

# PEACE

by Aristophanes

anonymous translator

## CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

TRYGAEUS  
TWO SERVANTS OF TRYGAEUS  
DAUGHTERS OF TRYGAEUS  
HERMES  
WAR  
TUMULT  
HIEROCLES, a Soothsayer  
AN ARMOURER  
A SICKLE-MAKER  
A CREST-MAKER  
SON OF LAMACHUS  
SON OF CLEONYMUS  
CHORUS OF HUSBANDMEN

## PEACE

(SCENE:-Behind the Orchestra on the right the farmhouse of TRYGAEUS, in the centre the mouth of a cave closed up with huge boulders, on the left the palace of ZEUS. In front of the farmhouse is a stable, the door of which is closed. Two of TRYGAEUS'slaves are seen in front of the stable, one of them kneading cakes of dung, the other taking the finished cakes and throwing them into the stable.)

FIRST SERVANT

Quick, quick, bring the dung-beetle his cake.

SECOND SERVANT

There it is. Give it to him, and may it kill him! And may he never eat a better.

FIRST SERVANT

Now give him this other one kneaded up with ass's dung.

SECOND SERVANT

There! I've done that too. And where's what you gave him just now? Surely he can't have devoured it yet!

FIRST SERVANT

Indeed he has; he snatched it, rolled it between his feet and bolted it. Come, hurry up, knead up a lot and knead them stiffly.

SECOND SERVANT

Oh, scavengers, help me in the name of the gods, if you do not wish to see me fall down choked.

FIRST SERVANT

Come, come, another made from the stool of a fairy's favourite. That will be to the beetle's taste; he likes it well ground.

SECOND SERVANT

There! I am free at least from suspicion; none will accuse me of

tasting what I mix.

FIRST SERVANT

Faugh! come, now another! keep on mixing with all your might.

SECOND SERVANT

By god, no. I can stand this awful cesspool stench no longer.

FIRST SERVANT

I shall bring you the whole ill-smelling gear.

SECOND SERVANT

Pitch it down the sewer sooner, and yourself with it. (To the AUDIENCE) Maybe, one of you can tell me where I can buy a stopped-up nose, for there is no work more disgusting than to mix food for a dung-beetle and to carry it to him. A pig or a dog will at least pounce upon our excrement without more ado, but this foul wretch affects the disdainful, the spoilt mistress, and won't eat unless I offer him a cake that has been kneaded for an entire day.... But let us open the door a bit ajar without his seeing it. Has he done eating? Come, pluck up courage, cram yourself till you burst! The cursed creature! It wallows in its food! It grips it between its claws like a wrestler clutching his opponent, and with head and feet together rolls up its paste like a rope-maker twisting a hawser. What an indecent, stinking, gluttonous beast! I don't know what angry god let this monster loose upon us, but of a certainty it was neither Aphrodite nor the Graces.

FIRST SERVANT

Who was it then?

SECOND SERVANT

No doubt Zeus, the God of the Thundercrap.

FIRST SERVANT

But perhaps some spectator, some beardless youth, who thinks himself a sage, will say, "What is this? What does the beetle mean?" And then an Ionian, sitting next him, will add, "I think it's an allusion to Cleon, who so shamelessly feeds on filth all by himself."-But now I'm going indoors to fetch the beetle a drink.

SECOND SERVANT

As for me, I will explain the matter to you all, children, youths, grownups and old men, aye, even to the decrepit dotards. My master is mad, not as you are, but with another sort of madness, quite a new kind. The livelong day he looks open-mouthed towards heaven and never stops addressing Zeus. "Ah! Zeus," he cries, "what are thy intentions? Lay aside thy besom; do not sweep Greece away!" Ah! Hush, hush! I think I hear his voice!

TRYGAEUS (from within)

Oh! Zeus, what art thou going to do for our people? Dost thou not see this, that our cities will soon be but empty husks?

SECOND SERVANT

As I told you, that is his form of madness. There you have a sample of his follies. When his trouble first began to seize him, he said to himself, "By what means could I go straight to Zeus? Then he made himself very slender little ladders and so clambered up towards

heaven; but he soon came hurtling down again and broke his head. Yesterday, to our misfortune, he went out and brought us back this thoroughbred, but from where I know not, this great beetle, whose groom he has forced me to become. He himself caresses it as though it were a horse, saying, "Oh! my little Pegasus, my noble aerial steed, may your wings soon bear me straight to Zeus!" But what is my master doing? I must stoop down to look through this hole. Oh! great gods! Here! neighbours, run here quick! here is my master flying off mounted on his beetle as if on horseback.

(The Machine brings in TRYGAEUS astride an enormous figure of a dung beetle with wings spread.)

TRYGAEUS (intoning)

Gently, gently, go easy, beetle; don't start off so proudly, or trust at first too greatly to your powers; wait till you have sweated, till the beating of your wings shall make your limb joints supple. Above all things, don't let off some foul smell. I adjure you; else I would rather have you stay right in the stable.

SECOND SERVANT (intoning)

Poor master! Is he crazy?

TRYGAEUS (intoning)

Silence! silence!

SECOND SERVANT (intoning)

But why start up into the air on chance?

TRYGAEUS (intoning)

'Tis for the weal of all the Greeks; I am attempting a daring and novel feat.

SECOND SERVANT (intoning)

But what is your purpose? What useless folly!

TRYGAEUS (intoning)

No words of ill omen! Give vent to joy and command all men to keep silence, to close down their drains and privies with new tiles and to cork up their own arses.

FIRST SERVANT (speaking)

No, I shall not be silent, unless you tell me where you are going.

TRYGAEUS

Why, where am I likely to be going across the sky, if it be not to visit Zeus?

FIRST SERVANT

For what purpose?

TRYGAEUS

I want to ask him what he reckons to do for all the Greeks.

SECOND SERVANT

And if he doesn't tell you?

TRYGAEUS

I shall pursue him at law as a traitor who sells Greece to the Medes.

SECOND SERVANT

Death seize me, if I let you go.

TRYGAEUS

It is absolutely necessary.

SECOND SERVANT (loudly)

Alas! alas! dear little girls, your father is deserting you secretly to go to heaven. Ah! poor orphans, entreat him, beseech him.

(The little daughters of TRYGAEUS come out.)

LITTLE DAUGHTER (singing)

Father! father! what is this I hear? Is it true? What! you would leave me, you would vanish into the sky, you would go to the crows? Impossible! Answer, father, if you love me.

TRYGAEUS (singing)

Yes, I am going. You hurt me too sorely, my daughters, when you ask me for bread, calling me your daddy, and there is not the ghost of an obolus in the house; if I succeed and come back, you will have a barley loaf every morning-and a punch in the eye for sauce!

LITTLE DAUGHTER

But how will you make the journey? There's no ship that will take you there.

TRYGAEUS

No, but this winged steed will.

LITTLE DAUGHTER

But what an idea, papa, to harness a beetle, to fly to the gods on.

TRYGAEUS

We see from Aesop's fables that they alone can fly to the abode of the Immortals.

LITTLE DAUGHTER

Father, father, that's a tale nobody can believe! that such a smelly creature can have gone to the gods.

TRYGAEUS

It went to have vengeance on the eagle and break its eggs.

LITTLE DAUGHTER

Why not saddle Pegasus? you would have a more tragic appearance in the eyes of the gods.

TRYGAEUS

Eh! don't you see, little fool, that then twice the food would be wanted? Whereas my beetle devours again as filth what I have eaten myself.

LITTLE DAUGHTER

And if it fell into the watery depths of the sea, could it escape with its wings?

TRYGAEUS (exposing himself)

I am fitted with a rudder in case of need, and my Naxos beetle will serve me as a boat.

LITTLE DAUGHTER

And what harbour will you put in at?

TRYGAEUS

Why is there not the harbour of Cantharus at the Piraeus?

LITTLE DAUGHTER

Take care not to knock against anything and so fall off into

space; once a cripple, you would be a fit subject for Euripides, who would put you into a tragedy.

TRYGAEUS (as the Machine hoists him higher)

I'll see to it. Good-bye! (To the Athenians) You, for love of whom I brave these dangers, do ye neither fart nor crap for the space of three days, for, if, while cleaving the air, my steed should scent anything, he would fling me head foremost from the summit of my hopes.

(Intoning)

Now come, my Pegasus, get a-going with up-pricked ears and make your golden bridle resound gaily. Eh! what are you doing? What are you up to? Do you turn your nose towards the cesspools? Come, pluck up a spirit; rush upwards from the earth, stretch out your speedy wings and make straight for the palace of Zeus; for once give up foraging in your daily food.-Hi! you down there, what are you after now? Oh! my god! it's a man taking a crap in the Piraeus, close to the warehouses. But is it my death you seek then, my death? Will you not bury that right away and pile a great heap of earth upon it and plant wild thyme therein and pour perfumes on it? If I were to fall from up here and misfortune happened to me, the town of Chios would owe a fine of five talents for my death, all because of your damned arse.

