sphynx was likewise call'd Φίξ by the Boeotians, as in Ηέα.

As to her propounding her Riddles, the Rewards propos'd by Creon to such as should expound them, and OE dipus's Success therein, they are Circumstances too well known to dwell on further. Those who are inclined to think the whole a Mystery, couch'd under a Fable, may take Nat. Comes along with them, in Mythol. lib. 9. chap. 18.

Ʒ. 83. Th' appointed Day.] The Return of Creon is very artfully contriv'd to connect the Scenes; and OE dipus, as the Scholiast observes, desiring the Answer of the Oracle should be pronounced in Publick, prefers the Kingly Character, in preferring the Interests of his People; and at the same time not thinking himself concern'd in the Crime, prosecutes the Enquiry after Laius's Murthers, and promotes the Business of the Tragedy.

Ʒ. 122. Did Laius—meet his Death?] The Enquiry of OE dipus concerning Laius's Death, seems to lye open to the same Remark which I have made on the 18th Verfe of the second Act of the Electra of Sophocles; to which I beg leave to refer my Readers.: Aristotles in his Poetics has given it for an indispensible Rule, that, 'tis absolutely necessary that among all the Incidents which compose the Fable, no one be without Reason; (but he seems
King of Thebes.

77

Seems to have put in an Excuse for Sophocles, in the subsequent Terms;) or if that be impossible, it ought to be so order'd, that what is without Reason be always out of the Tragedy, as Sophocles has prudently observ'd in his OEdipus. Mr. Dacier's accurate Note upon this Passage, sets the Critick in a much clearer Light. As there are Subjects which cannot be manag'd without using these Incidents, which Aristotle calls without Reason, he says, that they ought to be placed out of the Tragedy, that is, out of the Action which makes the Subject of the Piece, and made use of, as Sophocles does of that which is without Reason in his OEdipus. 'Twas without Reason that OEdipus should be so long married to Jocasta, and not know in what manner Laius was kill'd, nor make any Enquiry after the Murthere's; but as that Subject, which is otherwise the finest in the World, could not subsist without that, Sophocles did not think fit to omit it; but has plac'd it out of the Action, which he has taken for the Subject of his Piece: that Incident is related as a thing already done, and which precedes the Day of the Action. The Poet is answerable, only for those Incidents which enter into the Composition of his Subject, and not for those which precede or follow it.

7. 133. Did not hire, &c.] The Original is, ο η τι μη ευω αειγυου ετραγειοι, which the Cambridge Edition of Sophocles, printed in 1668. has render'd thus, Si illae non pecuniâ Omnia Ater faciebat, if he did not travel with a Charge of Money. But I have follow'd the interpretation of both the Scholiasts upon the Place, and the Speech is level'd at Creon, as if he had been consenting to, and had contracted with the Murtherer of Laius, to gain the Crown himself.

Enter the Chorus.] The learned Mr. Dacier seems mistaken in the Chorus of this Tragedy, for taking notice that the Priest of Jupiter, follow'd by a great many other Priests, &c. make the opening of the Scene; he sub-
Notes upon OEDIPUS,

Joins, and when the Subject is well explain'd, the Priests themselves make the Chorus of the Piece: The contrary whereof appears to me very plain, especially if we may depend on the Scholiasts. The Entrance of the Chorus is probable and well prepar'd, for the King (sends for and) says he must confer with his People on the Matter. The Priest goes out, having done what he came to do, and withal to give room for a fresh Actor.—Subsequent to the King's Command come certain ancient Thebans, of whom the Chorus is made up.

Notes upon the Second ACT.

Verse 37. On me and mine.] The Scholiast justly remarks, that it moves Compassion very strongly to hear OEdipus unknowingly curst himself twice, if he knew the Murderer.

υ. 54. The Authors of his Death.] The Greek is τοιαναγκα το δε τη ανεξαν παρεναισκοναι, τοι τη αληθεια καθισμεν τι τοιαναγκα πασηνεκοναι τοιαναγκα μελετησον. i. e. Of Laius the Son of Labdacus, the Son of Polydorus, the Son of Cadmus, the Son of Agenor. I cannot conceive the meaning of Sophocles's inserting the Genealogy of Laius, which was of no Concern to the Audience, and gives OEdipus's Expression an Air of Stiffness and Pedantry: 'Tis as formal, as if calculated for some particular Purpose; and put me in mind of Abraham begat Isaac, &c.

