

THE NINE COMMANDMENTS, ACCORDING TO EURIPIDES.

A FRAGMENT FROM THE *ERECHTHEUS*.

TRANSLATED BY

PROFESSOR F. W. NEWMAN.

WELL hast thou asked me. But I wish, my child !
Some noble treasure, if I die, to leave
In words of warning wholesome to thy youth :
For thou already understandest ; yea,
Canst safe retain the precepts of thy sire,
In short monition will I much comprise.

1. A gentle spirit first must thou maintain.
2. Pious to all alike present thyself,
Nor to the rich man greater duty pay.
3. Choose betwixt adverse causes : to the one
Clinging with steadfast love, the other hate.
4. Unjustly win not riches, if thou wish
Long time to hold them fast : for pelf that comes
Basely within the chambers, saps the wall.

5. Yet seek for just enrichment ; so thy house
Nobler shall be, and nobler too thy bride.
But penury, ev'n in the wisest man,
Hath disesteem and many a hurtful slight.
6. Friends earn thou, such as in familiar talk
Yield not before thee. Let thy key lock out
The miscreants who, to please thee, softly speak.
7. Love thou companionship of elder men ;
But reckless morals of the unchastised,—
Brilliant alone for laughter's interchange,—
Abhor ! Base pleasure hath but short delight.
8. And if, my child ! high powèr e'er be thine,
Shun to indulge base loves of meaner folk,
Which murder by the sword or rope entail,
When worthy poor men's children are defil'd.
9. Give not to worthless men thy voice or aid,
To lift them into powèr. Upstarts mean,
O'ergorg'd with wealth, of public honours proud,
In heat of new successes, gambol wild.

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Now, oh my child ! stretch out to me thy hand,  
And let thy father touch it. Fare thee well !  
From warm embraces purposely, through shame,  
Stand I aloof ; for none,\* who prudent is,  
Chooseth too womanish of heart to be.

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\* More German than Greek or Roman ?