(Speaking)

Alas! how frightened I am! oh! I have no heart for jests. Ah! machinist, take great care of me. There is already a wind whirling round my navel; take great care or, from sheer fright, I shall form food for my beetle.... But I think I am no longer far from the gods; aye, that is the dwelling of Zeus, I perceive. (The beetle descends and comes to a halt in front of the house of ZEUS. TRYGAEUS dismounts and knocks at the door.) Hullo! Hi! where is the doorkeeper? Will no one open?

HERMES (from within)

I think I can sniff a man. (Opening the door) Why, what plague is this?

TRYGAEUS

A horse-beetle.

HERMES

Oh! impudent, shameless rascal! oh! scoundrel! triple scoundrel! the greatest scoundrel in the world! how did you come here? Oh! scoundrel of all scoundrels! your name? Reply.

TRYGAEUS

Triple scoundrel.

HERMES

Your country?

TRYGAEUS

Triple scoundrel.

HERMES

Your father?

TRYGAEUS

My father? Triple scoundrel.

HERMES

By the Earth, you shall die, unless you tell me your name.

TRYGAEUS

I am Trygaeus of the Athmonian deme, a good vine-dresser, little addicted to quibbling and not at all an informer.

HERMES

Why do you come?

TRYGAEUS

I come to bring you this meat.

HERMES (changing his tone)

Ah! my good friend, did you have a good journey?

TRYGAEUS

Glutton, be off! I no longer seem a triple scoundrel to you. Come, call Zeus.

HERMES

Ah! ah! you are a long way yet from reaching the gods, for they moved yesterday.

TRYGAEUS

To what part of the earth?

HERMES

Eh! of the earth, did you say?

TRYGAEUS

In short, where are they then?

HERMES

Very far, very far, right at the furthest end of the dome of heaven.

TRYGAEUS

But why have they left you all alone here?

HERMES

I am watching what remains of the furniture, the little pots and pans, the bits of chairs and tables, and odd wine-jars.

TRYGAEUS

And why have the gods moved away?

HERMES

Because of their wrath against the Greeks. They have located War in the house they occupied themselves and have given him full power to do with you exactly as he pleases; then they went as high up as ever they could, so as to see no more of your fights and to hear no more of your prayers.

TRYGAEUS

What reason have they for treating us so?

HERMES

Because they have afforded you an opportunity for peace more than once, but you have always preferred war. If the Laconians got the very slightest advantage, they would exclaim, "By the Twin Brethren! the Athenians shall smart for this." If, on the contrary, the latter triumphed and the Laconians came with peace proposals, you would say, "By Demeter, they want to deceive us. No, by Zeus, we will not hear a word; they will always be coming as long as we hold Pylos."

TRYGAEUS

Yes, that is quite the style our folk do talk in.

HERMES

So that I don't know whether you will ever see Peace again.

TRYGAEUS

Why, where has she gone to then?

HERMES

War has cast her into a deep pit.

TRYGAEUS

Where?

HERMES

Down there, at the very bottom. And you see what heaps of stones he has piled over the top, so that you should never pull her out again.

TRYGAEUS

Tell me, what is War preparing against us?

HERMES

All I know is that last evening he brought along a huge mortar.

TRYGAEUS

And what is he going to do with his mortar?

HERMES

He wants to pound up all the cities of Greece in it.... But I must say good-bye, for I think he is coming out; what an uproar he is making!

(He departs in haste.)

TRYGAEUS

Ah! great gods let us seek safety; I think I already hear the noise of this fearful war mortar. (He hides.)

WAR (enters, carrying a huge mortar)

Oh! mortals, mortals, wretched mortals, how your jaws will snap!

TRYGAEUS

Oh! divine Apollo! what a prodigious big mortar! Oh, what misery the very sight of War causes me! This then is the foe from whom I fly, who is so cruel, so formidable, so stalwart, so solid on his legs!

WAR

Oh! Prasiae! thrice wretched, five times, aye, a thousand times wretched! for thou shalt be destroyed this day.

(He throws some leeks into the mortar.)

TRYGAEUS (to the audience)

This, gentlemen, does not concern us over much; it's only so much the worse for the Laconians.

WAR

Oh! Megara! Megara! utterly are you going to be ground up! what fine mincemeat are you to be made into!

(He throws in some garlic.)

TRYGAEUS (aside)

Alas! alas! what bitter tears there will be among the Megarians!

WAR (throwing in some cheese)

Oh, Sicily! you too must perish! Your wretched towns shall be

grated like this cheese. Now let us pour some Attic honey into the mortar.

(He does so.)

TRYGAEUS (aside)

Oh! I beseech you! use some other honey; this kind is worth four obols; be careful, oh! be careful of our Attic honey.

WAR

Hi! Tumult, you slave there!

TUMULT

What do you want?

WAR

Out upon you! Standing there with folded arms! Take this cuff on the head for your pains.

TUMULT

Oh! how it stings! Master, have you got garlic in your fist, I wonder?

WAR

Run and fetch me a pestle.

TUMULT

But we haven't got one; it was only yesterday we moved.

WAR

Go and fetch me one from Athens, and hurry, hurry!

TUMULT

I'll hurry; if I return without one, I shall have no cause for laughing.

(He runs off.)

TRYGAEUS (to the audience)

Ah! what is to become of us, wretched mortals that we are? See the danger that threatens if he returns with the pestle, for War will quietly amuse himself with pounding all the towns of Hellas to pieces.

Ah! Bacchus! cause this herald of evil to perish on his road!

WAR (to the returning TUMULT)

Well?

TUMULT

Well, what?

WAR

You have brought back nothing?

TUMULT

Alas! the Athenians have lost their pestle-the tanner, who ground Greece to powder.

TRYGAEUS

Oh! Athene, venerable mistress! it is well for our city he is dead, and before he could serve us with this hash.

WAR

Then go and seek one at Sparta and have done with it!

TUMULT

Aye, aye, master!

(He runs off.)

WAR (shouting after him)

Be back as quick as ever you can.

TRYGAEUS (to the audience)

What is going to happen, friends? This is the critical hour. Ah! if there is some initiate of Samothrace among you, this is surely the moment to wish this messenger some accident-some sprain or strain.

TUMULT (returning)

Alas! alas! thrice again, alas!

WAR

What is it? Again you come back without it?

TUMULT

The Spartans too have lost their pestle.

WAR

How, varlet?

TUMULT

They had lent it to their allies in Thrace, who have lost it for them.

TRYGAEUS

Long life to you, Thracians! My hopes revive, pluck up courage, mortals!

WAR

Take all this stuff; I am going in to make a pestle for myself.

(He goes in, followed by TUMULT.)

TRYGAEUS (coming out of his hiding-place)

Now is the time to sing as Datis did, as he masturbated at high noon, "Oh pleasure! oh enjoyment! oh delights!" Now, oh Greeks! is the moment when freed of quarrels and fighting, we should rescue sweet Peace and draw her out of this pit, before some other pestle prevents us. Come, labourers, merchants, workmen, artisans, strangers, whether you be domiciled or not, islanders, come here, Greeks of all countries, come hurrying here with picks and levers and ropes! This is the moment to drain a cup in honour of the Good Genius.

(The CHORUS enters; it consists of labourers and farmers from various Greek states.)

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Come hither all! quick, to the rescue! All peoples of Greece, now is the time or never, for you to help each other. You see yourselves freed from battles and all their horrors of bloodshed. The day hateful to Lamachus has come. (To TRYGAEUS) Come then, what must be done? Give your orders, direct us, for or swear to work this day without ceasing, until with the help of our levers and our engines we have drawn back into light the greatest of all goddesses, her to whom the olive is so dear.

TRYGAEUS

Silence! if War should hear your shouts of joy he would bound forth from his retreat in fury.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Such a decree overwhelms us with joy; how different to the edict, which bade us muster with provisions for three days.

TRYGAEUS

Let us beware lest the cursed Cerberus prevent us even from the nethermost bell from delivering the goddess by his furious howling, just as he did when on earth.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Once we have hold of her, none in the world will be able to take her from us. Huzza! huzza!

TRYGAEUS

You will work my death if you don't subdue your shouts. War will come running out and trample everything beneath his feet.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Well then! Let him confound, let him trample, let him overturn everything! We cannot help giving vent to our joy.