υ. 76. Creon counsel'd.] There is a particular Art belonging to the Theatre, which is call'd The Preparation of Incidents; of which this Second Act of OEdipus is very full, as is obvious to every one who is acquainted with the Theory of the Stage. In multis OEconomia Comicorum Postarum it à se habet, ut facile possit Spectator venisse.
venisse quod Consilio Scriptorum satum sit, says Donatus upon Terence. The O-Economy of the Comick Poets is frequently such, that the Spectator may think that E-vens casual, which is design'd by the Writer. The Rule holds in Tragedy and Epick Poetry: and Scaliger praising Virgil for his Art in this Point, has these Words, ubique vero alicquid jacit feminum ad futuram Messen, he every where scatters Seeds for a future Harvest. The Abbot of Aubignac has writ an entire Chapter, in his whole Art of the Stage; upon this Head, and which he concludes thus: But the main thing to be remembered, is, that all that is said or done as a Preparative or Seed for things to come, must have so apparent a Reason, and so powerful a Colour to be said and done in that place, that it may seem to have been introduc'd only for that, and s-a tc's never give a Hint to prevent those Incidents which it is to prepare: I was peculiarly called to this Criticisin, by an Intimation of the Scholiast, to το ψάλλον τα χθές, οτι η μετόπωσι μετα τον μηδεμίον νομον μοι, το 'Οριωνος τα ψάλλει. But the Words Creon counsel'd do make the Sequel probable, that OEdipus's Suspicion of him might obtain Credit, that Tiresias was suborn'd by Creon to prophecy Falsities to blacken OEdipus.

1. 147. Then Passion shall have room.] The Poet thro' this whole Scene of OEdipus and Tiresias endeavours at establishing the King's Manners, and Character: He would describe a Man, that is passionate, violent and rash; he always keeps in that Character, what is proper and necessary for the Subject; and enhances it by all the Embellishments it is capable of. The Scholiast takes Notice, that the Chorus are very reasonably puzzled, to devine what Differences had fell out betwixt the Son of Labda-cus, and Polybus; for as yet they look'd upon OEdipus to be the Son of Polybus. εἰσὶς τοις ἄνδρεσιν πατώς καὶ νακτε ἂν γίνονται τοῖς ἃν τοὺς Λακεδαιμόνες ἐστὶς ἔδωκεν, ἵνα γὰρ τοιοῦτο τέλεος Πολιμέπον.
Notes upon the third ACT.

Verse 1. To Men of Thebes.] The Contrivance of this Act, both in the Scenary and Prosecution of the Plot is admirable. The Entrance of Creon is easy and natural; Oedipus had thrown Suspicions on him, which reflected highly on his Honour, and he longs to clear himself before those, who had been Witnesses of the Calumnies: Oedipus, who had been sufficiently disturb’d by Tiresias, and given way to Suggestions against Creon, hears him come to apologize for himself, and in the Ferment of his Rage, comes forth to upbraid him personally of Falshood: The Warmth and Loudness of their Dispute alarms Jocasta, who, fearing the Consequences, enters with Design either to reconcile them, or prevent Danger.

v. 188. When I have enquir’d.] The Scholiast remarks, that after Creon had left the Stage, Jocasta, with a World of Probability, enquires into the Cause of the King’s and his Variance; which is done likewise to introduce the first Remembrance and unravelling of the Plot. περιεχεῖν, ἢς τὸ ἐπιλαέκασιν καὶ τὸς ἐπιλαέσει τούτων ἦμα τῇ ἐκ τοῦ ēρχεται θείῳ τὸ ἐνασάκηδι.

v. 219. Laius had once an Oracle.] I cannot sufficiently admire the Art and Fatality of Jocasta’s Kindness in this Scene; she labours to relieve Oedipus from the Anxiety he was under upon Account of some terrible Predictions, by telling him how fruitless and unaccomplish’d an Oracle her former Husband had once given to him from the Tripος; but in her Story unhappily recounts Facts, which call some fearful Circumstances to Oedipus’s Mind, and involve him in fresh and more horrible Distractions.

v. 309. Made from the Stars.] The Greek is, ἀφείς τὸ λαῖτος ἐξ ἐξωτικηρίῳ for the future, measuring the Corinthian Land by the Stars. And the old Scholiast upon the place says, ἡ μελαφοὺς ἢ δὲ τὸ πολλὴν μέλαν ὁς
King of Thebes.