TRYGAEUS

Oh! cruel fate! My friends! in the name of the gods, what possesses you? Your dancing will wreck the success of a fine undertaking.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

It's not I who want to dance; it's my legs that bound with delight.

TRYGAEUS

Enough, please, cease your gambols.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

There! That's all.

TRYGAEUS

You say so, and nevertheless you go on.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Yet one more figure and it's done.

TRYGAEUS

Well, just this one; then you must dance no more.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

No, no more dancing, if we can help you.

TRYGAEUS

But look, you are not stopping even now.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

By Zeus, I am only throwing up my right leg, that's all.

TRYGAEUS

Come, I grant you that, but pray, annoy me no further.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Ah! the left leg too will have its fling; well, that's its right. I am so happy, so delighted at not having to carry my buckler any more. I fart for joy and I laugh more than if I had cast my old age, as a serpent does its skin.

TRYGAEUS

No, it's not time for joy yet, for you are not sure of success. But when you have got the goddess, then rejoice, shout and laugh; thenceforward you will be able to sail or stay at home, to make love or sleep, to attend festivals and processions, to play at cottabos, live like true Sybarites and to shout, lo, io!

CHORUS (singing)

Ah! God grant we may see the blessed day. I have suffered so much; have so oft slept with Phormio on hard beds. You will no longer find me a bitter and angry judge....

TRYGAEUS (singing)

Nor, naturally, hard in your ways, as heretofore.

CHORUS (singing)

....but turned indulgent and grown younger by twenty years through happiness. We have been killing ourselves long enough, tiring ourselves out with going to the Lyceum and returning laden with spear and buckler.-But what can we do to please you? Come, speak; for 'tis a good Fate that has named you our leader.

TRYGAEUS

How shall we set about removing these stones?

HERMES (who has just returned)

Rash reprobate, what do you propose doing?

TRYGAEUS

Nothing bad, as Cillicon said.

HERMES

You are undone, you wretch.

TRYGAEUS

Yes, if the lot had to decide my life, for Hermes would know how to turn the chance.

HERMES

You are lost, you are dead.

TRYGAEUS

On what day?

HERMES

This instant.

TRYGAEUS

But I have not provided myself with flour and cheese yet to start for death.

HERMES

You are kneaded and ground already, I tell you.

TRYGAEUS

Hah! I have not yet tasted that gentle pleasure.

HERMES

Don't you know that Zeus has decreed death for him who is caught exhuming Peace?

TRYGAEUS

What! must I really and truly die?

HERMES

You must.

TRYGAEUS

Well then, lend me three drachmae to buy a young pig; I wish to have myself initiated before I die.

HERMES

Oh! Zeus, the Thunderer!

TRYGAEUS

I adjure you in the name of the gods, master, don't report us!

HERMES

I may not, I cannot keep silent.

TRYGAEUS

In the name of the meats which I brought you so good-naturedly.

HERMES

Why, wretched man, Zeus will annihilate me, if I do not shout out at the top of my voice, to inform him what you are plotting.

TRYGAEUS

Oh, no! don't shout, I beg you, dear little Hermes.... And what are you doing, comrades? You stand there as though you were stocks and stones. Wretched men, speak, entreat him at once; otherwise he will be shouting.

CHORUS (singing)

Oh! mighty Hermes! do not do it; no, do not do it! If ever you have eaten some young pig, sacrificed by us on your altars, with pleasure, may this offering not be without value in your sight to-day.

TRYGAEUS (singing)

Do you not hear them wheedling you, mighty god?

CHORUS (singing)

Be not pitiless toward our prayers; permit us to deliver the goddess. Oh! the most human, the most generous of the gods, be favourable toward us, if it be true that you detest the haughty crests and proud brows of Pisander; we shall never cease, oh master, offering you sacred victims and solemn prayers.

TRYGAEUS

Have mercy, mercy, yourself be touched by their words; never was your worship so dear to them as to-day. (Aside) Really they are the greatest thieves that ever were. (To HERMES) And I shall reveal to you a great and terrible plot that is being hatched against the gods.

HERMES

Hah! speak and perchance I shall let myself be softened.

TRYGAEUS

Know then, that the Moon and that infamous Sun are plotting against you, and want to deliver Greece into the hands of the barbarians.

HERMES

What for?

TRYGAEUS

Because it is to you that we sacrifice, whereas the barbarians worship them; hence they would like to see you destroyed, that they alone might receive the offerings.

HERMES

Is it then for this reason that these untrustworthy charioteers have for so long been defrauding us, one of them robbing us of daylight and the other nibbling away at the other's disk?

TRYGAEUS

Yes, certainly. So therefore, Hermes, my friend, help us with your whole heart to find and deliver the captive and we will celebrate the great Panathenaea in your honour as well as all the festivals of

the other gods; for Hermes shall be the Mysteries. the Dipolia, the Adonia; everywhere the towns, freed from their miseries, will sacrifice to Hermes the Liberator; you will be loaded with benefits of every kind, and to start with, I offer you this cup for libations as your first present.

HERMES

Ah! how golden cups do influence me! Come, friends. get to work. To the pit quickly, pick in hand, and drag away the stones.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

We go, but you, cleverest of all the gods, supervise our labours; tell us, good workman as you are, what we must do; we shall obey your orders with alacrity.

(They begin to lift the stones.)

TRYGAEUS

Quick, reach me your cup, and let us preface our work by addressing prayers to the gods.

HERMES

Libation! Libation! Silence! Let us offer our libations and our prayers, so that this day may begin an era of unalloyed happiness for Greece and that he who has bravely pulled at the rope with us may never resume his buckler.

TRYGAEUS

Aye, may we pass our lives in peace, caressing our mistresses and poking the fire.

HERMES

May he who would prefer the war, oh Dionysus....

TRYGAEUS

Be ever drawing barbed arrows out of his elbows.

HERMES

If there be a citizen, greedy for military rank and honours, who refuses, oh, divine Peace! to restore you to daylight....

TRYGAEUS

May he behave as cowardly as Cleonymus on the battlefield.

HERMES

If a lance-maker or a dealer in shields desires war for the sake of better trade....

TRYGAEUS

May he be taken by pirates and eat nothing but barley.

HERMES

If some ambitious man does not help us, because he wants to become a General, or if a slave is plotting to pass over to the enemy....

TRYGAEUS

Let his limbs be broken on the wheel, may he be beaten to death with rods!

HERMES

As for us, may Fortune favour us! Io! Paeon, Io!

TRYGAEUS

Don't say Paeon, but simply, Io.

HERMES

Very well, then! Io! Io! Io! I'll simply say, Io!

TRYGAEUS

To Hermes, the Graces, the Horae, Aphrodite, Eros!

HERMES

But not to Ares.

TRYGAEUS

No.

HERMES

Nor to Enyalios.

TRYGAEUS

No.

(The stones have been removed and a rope attached to the cover of the pit. The indented portions of the following scene are a sort of chanty.)

HERMES

Come, all strain at the ropes to tear off the cover. Pull!

CHORUS

Heave away, heave, heave, oh!

HERMES

Come, pull harder, harder.

CHORUS

Heave away, heave, heave, oh!

HERMES

Still harder, harder still.

CHORUS

Heave away, heave! Heave away, heave, heave, oh!

TRYGAEUS

Come, come, there is no working together. Come! all pull at the same instant! you Boeotians are only pretending. Beware!

HERMES

Come, heave away, heave!

TRYGAEUS

Heave away, heave oh!

CHORUS

Hi! you two pull as well.

TRYGAEUS

Why, I am pulling, I am hanging on to the rope and straining till I am almost off my feet; I am working with all my might.

CHORUS

Why does not the work advance then?

TRYGAEUS

Lamachus, this is terrible! You are in the way, sitting there. We have no use for your Medusa's head, friend. But wait, the Argives have not pulled the least bit; they have done nothing but laugh at us for our pains while they were getting gain with both hands.

HERMES

Ah! my dear sir, the Laconians at all events pull with vigour.

TRYGAEUS

But look! only those among them who generally hold the plough-tail

show any zeal, while the armourers impede them in their efforts.

HERMES

And the Megarians too are doing nothing, yet look how they are pulling and showing their teeth like famished curs.

TRYGAEUS

The poor wretches are dying of hunger I suppose.

HERMES

This won't do, friends. Come! all together! Everyone to the work and with a good heart for the business.

CHORUS

Heave away, heave!

HERMES

Harder!

CHORUS

Heave away, heave!

HERMES

Come on then, by heaven.

CHORUS

We are moving it a little.

TRYGAEUS

Isn't it terrible and stupid! some pull one way and others another. You Argives there, beware of a thrashing!

HERMES

Come, put your strength into it.

TRYGAEUS

Heave away, heave!

CHORUS

There are many ill-disposed folk among us.

TRYGAEUS

Do you at least, who long for peace, pull heartily.

CHORUS

But there are some who prevent us.

HERMES

Off to the Devil with you, Megarians! The goddess hates you. She recollects that you were the first to rub her the wrong way. Athenians, you are not well placed for pulling. There you are too busy with law-suits; if you really want to free the goddess, get down a little towards the sea.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Come, friends, none but husbandmen on the rope.

HERMES

Ah I that will do ever so much better.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

He says the thing is going well. Come, all of you, together and with a will.

TRYGAEUS

It's the husbandmen who are doing all the work.

CHORUS

Come then, come, and all together!

HERMES

Hah! hah! at last there is some unanimity in the work.

CHORUS

Don't let us give up, let us redouble our efforts.

HERMES

There! now we have it!

CHORUS

Come then, all together! Heave away, heave! All together! (PEACE is drawn out of the pit. With her come OPORA and THEORIA.)

TRYGAEUS

Oh! venerated goddess, who givest us our grapes, where am I to find the ten-thousand-gallon words wherewith to greet thee? I have none such at home. Oh! hail to thee, Opora, and thee, Theoria! How beautiful is thy face! How sweet thy breath! What gentle fragrance comes from thy bosom, gentle as freedom from military duty, as the most dainty perfumes!

HERMES

Is it then a smell like a soldier's knapsack?

TRYGAEUS

Oh! hateful soldier! your hideous satchel makes me sick! it stinks like the belching of onions, whereas this lovable deity has the odour of sweet fruits, of festivals, of the Dionysia, of the harmony of flutes, of the tragic poets, of the verses of Sophocles, of the phrases of Euripides....

HERMES

That's a foul calumny, you wretch! She detests that framer of subtleties and quibbles.

TRYGAEUS (ignoring this)

...of ivy, of straining-bags for wine, of bleating ewes, of provision-laden women hastening to the kitchen, of the tipsy servant wench, of the upturned wine-jar, and of a whole heap of other good things.

HERMES

Then look how the reconciled towns chat pleasantly together, how they laugh....

TRYGAEUS

And yet they are all cruelly mishandled; their wounds are bleeding still.

HERMES

But let us also scan the mien of the spectators; we shall thus find out the trade of each.

TRYGAEUS

Good god!

HERMES

Look at that poor crest-maker, tearing at his hair....

TRYGAEUS

...and at that pike-maker, who has just farted in yon sword-cutler's face.

HERMES

And do you see with what pleasure this sickle-maker....

TRYGAEUS

....is thumbing his nose at the spear-maker?

HERMES

Now tell the husbandmen to be off.

TRYGAEUS

Listen, good folk! Let the husbandmen take their farming tools and return to their fields as quickly as possible, but without either sword, spear or javelin. All is as quiet as if Peace had been reigning for a century. Come, let everyone go and till the earth, singing the Paean.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS (to PEACE)

Oh, thou, whom men of standing desired and who art good to husbandmen, I have gazed upon thee with delight; and now I go to greet my vines, to caress after so long an absence the fig trees I planted in my youth.

TRYGAEUS

Friends, let us first adore the goddess, who has delivered us from crests and Gorgons; then let us hurry to our farms, having first bought a nice little piece of salt fish to eat in the fields.

HERMES

By Posidon! what a fine crew they make and dense as the crust of a cake; they are as nimble as guests on their way to a feast.

TRYGAEUS

See, how their iron spades glitter and how beautifully their three-pronged mattocks glisten in the sun! How regularly they align the plants! I also burn to go into the country and to turn over the earth I have so long neglected.-Friends, do you remember the happy life that Peace afforded us formerly; can you recall the splendid baskets of figs, both fresh and dried, the myrtles, the sweet wine, the violets blooming near the spring, and the olives, for which we have wept so much? Worship, adore the goddess for restoring you so many blessings.

CHORUS (singing)

Hail! hail! thou beloved divinity! thy return overwhelms us with joy. When far from thee, my ardent wish to see my fields again made me pine with regret. From thee came all blessings. Oh! much desired Peace! thou art the sole support of those who spend their lives tilling the earth. Under thy rule we had a thousand delicious enjoyments at our beck; thou wert the husbandman's wheaten cake and his safeguard. So that our vineyards, our young fig-tree woods and all our plantations hail thee with delight and smile at thy coming.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

But where was she then, I wonder, all the long time she spent away from us? Hermes, thou benevolent god, tell us!

HERMES

Wise husbandmen, hearken to my words, if you want to know why she was lost to you. The start of our misfortunes was the exile of

Phidias; Pericles feared he might share his in-luck, he mistrusted your peevish nature and, to prevent all danger to himself, he threw out that little spark, the Megarian decree, set the city aflame, and blew up the conflagration with a hurricane of war, so that the smoke drew tears from all Greeks both here and over there. At the very outset of this fire our vines were a-crackle, our casks knocked together; it was beyond the power of any man to stop the disaster, and Peace disappeared.

TRYGAEUS

That, by Apollo is what no one ever told me; I could not think what connection there could be between Phidias and Peace.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Nor I, until now. This accounts for her beauty, if she is related to him. There are so many things that escape us.

HERMES

Then, when the towns subject to you saw that you were angered one against the other and were showing each other your teeth like dogs, they hatched a thousand plots to pay you no more dues and gained over the chief citizens of Sparta at the price of gold. They, being as shamelessly greedy as they were faithless in diplomacy, chased off Peace with ignominy to let loose War. Though this was profitable to them, it was the ruin of the husbandmen, who were innocent of all blame; for, in revenge, your galleys went out to devour their figs.

TRYGAEUS

And with justice too; did they not break down my black fig tree, which I had planted and dunged with my own hands?

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Yes, by Zeus! yes, that was well done; the wretches broke a chest for me with stones, which held six medimni of corn.

HERMES

Then the rural labourers flocked into the city and let themselves be bought over like the others. Not having even a grape-stone to munch and longing after their figs, they looked towards the demagogues. These well knew that the poor were driven to extremity and lacked even bread; but they nevertheless drove away the Goddess, each time she reappeared in answer to the wish of the country, with their loud shrieks that were as sharp as pitchforks; furthermore, they attacked the well-filled purses of the richest among our allies on the pretence that they belonged to Brasidas' party. And then you would tear the poor accused wretch to pieces with your teeth; for the city, all pale with hunger and cowed with terror, gladly snapped up any calumny that was thrown it to devour. So the strangers, seeing what terrible blows the informers dealt, sealed their lips with gold. They grew rich, while you, alas! you could only see that Greece was going to ruin. It was the tanner who was the author of all this woe.

TRYGAEUS

Enough said, Hermes leave that man in Hades, whither he has gone; be no longer belongs to us, but rather to you. That he was a

cheat, a braggart, a calumniator when alive, why, nothing could be truer; but anything you might say now would be an insult to one of your own folk.

(To PEACE) Oh! venerated Goddess! why art thou silent?

HERMES

And how could she speak to the spectators? She is too angry at all that they have made her suffer.

TRYGAEUS

At least let her speak a little to you, Hermes.

HERMES

Tell me, my dear, what are your feelings with regard to them? Come, you relentless foe of all bucklers, speak; I am listening to you. (PEACE whispers into HERMES' ear.) Is that your grievance against them? Yes, yes, I understand. Hearken, you folk, this is her complaint. She says, that after the affair of Pylos she came to you unbidden to bring you a basket full of truces and that you thrice repulsed her by your votes in the assembly.

TRYGAEUS

Yes, we did wrong, but forgive us, for our mind was then entirely absorbed in leather.

HERMES

Listen again to what she has just asked me. Who was her greatest foe here? and furthermore, had she a friend who exerted himself to put an end to the fighting?

TRYGAEUS

Her most devoted friend was Cleonymus; it is undisputed.

HERMES

How then did Cleonymus behave in fights?

TRYGAEUS

Oh! the bravest of warriors! Only he was not born of the father he claims; he showed it quick enough in the army by throwing away his weapons.

HERMES

There is yet another question she has just put to me. Who rules now in the rostrum?

TRYGAEUS

It's Hyperbolus who now holds empire on the Pnyx. (To PEACE) What now? you turn away your head!

HERMES

She is vexed, that the people should give themselves a wretch of that kind for their chief.

TRYGAEUS

Oh! we shall not employ him again; but the people, seeing themselves without a leader, took him haphazard, just as a man, who is naked, springs upon the first cloak he sees.

HERMES

She asks, what will be the result of such a choice by the city?

TRYGAEUS

We shall be more far-seeing in consequence.

HERMES

And why?