It is a Metaphor borrowed from those that traverse the Seas, who by the Stars are taught the Course of their Navigation. I remember an Expression of Virgil's Palinurus, very like this of Sophocles.

Si modo risè memor servata remetior astra. Æn. V. 25.

v. 417. No more to the Lycian Temples pressing.] The Original is, ὥς ὅς ὁς κατὰ τὸν ναῷ, nor to the Temple at Aba; and 'Αὔα, τῆς Ἀχαιας ἐπαίσκετο ἐν Ἀπόλλωνι, Aba, was a Place in Lycia where Apollo had a Temple, says the Scholiast; but the learned Dr. Potter thinks him sufficiently refuted, in that we read of an Oracle of Apollo, at Aba, a City of Phociis, mention'd by Herodotus, and Stephanus the Byzantian; by the latter of which we are told, it was more ancient than the Delphian. Pausanias and Diodorus, make mention of an Aba, a Town of the Locrenses Epicnemidii; and Stephanus, of one, a City of Caria: Mr. Lloyd in his Lexicon Geographicum, mentions several others taken notice of by different Authors.

Notes on the Fourth ACT.

v. 12. To thee, thou next redress!] The Original is, ἀγρικός ὅς ὅς, for thou art nearest: On which the old Scholiast thus flourishes, γυμνάσιον ἡτοι ἄριστον ἐν Ἀπόλλωνι τῷ ἀνευχρηστῇ, ἀγρικός ὅς, καθο ἐστὶν ἀπὸ Ἀττικῆς ἡ Ἐθνος, ἐν ἀπὸ Θηρίων ὁμοιομμένον ἐν γυμνάσιον Λυκίων Ἀπόλλων. There is a Gymnasium at Athens, consecrated to Apollo; he is still nearest therefore, because Thebes was not far distant from Attica: or else there was a Gymnasium at Thebes, that was likewise under the Protection of Lycian Apollo. If I might presume to call in Question these learned Opinions, I would venture to say Sophocles had no such Meaning. That Jocasta invok'd Apollo merely as Θεῖς ἄνευχρηστή, a Deity that averted Evils; and he might reasonably be address'd to
Notes upon OEDIPUS,

as τὰ κοινὰ, or Nearest on two Accounts: either as he then shone over her Head, and so was present; or, as he was likewise ὁ παράπλησις, a Deity which presided over and protected Houses, and therefore had Images erected to him in the Porches: I have been pretty particular on the Custom of addressing the Sun to deprecate Frights arising from Dreams, in my Note on the 129th Verse of the Second Act of Electra; which perhaps may serve as a Supplement to this Remark.

V. 29. From Corinth, Lady.] Aristotle in his Poetics, explaining the Peripetia in a Tragedy, says. It is a Change of one Fortune into another, contrary to what was expected, and that Change happens either necessarily or probably. This Change in OEdipus is certainly very happily contriv'd, for as Mr. Dacier remarks, a Man from Corinth comes to acquaint OEdipus of King Polybus's Death, that he might go and take Possession of that Kingdom. OEdipus, who thought that Polybus was his Father, and being afraid of committing Incest, as the Oracle had said he should, told him, that he was resolv'd never to go into any Place where his Mother was. The Corinthian answer'd, that 'twas very plain, he did not know himself, and that he disturb'd himself about nothing; And thinking to do him some signal Service, in bringing him out of his Error, he told him that he was not the Son of Polybus and Merope; which began the Remembrance, which cast him into the most horrible of all his Misfortunes. Thus did the Discourse of this Corinthian produce a Change of Fortune, not probably but necessarily.