TRYGAEUS

Because he is a lamp-maker. Formerly we only directed our business by groping in the dark; now we shall only deliberate by lamplight.

HERMES

Oh! oh! what questions she does order me to put to you!

TRYGAEUS

What are they?

HERMES

She wants to have news of a whole heap of old-fashioned things she left here. First of all, how is Sophocles?

TRYGAEUS

Very well, but something very strange has happened to him.

HERMES

What then?

TRYGAEUS

He has turned from Sophocles into Simonides.

HERMES

Into Simonides? How so?

TRYGAEUS

Because, though old and broken-down as he is, he would put to sea on a hurdle to gain an obolus.

HERMES

And wise Cratinus, is he still alive?

TRYGAEUS

He died about the time of the Laconian invasion.

HERMES

How?

TRYGAEUS

Of a swoon. He could not bear the shock of seeing one of his casks full of wine broken. Ah! what a number of other misfortunes our city has suffered! So, dearest mistress, nothing can now separate us from thee.

HERMES

If that be so, receive Opora here for a wife; take her to the country, live with her, and grow fine grapes together.

TRYGAEUS (to OPORA)

Come, my dear one, come and accept my kisses. (To HERMES) Tell me, Hermes, my master, do you think it would hurt me to love her a little, after so long an abstinence?

HERMES

No, not if you swallow a potion of penny-royal afterwards. But hasten to lead Theoria to the Senate; that was where she lodged before.

TRYGAEUS

Oh! fortunate Senate! Thanks to Theoria, what soups you will swallow for the space of three days! how you will devour meats and

cooked tripe! Come, farewell, friend Hermes!

HERMES

And to you also, my dear sir, may you have much happiness, and don't forget me.

TRYGAEUS (looking around for his dung-beetle)

Come, beetle, home, home, and let us fly on a swift wing.

HERMES

Oh! he is no longer here.

TRYGAEUS

Where has he gone to then?

HERMES

He is 'harnessed to the chariot of Zeus and bears the thunderbolts.'

TRYGAEUS

But where will the poor wretch get his food?

HERMES

He will eat Ganymede's ambrosia.

TRYGAEUS

Very well then, but how am I going to descend?

HERMES

Oh! never fear, there is nothing simpler; place yourself beside the goddess.

TRYGAEUS

Come, my pretty maidens, follow me quickly; there are plenty of men waiting for you with their tools ready.

(He goes out, with OPORA and THEORIA.)

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Farewell and good luck be yours! Let us begin by handing over all this gear to the care of our servants, for no place is less safe than a theatre; there is always a crowd of thieves prowling around it, seeking to find some mischief to do. Come, keep a good watch over all this. As for ourselves, let us explain to the spectators what we have in our minds, the purpose of our play.

(The CHORUS turns and faces the audience.)

Undoubtedly the comic poet who mounted the stage to praise himself in the parabasis would deserve to be handed over to the sticks or the beades. Nevertheless, oh Muse, if it be right to esteem the most honest and illustrious of our comic writers at his proper value, permit our poet to say that he thinks he has deserved a glorious renown. First of all, he is the one who has compelled his rivals no longer to scoff at rags or to war with lice; and as for

those Heracleses, always chewing and ever hungry, he was the first to cover them with ridicule and to chase them from the stage; he has also dismissed that slave, whom one never failed to set weeping before you, so that his comrade might have the chance of jeering at his stripes and might ask, "Wretch, what has happened to your hide? Has the lash rained an army of its thongs on you and laid your back waste?" After having delivered us from all these wearisome ineptitudes and these low buffooneries, he has built up for us a great art, like a

palace with high towers, constructed of fine phrases, great thoughts and of jokes not common on the streets. Moreover it's not obscure private persons or women that he stages in his comedies; but, bold as Heracles, it's the very greatest whom he attacks, undeterred by the fetid stink of leather or the threats of hearts of mud. He has the right to say, "I am the first ever dared to go straight for that beast with the sharp teeth and the terrible eyes that flashed lambent fire like those of Cynna, surrounded by a hundred lewd flatterers, who spittle-licked him to his heart's content; it had a voice like a roaring torrent, the stench of a seal, the unwashed balls of a Lamia and the arse of a camel. I did not recoil in horror at the sight of such a monster, but fought him relentlessly to win your deliverance and that of the islanders." Such are the services which should be graven in your recollection and entitle me to your thanks. Yet I have not been seen frequenting the wrestling school intoxicated with success and trying to seduce young boys; but I took all my theatrical gear and returned straight home. I pained folk but little and caused them much amusement; my conscience rebuked me for nothing. (More and more rapidly from here on) Hence both grown men and youths should be on my side and I likewise invite the bald to give me their votes; for, if I triumph, everyone will say, both at table and at festivals, "Carry this to the bald man, give these cakes to the bald one, do not grudge the poet whose talent shines as bright as his own bare skull the share he deserves."

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS (singing)

Oh, Muse! drive the war far from our city and come to preside over our dances, if you love me; come and celebrate the nuptials of the gods, the banquets of us mortals and the festivals of the fortunate; these are the themes that inspire thy most poetic songs. And should Carcinus come to beg thee for admission with his sons to thy chorus, refuse all traffic with them; remember they are but gelded birds, stork-necked dancers, mannikins about as tall as a goat's turd, in fact machine-made poets. Contrary to all expectation, the father has at last managed to finish a piece, but he admits that a cat strangled it one fine evening.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS (singing)

Such are the songs with which the Muse with the glorious hair inspires the able poet and which enchant the assembled populace, when the spring swallow twitters beneath the foliage; but the god spare us from the chorus of Morsimus and that of Melanthius! Oh! what a bitter discordancy grated upon my ears that day when the tragic chorus was directed by this same Melanthius and his brother, these two Gorgons, these two Harpies, the plague of the seas, whose gluttonous bellies devour the entire race of fishes, these followers of old women, these goats with their stinking arm-pits. Oh! Muse, spit upon them abundantly and keep the feast gaily with me.

(TRYGAEUS enters, limping painfully, accompanied by OPORA and THEORIA.)

TRYGAEUS

Ah! it's a rough job getting to the gods! my legs are as good as broken through it. (To the audience) How small you were, to be sure, when seen from heaven! you had all the appearance too of being great rascals; but seen close, you look even worse.

SERVANT (coming out of TRYGAEUS' house)

Is that you, master?

TRYGAEUS

So I've been told.

SERVANT

What has happened to you?

TRYGAEUS

My legs pain me; it was such a damned long journey.

SERVANT

Oh! tell me....

TRYGAEUS

What?

SERVANT

Did you see any other man besides yourself strolling about in heaven;

TRYGAEUS

No, only the souls of two or three dithyrambic poets.

SERVANT

What were they doing up there?

TRYGAEUS

They were seeking to catch some lyric exordia as they flew by immersed in the billows of the air.

SERVANT

Is it true, what they tell us, that men are turned into stars after death?

TRYGAEUS

Quite true.

SERVANT

Then what star has Ion of Chios turned into?

TRYGAEUS

The Morning Star, the one he wrote a poem about; as soon as he got up there, everyone called him the Morning Star.

SERVANT

And those stars like sparks, that plough up the air as they dart across the sky.

TRYGAEUS

They are the rich leaving the feast with a lantern and a light inside it.-But hurry up, show this young girl into my house, (pointing to OPORA) clean out the bath, heat some water and prepare the nuptial couch for herself and me. When that's done, come back here; meanwhile I am off to present this other one to the Senate.

SERVANT

But where then did you get these girls?

TRYGAEUS

Where? why in heaven.

SERVANT

I would not give more than an obolus for gods who have got to keeping brothels like us mere mortals.

TRYGAEUS

They are not all like that, but there are some up there too who live by this trade.

SERVANT

Come, that's rich! But tell me, shall I give her something to eat?

TRYGAEUS

No, for she would touch neither bread nor cake; she is used to licking ambrosia at the table of the gods.

SERVANT

Well, we can give her something to lick down here too.

(He takes OPORA into the house.)

CHORUS (singing)

Here is a truly happy old man, as far as I can judge.

TRYGAEUS (singing)

Ah! but what shall I be, when you see me presently dressed for the wedding?

CHORUS (singing)

Made young again by love and scented with perfumes, your lot will be one we all shall envy.

TRYGAEUS (singing)

And when I lie beside her and fondle her breasts?

CHORUS (singing)

Oh! then you will be happier than those spinning-tops who call Carcinus their father.

TRYGAEUS (singing)

And I well deserve it; have I not bestridden a beetle to save the Greeks, who now, thanks to me, can make love at their ease and sleep peacefully on their farms?

SERVANT (returning from the house)

The girl has quitted the bath; she is charming from head to foot, belly and buttocks too; the cake is baked and they are kneading the sesame-biscuit; nothing is lacking but the bridegroom's tool.

TRYGAEUS

Let us first hasten to lodge Theoria in the hands of the Senate.

SERVANT

Tell me, who is this woman?

TRYGAEUS

Why, it's Theoria, with whom we used formerly to go to Brauron, to get tipsy and frolic-I had the greatest trouble to get hold of her.

SERVANT

Ah! you charmer! what pleasure your pretty bottom will afford me every four years!

TRYGAEUS (to the audience)

Let's see, which one of you is steady enough to be trusted by the Senate with the care of this charming wench? (to the SERVANT)

Hi! you, friend! what are you drawing there?

SERVANT (who has been making signs in the air)

It's er.... well, at the Isthmian Games I shall have a tent for my tool.

TRYGAEUS (to the audience)

Come, who wishes to take the charge of her? No one? Come, Theoria, I am going to lead you into the midst of the spectators and confide you to their care.

SERVANT

Ah! there is one who makes a sign to you.

TRYGAEUS

Who is it?

SERVANT

It's Ariphrades. He wishes to take her home at once.

TRYGAEUS

No, he must not. He would soon have her done for, absorbing all her life-force. Come, Theoria, take off all these clothes. (THEORIA undresses. As soon as she is nude, TRYGAEUS conducts her to the front row of seats, where the SENATORS sit.) Senate, Prytanes, gaze upon Theoria and see what precious blessings I place in your hands. Hasten to raise its limbs and to immolate the victim. And look at this chimney.

SERVANT

God, what a beautiful one! It's black with smoke because the Senate used to do its cooking there before the war.

TRYGAEUS

Now that you have found Theoria again, you can start the most charming games from to-morrow, wrestling with her on the ground, on all fours, or you can lay her on her side, or stand before her with bent knees, or, well rubbed with oil, you can boldly enter the lists, as in the Pancratium, belabouring your foe with blows from your fist or something else. The next day you will celebrate equestrian games, in which the riders will ride side by side, or else the chariot teams, thrown one on top of another, panting and whinnying, will roll and knock against each other on the ground, while other rivals, thrown out of their seats, will fall before reaching the goal, utterly exhausted by their efforts.-Come, Prytanes, take Theoria. Oh! look-how graciously yonder fellow has received her; you would not have been in such a hurry to introduce her to the Senate, if nothing were coming to you through it; you would not have failed to plead some holiday as an excuse.

CHORUS (singing)

Such a man as you assures the happiness of all his fellow-citizens.

TRYGAEUS (singing)

When you are gathering your vintages you will prize me even better.

CHORUS (singing)

E'en from to-day we hail you as the deliverer of mankind.

TRYGAEUS (singing)

Wait until you have drunk a beaker of new wine, before you appraise my true merits.

CHORUS (singing)

Excepting the gods, there is none greater than yourself, and that will ever be our opinion.

TRYGAEUS (singing)

Yea, Trygaeus of Athmonia has deserved well of you, he has freed both husbandman and craftsman from the most cruel ills; he has vanquished Hyberbolus.

SERVANT

Well then, what must be done now?

TRYGAEUS

You must offer pots of green-stuff to the goddess to consecrate her altars.

SERVANT

Pots of green-stuff as we do to poor Hermes-and even he thinks the fare pretty mean?

TRYGAEUS

What will you offer them? A fatted bull?

SERVANT

Oh no! I don't want to start bellowing the battle-cry.

TRYGAEUS

A great fat swine then?

SERVANT

No, no.

TRYGAEUS

Why not?

SERVANT

We don't want any of the swinishness of Theagenes.

TRYGAEUS

What other victim do you prefer then?

SERVANT

A sheep.

TRYGAEUS

A sheep?

SERVANT

Yes.

TRYGAEUS

But that's the Ionic form of the word.

SERVANT

Purposely. So that if anyone in the assembly says, "We must go to war," all may start bleating in alarm, "Oi, oi."

TRYGAEUS

A brilliant idea.

SERVANT

And we shall all be lambs one toward the other, yes, and milder still toward the allies.

TRYGAEUS

Then go for the sheep and haste to bring it back with you; I will prepare the altar for the sacrifice.

(They both leave.)

CHORUS (singing)

How everything succeeds to our wish, when the gods are willing and Fortune favours us! how opportunely everything falls out.

TRYGAEUS (returning)

Nothing could be truer, for look! here stands the altar all ready at my door.

(He enters his house.)

CHORUS (singing)

Hurry, hurry, for the winds are fickle; make haste, while the divine will is set on stopping this cruel war and is showering on us the most striking benefits.

TRYCAEUS (returning)

Here is the basket of barley-seed mingled with salt, the chaplet and the sacred knife; and there is the fire; so we are only waiting for the sheep.

CHORUS (singing)

Hasten, hasten, for, if Chaeris sees you, he will come without bidding, he and his flute; and when you see him puffing and panting and out of breath, you will have to give him something.

TRYGAEUS (to the SERVANT who has returned with a sheep and a vase of water)

Come, seize the basket and take the lustral water and hurry to circle round the altar to the right.

SERVANT

There! that's done. What is your next bidding?

TRYGAEUS

Wait. I take this fire-brand first and plunge it into the water. Now quick, quick, you sprinkle the altar. Give me some barley-seed, purify yourself and hand me the basin; then scatter the rest of the barley among the audience.

SERVANT

Done.

TRYGAEUS

You have thrown it?

SERVANT

Yes, by Hermes! and all the spectators have had their share.

TRYGAEUS

At least the women got none.

SERVANT

Oh! their husbands will give them some this evening.

TRYGAEUS

Let us pray! Who is here? Are there any good men?

SERVANT

Come, give me the water, so that I may sprinkle these people. Faith! they are indeed good, brave men.

(He throws the lustral water on hem.)

TRYGAEUS

You believe so?

SERVANT

I am sure, and the proof of it is that we have flooded them with lustral water and they have not budged an inch.

TRYGAEUS

Let us pray, then, as soon as we can.

SERVANT

Yes, let us pray.

TRYGAEUS

Oh! Peace, mighty queen, venerated goddess, thou, who presidest over choruses and at nuptials, deign to accept the sacrifices we offer thee.

SERVANT

Receive it, greatly honoured mistress, and behave not like the courtesans, who half open the door to entice the gallants, draw back when they are stared at, to return once more if a man passes on. But do not thou act like this to us.

TRYGAEUS

No, but like an honest woman, show thyself to thy worshippers, who are worn with regretting thee all these thirteen years. Hush the noise of battle, be a true Lysimacha to us. Put an end to this tittle-tattle, to this idle babble, that set us defying one another. Cause the Greeks once more to taste the pleasant beverage of friendship and temper all hearts with the gentle feeling of forgiveness. Make excellent commodities flow to our markets, fine heads of garlic, early cucumbers, apples, pomegranates and nice little cloaks for the slaves; make them bring geese, ducks, pigeons and larks from Boeotia and baskets of eels from Lake Copais; we shall all rush to buy them, disputing their possession with Morychus, Teleas, Glaucetes and every other glutton. Melanthius will arrive on the market last of all; they'll say, "no more eels, all sold!" and then he'll start groaning and exclaiming as in his monologue of Medea, "I am dying, I am dying! Alas! I have let those hidden in the beet escape me!" And won't we laugh? These are the wishes, mighty goddess, which we pray thee to grant. (To the SERVANT) Take the knife and slaughter the sheep like a finished cook.

SERVANT

No, the goddess does not wish it.

TRYGAEUS

And why not?

SERVANT

Blood cannot please Peace, so let us spill none upon her altar.

TRYGAEUS

Then go and sacrifice the sheep in the house, cut off the legs and bring them here; thus the carcass will be saved for the Choregus.

(The SERVANT goes into the house with the sheep.)

CHORUS (singing)

You, who remain here, get chopped wood and everything needed for

the sacrifice ready.

TRYGAEUS

Don't I look like a diviner preparing his mystic fire?

CHORUS (singing)

Undoubtedly. Will anything that a wise man ought to know escape you? Don't you know all that a man should know, who is distinguished for his wisdom and inventive daring?

TRYGAEUS

There! the wood catches. Its smoke blinds poor Stilbides. I am now going to bring the table and thus be my own slave.

(He goes into the house.)

CHORUS (singing)

You have braved a thousand dangers to save your sacred town. All honour to you I your glory will be ever envied.

TRYGAEUS (returning with a table)

Wait. Here are the legs, place them upon the altar. For myself, I mean to go back to the entrails and the cakes.

(He is about to go into the house.)