V. 180. I stand resolv'd, &c.] OEdipus's Manners are admirably well mark'd in this Act, for 'tis blind and rash Curiosity which makes his Misfortunes, and the unravelling of the Plot. Plutarch very aptly calls this Curiosity, an immoderate Desire of knowing every thing, and a Torrent which breaks down all the Banks of Reason which oppose it. It may not be improper to set down a Passage of his at length, because remarkable in it.
it self, and relating to the Subject in Hand. Curiosity cast OEdipus into the greatest of all Evils, for being de-
sirous to know who he was, because they reproach'd him
for being a Stranger. He set forward to consult the O-
vacle, met with his Father, and kill'd him without know-
ing who he was; afterwards he married his own Mo-
ter, and by that became King of Thebes; and when
he seem'd to be most happy, he had still a Desire to know
more, concerning himself; also his Wife used all pos-
sible Endeavours to hinder him: But the more she
strive to do it, the more he solicited a certain old Man,
who knew all the Affair, threatening and forcing him by
all the ways imaginable; so that as last the Business was
so far reveal'd, that he began to have some sort of Suspi-
cion; and then the old Man seeing himself obliged to de-
clare every particular, cry'd out, alas! I am at last re-
duc'd to the cruel Necessity of Speaking: OEdipus tran-
sported with Passion, and trembling, answer'd, And I am
reduc'd to the cruel Necessity of Hearing: But, speak.
So much, so tickling is the Pleasure of Curiosity, and dif-
ficult to withstand; as an Ulcer, the more 'tis scratch'd,
the more 'tis inflam'd and bloody; but he that is free from
this Malady, and of an easy Temper, when he has neglected
to hear some bad News, ought to say, O divine Forget-
fulness of past Evils, how full of Wisdom art thou!

Note: upon the Fifth ACT.

y. 297. O cursed Hour!] Aristotle has observ'd, that
the best Remembrance, is that which is found with the
Peripetie, as in the OEdipus, on which Mr. Dacier a-
mongst others, makes this Remark. The Subject of
OEdipus furnish'd Sophocles with the best Remembrance
the Theatre ever saw; for that Prince no sooner knew
himself to be the Son of Laius and Jocasta, but of the most
happy of Men, he became at once the most miserable.

Notes upon the Fifth ACT.

y. 47. Hanging, and strangled.] Sophocles has made Jo-
casta hang her self on the Discovery of her Incest with
84. **Notes upon OEDIPUS,**

her Son; but Euripides, Statius, and Seneca keep her alive, till after the mutual Death of Etocles and Poly- 
nices in single Combat: As to Seneca's part, I ought to 
distinguish, that he has introduc'd her living in his 
Thebais; tho' he had before made her stab herself in 
his OEdipus. But in the former he had his Eye on 
Euripides, in the latter on Sophocles.

_\textit{Yu. 174. He cries aloud.} \textbf{The Scholiast observes that} 
the Pretext is very natural for bringing forth \textit{OEdipus} 
to shew the Audience the Distress of his Blindness, by 
making him say, that he would shew Thebes, how justly 
he had punish'd himself, for his Involuntary Misfortune, 
and how willing he was to depart the Land by reason 
of the Imprecations he had fix'd on himself: \textit{πιθαυνόμενον τῷ ἕξιν των ἀτρότητων τοῖς ἐπι 
διέγερε τοὺς πολίτας τίνι ἔξισε, εἴη τινὶ ἐμφάνισε πάθησαν \να \ἀ 
μίλησα εἰς τῷ εἶδος ἐξίσους πέπλων Ἀλ τῆς ἄρεως ἢ ἑφανο 
ἐξετελεῖται.}

_\textit{Yu. 299. Fair be banish'd from this Land.} \textbf{OEdipus in} 
this Tragedy makes himself a willing Exile, but in the 
OEdipus Coloneus, he reproaches his Son Polynices with 
being turn'd out of Thebes by him.

\begin{quote}
\textit{τὸν αὐτὸς ἀνετὸς παλίμης τὸν ἀπελαθας.}
\textit{Καθήκας ἀπολεῖ,}—\textit{V. 1351.}
\end{quote}

But I shall suspend the Examination of this point, 
till my Notes on that Play, and the Seven Captains before 
Thebes, of Æschylus.

_\textit{Yu. 319. However renown'd.} \textbf{The Scholiast takes No-} 
tice, that Sophocles paraphrases upon the Saying of So- 
lon, which he made to Cretus, when he shew'd him all 
his Wealth and Grandeur, and ask'd him if he did not 
think him very happy; to whom the Philosopher reply'd, 

\textit{οὐκ φαν \ποτίς \ἐκλύθη \ἀγὼν \μακαρίως,} that we ought 
not to judge a Man happy till his Death. The Story 
and the Saying are very well known; but I do not find 
Diog. Laertius take any Notice of the latter in his Life 
of Solon.

\textbf{F I N I S.}