SERVANT (going in ahead of him)

I'll take care of them.

TRYGAEUS

But I want you here.

SERVANT (returning)

Well then, here I am. Do you think I have taken long?

TRYGAEUS

Just get this roasted. Ah who is this man, crowned with laurel, who is coming to me?

SERVANT

He has a self-important look; is he some diviner?

TRYGAEUS

No, it's Hierocles, that oracle-monger from Oreus.

SERVANT

What is he going to tell us?

TRYGAEUS

Evidently he is coming to oppose the peace.

SERVANT

No, it's the odour of the fat that attracts him.

TRYGAEUS

Let us appear not to see him.

SERVANT

Very well.

HIEROCLES (approaching)

What sacrifice is this? to what god are you offering it?

TRYGAEUS (to the SERVANT)

Keep quiet.-(Aloud) Look after the roasting and keep your hands of the meat.

HIEROCLES

To whom are you sacrificing? Answer me.

TRYGAEUS

Ah! the tail is showing favourable omens.

SERVANT

Aye, very favourable, oh, loved and mighty Peace!

HIEROCLES

Come, cut off the first offering and make the oblation.

TRYGAEUS

It's not roasted enough.

HIEROCLES

Yea, truly, it's done to a turn.

TRYGAEUS

Mind your own business, friend! (To the SERVANT) Cut away.

HIEROCLES

Where is the table?

TRYGAEUS

Bring the libations.

(The SERVANT departs.)

HIEROCLES

The tongue is cut separately.

TRYGAEUS

We know all that. But just listen to one piece of advice.

HIEROCLES

And that is?

TRYGAEUS

Don't talk, for it is divine Peace to whom we are sacrificing.

HIEROCLES (in an oracular tone)

Oh! wretched mortals, oh, you idiots!

TRYGAEUS

Keep such ugly terms for yourself.

HIEROCLES (as before)

What! you are so ignorant you don't understand the will of the gods and you make a treaty, you, who are men, with apes, who are full of malice?

TRYGAEUS

Ha, ha, ha!

HIEROCLES

What are you laughing at?

TRYGAEUS

Ha, ha! your apes amuse me!

HIEROCLES (resuming the oracular manner)

You simple pigeons, you trust yourselves to foxes, who are all craft, both in mind and heart.

TRYGAEUS

Oh, you trouble-maker! may your lungs get as hot as this meat!

HIEROCLES

Nay, nay! if only the Nymphs had not fooled Bacis, and Bacis mortal men; and if the Nymphs had not tricked Bacis a second time....

TRYGAEUS (mocking his manner)

May the plague seize you, if you don't stop Bacizing!

HIEROCLES

....it would not have been written in the book of Fate that the  
bonds of Peace must be broken; but first....

TRYGAEUS

The meat must be dusted with salt.

HIEROCLES

....it does not please the blessed gods that we should stop the  
War until the wolf uniteth with the sheep.

(A kind of oracle-match now ensues.)

TRYGAEUS

How, you cursed animal, could the wolf ever unite with the sheep?

HIEROCLES

As long as the wood-bug gives off a fetid odour, when it flies; as  
long as the noisy bitch is forced by nature to litter blind pups, so  
long shall peace be forbidden.

TRYGAEUS

Then what should be done? Not to stop War would be to leave it  
to the decision of chance which of the two people should suffer the  
most, whereas by uniting under a treaty, we share the empire of  
Greece.

HIEROCLES

You will never make the crab walk straight.

TRYGAEUS

You shall no longer be fed at the Prytaneum; when the war is over,  
oracles are not wanted.

HIEROCLES

You will never smooth the rough spikes of the hedgehog.

TRYGAEUS

Will you never stop fooling the Athenians?

HIEROCLES

What oracle ordered you to burn these joints of mutton in honour  
of the gods?

TRYGAEUS

This grand oracle of Homer's: "Thus vanished the dark war-clouds  
and we offered a sacrifice to new-born Peace. When the flame had  
consumed the thighs of the victim and its inwards had appeased our  
hunger, we poured out the libations of wine." 'Twas I who arranged the  
sacred rites, but none offered the shining cup to the diviner.

HIEROCLES

I care little for that. 'Tis not the Sibyl who spoke it.

TRYGAEUS

Wise Homer has also said: "He who delights in the horrors of civil  
war has neither country nor laws nor home." What noble words!

HIEROCLES

Beware lest the kite turn your brain and rob....

TRYGAEUS (to the SERVANT Who has returned with the libations) Look  
out, slave! This oracle threatens our meat. Quick, pour the  
libation, and give me some of the inwards.

HIEROCLES

I too will help myself to a bit, if you like.

TRYGAEUS

The libation! the libation!

HIEROCLES (to the SERVANT)

Pour out also for me and give me some of this meat.

TRYGAEUS

No, the blessed gods won't allow it yet; let us drink: and as for you, get you gone, for that's their will. Mighty Peace! stay ever in our midst.

HIEROCLES

Bring the tongue hither.

TRYGAEUS

Relieve us of your own.

HIEROCLES

The libation.

TRYGAEUS

Here! and this into the bargain. (He strikes him.)

HIEROCLES

You will not give me any meat?

TRYGAEUS

We cannot give you any until the wolf unites with the sheep.

HIEROCLES

I will embrace your knees.

TRYGAEUS

'Tis lost labour, good fellow; you will never smooth the rough spikes of the hedgehog....Come, spectators, join us in our feast.

HIEROCLES

And what am I to do?

TRYGAEUS

You? go and eat the Sibyl.

HIEROCLES

No, by the Earth! no, you shall not eat without me; if you do not give, I shall take; it's common property.

TRYGAEUS (to the SERVANT)

Strike, strike this Bacis, this humbugging soothsayer.

HIEROCLES

I take to witness....

TRYGAEUS

And I also, that you are a glutton and an impostor. (To the SERVANT) Hold him tight and I'll beat the impostor with a stick.

SERVANT

You look to that; I will snatch the skin from him which he has stolen from us.

TRYGAEUS

Let go that skin, you priest from hell! do you hear! Oh! what a fine crow has come from Oreus! Stretch your wings quickly for Elymnum.

(HIEROCLES flees. TRYGAEUS and the SERVANT go into the house.)

CHORUS (singing)

Oh! joy, joy! no more helmet, no more cheese nor onions! No, I

have no passion for battles; what I love is to drink with good comrades in the corner by the fire when good dry wood, cut in the height of the summer, is crackling; it is to cook pease on the coals and beechnuts among the embers, it is to kiss our pretty Thracian while my wife is at the bath.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Nothing is more pleasing, when the rain is sprouting our sowings, than to chat with some friend, saying, "Tell me, Comarchides, what shall we do? I would willingly drink myself, while the heavens are watering our fields. Come, wife, cook three measures of beans, adding to them a little wheat, and give us some figs. Syra! call Manes off the fields, it's impossible to prune the vine or to align the ridges, for the ground is too wet to-day. Let someone bring me the thrush and those two chaffinches; there were also some curds and four pieces of hare, unless the cat stole them last evening, for I know not what the infernal noise was that I heard in the house. Serve up three of the pieces for me, slave, and give the fourth to my father. Go and ask Aeschinades for some myrtle branches with berries on them, and then, for it's on the same road, invite Charinades to come and drink with me to the honour of the gods who watch over our crops."

CHORUS (singing)

When the grasshopper sings his dulcet tune, I love to see the Lemnian vines beginning to ripen, the earliest plant of all. Likewise I love to watch the fig filling out, and when it has reached maturity I eat it with appreciation, exclaiming, "Oh! delightful season!" Then too I bruise some thyme and infuse it in water. Indeed I grow a great deal fatter passing the summer in this way....

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

...than in watching a damned lieutenant with three plumes and military cloak of crimson, very livid indeed; he calls it the real Sardian purple, but if he ever has to fight in this cloak he'll dye it another colour, the real Cyzicene yellow, he the first to run away, shaking his plumes like a buff hippalectryon, and I am left to do the real work. Once back again in Athens, these brave fellows behave abominably; they write down these, they scratch through others, and this backwards and forwards two or three times at random. The departure is set for to-morrow, and some citizen has brought no provisions, because he didn't know he had to go; he stops in front of the statue of Pandion, reads his name, is dumbfounded and starts away at a run, weeping bitter tears. The townsfolk are less ill-used, but that is how the husbandmen are treated by these men of war, the hated of the gods and of men, who know nothing but how to throw away their shield. For this reason, if it please heaven, I propose to call these rascals to account, for they are lions in times of peace, but sneaking foxes when it comes to fighting.

TRYGAEUS (coming out of his house, followed by the SERVANT)

Oh! oh! what a crowd for the nuptial feast! Here! dust the

tables with this crest, which is good for nothing else now. Halloa! produce the cakes, the thrushes, plenty of good jugged hare and the little loaves.

(A SICKLE-MAKER enters with a comrade; one carries sickles, the other casks.)

SICKLE-MAKER

Trygaeus, where is Trygaeus?

TRYGAEUS

I am cooking the thrushes.

SICKLE-MAKER

Trygaeus, my best of friends, what a fine stroke of business you have done for me by bringing back Peace! Formerly my sickles would not have sold at an obolus apiece, to-day I am being paid fifty drachmae for every one. And here is a neighbour who is selling his casks for the country at three drachmae each. So come, Trygaeus, take as many sickles and casks as you will for nothing. Accept them for nothing; it's because of our handsome profits on our sales that we offer you these wedding presents.

TRYGAEUS

Thanks. Put them all down inside there, and come along quick to the banquet. Ah! do you see that armourer yonder coming with a wry face?

(Enter an armourer, followed by other personages who represent the various specialized trades which have profited by the war, a crest-maker, a manufacturer of breastplates, a trumpet-maker, a helmet-maker, a polisher of lances; each carries a sample of his products. The armourer is the only one who speaks.)

ARMOURER

Alas! alas! Trygaeus, you have ruined me utterly.

TRYGAEUS

What! won't the crests go any more, friend?

ARMOURER

You have killed my business, my livelihood, and that of this poor lance maker too.

TRYGAEUS

Come, come, what are you asking for these two crests?

ARMOURER

What do you bid for them?

TRYGAEUS

What do I bid? Oh! I am ashamed to say. Still, as the clasp is of good workmanship, I would give two, even three measures of dried figs; I could use them for dusting the table.

ARMOURER

All right, tell them to bring me the dried figs. (To the crest-maker) That's better than nothing, my friend.

TRYGAEUS

Take them away, be off with your crests and get you gone; they are moulting, they are losing all their hair; I would not give a single fig for them.

ARMOURER

Good gods, what am I going to do with this fine ten-mina breastplate, which is so splendidly made?

TRYGAEUS

Oh, you will lose nothing over it. Sell it to me at cost price. It would be very useful as a thunder-mug...

ARMOURER

Cease your insults, both to me and my wares.

TRYGAEUS

...if propped on three stones. (He sits on it.) Look, it's admirable

ARMOURER

But how can you wipe yourself, idiot?

TRYGAEUS (with appropriate gestures)

I can put one hand through here, and the other there, and so...

ARMOURER

What! do you wipe yourself with both hands?

TRYGAEUS

Aye, so that I may not be accused of robbing the State, by blocking up an oar-hole in the galley.

ARMOURER

Would you crap in a thunder-mug that cost ten minae?

TRYGAEUS

Undoubtedly, you rascal. Do you think I would sell my arse for a thousand drachmae?

ARMOURER

Come, have the money paid over to me.

TRYGAEUS

No, friend; I find it pinches my bottom. Take it away, I won't buy it.

ARMOURER

What is to be done with this trumpet, for which I gave sixty drachmae the other day?

TRYGAEUS

Pour lead into the hollow and fit a good, long stick to the top; and you will have a balanced cottabus.

ARMOURER

Don't mock me.

TRYGAEUS

Well, here's another idea. Pour in lead as I said, add here a dish hung on strings, and you will have a balance for weighing the figs which you give your slaves in the fields.

ARMOURER

Cursed fate! I am ruined. Here are helmets, for which I gave a mina each. What I to do with them? who will buy them?

TRYGAEUS

Go and sell them to the Egyptians; they will do for measuring laxatives.

ARMOURER

Ah! poor helmet-maker, things are indeed in a bad way.  
TRYGAEUS  
He has no cause for complaint.  
ARMOURER  
But helmets will be no more used.  
TRYGAEUS  
Let him learn to fit a handle to them and he can sell them for more money.  
ARMOURER  
Let us be off, comrade.  
TRYGAEUS  
No, I want to buy these spears.  
ARMOURER  
What will you give?  
TRYGAEUS  
If they could be split in two, I would take them at a drachma per hundred to use as vine-props.  
ARMOURER  
The insolent dog! Let us go, friend.  
(The munitions-makers all depart.)  
TRYGAEUS (as some young boys enter)  
Ah I here come the guests, young folks from the table to take a pee; I fancy they also want to hum over what they will be singing presently. Hi! child! what do you reckon to sing? Stand there and give me the opening line.  
BOY  
"Glory to the young warriors..."  
TRYGAEUS  
Oh! leave off about your young warriors, you little wretch; we are at peace and you are an idiot and a rascal.  
BOY  
"The skirmish begins, the hollow bucklers clash against each other."  
TRYGAEUS  
Bucklers! Leave me in peace with your bucklers.  
BOY  
"And then there came groanings and shouts of victory."  
TRYGAEUS  
Groanings! ah! by Bacchus! look out for yourself, you cursed squaller, if you start wearying us again with your groanings and hollow bucklers.  
BOY  
Then what should I sing? Tell me what pleases you.  
TRYGAEUS  
"'Tis thus they feasted on the flesh of oxen," or something similar, as, for instance, "Everything that could tickle the palate was placed on the table."  
BOY  
"'Tis thus they feasted on the flesh of oxen and, tired of

warfare, unharnessed their foaming steeds."

TRYGAEUS

That's splendid; tired of warfare, they seat themselves at table; sing to us how they still go on eating after they are satiated.

BOY

"The meal over, they girded themselves..."

TRYGAEUS

With good wine, no doubt?

BOY

"...with armour and rushed forth from the towers, and a terrible shout arose."

TRYGAEUS

Get you gone, you little scapegrace, you and your battles! You sing of nothing but warfare. Who is your father then?

BOY

My father?

TRYGAEUS

Why yes, your father.

BOY

I am Lamachus' son.

TRYGAEUS

Oh! oh! I could indeed have sworn, when I was listening to you, that you were the son of some warrior, who dreams of nothing but wounds and bruises, of some Bulomachus or Clausimachus; go and sing your plaguey songs to the spearmen....Where is the son of Cleonymus? Sing me something before going back to the feast. I am at least certain he will not sing of battles, for his father is far too careful a man.

SON OF CLEONYMUS

"A Saian is parading with the spotless shield which I regret to say I have thrown into a thicket."

TRYGAEUS

Tell me, you little good-for-nothing, are you singing that for your father?

SON OF CLEONYMUS

"But I saved my life."

TRYGAEUS

And dishonoured your family. But let us go in; I am very certain, that being the son of such a father, you will never forget this song of the buckler. (To the CHORUS) You, who remain to the feast, it's your duty to devour dish after dish and not to ply empty jaws. Come, put heart into the work and eat with your mouths full. For, believe me, poor friends, white teeth are useless furniture if they chew nothing.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS (to TRYGAEUS, who is going into the house) Never fear; thanks all the same for your good advice. (To the CHORUS) And all of you, who yesterday were dying of hunger, come, stuff yourselves with this fine hare-stew; it's not every day that we find cakes lying neglected. Eat, eat, or I predict you will soon

regret it.

TRYGAEUS (coming out of the house)

Silence! Keep silence! Here is the bride about to appear! Take nuptial torches and let all rejoice and join in our songs. Then, when we have danced, clinked our cups and thrown Hyperbolus through the doorway we will carry back all our farming tools to the fields and shall pray the gods to give wealth to the Greeks and to cause us all to gather in an abundant barley harvest, enjoy a noble vintage, to grant that we may choke With good figs, that our wives may prove fruitful, that in fact we may recover all our lost blessings, and that the sparkling fire may be restored to the hearth, (OPORA comes out of the house, followed by torch-bearing slaves.) Come, wife, to the fields and seek, my beauty, to brighten and enliven my nights. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS (singing)

Oh! thrice happy man, who so well deserve your good fortune! Oh! Hymen! oh oh! Hymenaeus!

CHORUS (singing)

Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

TRYGAEUS (singing)

What shall we do to her?

CHORUS (singing)

What shall we do to her?

TRYGAEUS (singing)

We will gather her kisses.

CHORUS (singing)

We will gather her kisses.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS (singing)

But come, comrades, we who are in the first row, let us pick up the bridegroom and carry him in triumph. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus! Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

TRYGAEUS (singing)

You shall have a fine house, no cares and the finest of figs. Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus! Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS (singing)

The bridegroom's fig is great and thick; the bride's very soft and tender.

TRYGAEUS (singing)

While eating and drinking deep draughts of wine, continue to repeat: Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus! Oh! Hymen! oh! Hymenaeus, Hail, hail, my friends. All who come with me shall have cakes galore.

THE END

