

## FIVE TRAGICAL HISTORIES OF LOVE.

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### I.

IN Haliartus, which is a city of Boeotia, lived a young damsel of surpassing beauty, whose name was Aristoclia, the daughter of Theophanes. This lady was courted by Straton an Orchomenian, and Callisthenes of Haliartus; but Straton was the more wealthy of the two, and more enamored of the virgin. For he had seen her bathing herself in the fountain of Hercyne, which is in Lebadea, against the time that she was to bear the sacred basket in honor of Jupiter the King. But the virgin herself had a greater affection for Callisthenes, for that he was more nearly allied to her. In this case, her father Theophanes, not knowing well what to do (for he was afraid of Straton, who had the advantage both of noble birth and riches above all the rest of the Boeotians), resolved to refer the choice to the oracle of Trophonius. On the other side, Straton (for he was made believe by some of the virgin's familiar acquaintance that his mistress had the greatest kindness for him) earnestly desired to refer the matter to the election of the virgin herself. But when Theophanes put the question to his daughter in a great assembly of all the friends of all parties, it fell out that the damsel preferred Callisthenes. Thereupon it presently appeared in Straton's countenance how much he was disgusted at the indignity he had received. However, two days after, he came to

Theophanes and Callisthenes, requesting the continuance of their friendship, notwithstanding that some Daemon had envied him the happiness of his intended marriage. They so well approved his proposal, that they invited him to the wedding and the nuptial feast. But he in the mean time having mustered together a great number of his friends, together with a numerous troop of his own servants, whom he secretly dispersed and disposed up and down in places proper for his purpose, watched his opportunity so well that, as the damsel was going down, according to the custom of the country, to the fountain called Cissoessa, there to pay her offerings to the Nymphs before her wedding-day, he and his accomplices rushing out of their ambuscade seized upon the virgin, whom Straton held fast and pulled to himself. On the other side, Callisthenes, with those that were about him, as it is easy to be believed, flew with all speed to her relief; and in this fatal contest, while the one tugged and the other hauled, the unhappy damsel perished. As for Callisthenes, he was never seen any more; whether he laid violent hands upon himself, or whether it were that he left Boeotia as a voluntary exile; for no man could give any account of him afterwards. And as for Straton, he slew himself before the eyes of all upon the dead body of the unfortunate virgin.

## II.

A certain great person whose name was Phido, designing to make himself lord of the whole Peloponnesus, and more especially desirous that Argos, being his native country, should be the metropolis of all the rest, resolved to reduce the Corinthians under his subjection. To this purpose he sent to them to demand a levy of a thousand young gentlemen, the most valiant and the chiefest in the

prime of their age in the whole city. Accordingly they sent him a thousand young sparks, brisk and gallant, under the leading of Dexander, whom they chose to be their captain. But Phido, designing nothing more than the massacre of these gentlemen, to the end he might the more easily make himself master of Corinth when it should be enfeebled by so great a loss (as being by its situation the chief bulwark to guard the entrance into Peloponnesus), imparted this contrivance of his to several of his confidants, in which number was one whose name was Abro; who, having been formerly acquainted with Dexander, and familiarly entertained by him, discovered the whole conspiracy to his friend in acknowledgment of his kindness. By which means the thousand, before they fell into the ambuscade, retreated and got safe to Corinth. Phido thus disappointed made all the inquiry imaginable, to find out who it was that had betrayed and discovered his design. Which Abro understanding fled to Corinth with his wife and all his family, and settled himself in Melissus, a certain village in the territory of the Corinthians. There he begat a son, whom he named Melissus from the name of the place where he was born. The son of this Melissus was Actaeon, the loveliest and most modest of all the striplings of his age. For which reason there were several that fell in love with him, but none with so much ardor as Archias, being of the race of the Heraclidae, and for wealth and authority the greatest person in all Corinth. This Archias, when he found that no fair means and persuasions would prevail upon the young lad, resolved to ravish him away by force; to which purpose he invited himself to Melissus's house, as it were to make merry, accompanied with a great number of his friends and servants, and by their assistance he made an attempt to carry away the son by violence. But the father and his friends opposing the rape, and the neighbors coming in to the rescue of the child, poor

Actaeon, between the one and the other, was pulled and hauled to death ; and Archias with his company departed. Upon this, Melissus carried the murdered body of his son into the market-place of Corinth, and there, exposing him to public view, demanded justice to be done upon the murderers. But finding that the Corinthians only pitied his condition, without taking any farther notice of the matter, he returned home, and waited for the grand assembly of the Greeks at the Isthmus. At what time, getting up to the very top of Neptune's temple, he exclaimed against the whole race of the Bacchiadae, and after he had made a public relation of the good service which his father Abro had done the Corinthians, he invoked the vengeance of the Gods, and presently threw himself headlong among the rocks. Soon after the Corinthians being plagued with a most terrible drought, upon which ensued a violent famine, they sent to the oracle, to know by what means they might be delivered from their calamity. To whom the Deity made answer, that it was Neptune's wrath, which would not cease till they had revenged the death of Actaeon. Archias, hearing this (for he was one of those that were sent to the oracle), never returned again to Corinth, but sailing into Sicily, built there the city of Syracuse ; where, after he was become the father of two daughters, Ortygia and Syracuse, he was treacherously slain by Telephus, whom he had preternaturally abused in his youth, and who, having the command of a ship, sailed along with him into Sicily.

### III.

A certain poor man, Scedasus by name, lived at Leuctra, a small village in the territory of the Thespians, and had two daughters, Hippo and Miletia, or as others say, Theano

and Euxippe. This Scedasus was a very good man, and, to the extent of his fortune, very hospitable to strangers. This was the reason that most readily and gladly he entertained two young gentlemen of Sparta, that came to lodge at his house; who, falling in love with the virgins, were yet so overawed by the kindness that Scedasus had showed them, that they durst not make any rude attempt for that time. The next morning therefore they went directly to the city of Delphi, whither they were journeying, where after they had consulted the oracle touching such questions as they had to put, they returned homeward, and travelling through Boeotia, stopped again at Scedasus's house, who happened at that time not to be at Leuctra. However, his daughters, according to that education to which their father had accustomed them, gave the same entertainment to the strangers as if their father had been at home. But such was the perfidious ingratitude of these guests, that finding the virgins alone, they ravished and by force deflowered the damsels; and, which was worse, perceiving them lamenting to excess the undeserved injury they had received, the ravishers murdered them, and after they had thrown their bodies into a well, went their ways. Soon after Scedasus, returning home, missed both his daughters, but all things else he found safe and in order, as he left them; which put him into such a quandary, that he knew not what to say or do, till instructed by a little bitch, that several times in a day came whining and fawning upon him and then returned to the well, he began to suspect what he found to be true; and so he drew up the dead bodies of his daughters. Moreover, being then informed by his neighbors, that they had seen the two Lacedaemonian gentlemen which he had entertained some time before go into his house, he guessed them to be the persons who had committed the fact, for that they would be always praising the virgins when they lodged there before,

and telling their father what happy men they would be that should have the good fortune to marry them. Thereupon away he went to Lacedaemon, with a resolution to make his complaint to the Ephori; but being benighted in the territory of Argos, he put into a public house, where he found another old man of the city of Oreus, in the province of Histiaea; whom when he heard sighing and cursing the Lacedaemonians, Scedasmus asked him what injury the Lacedaemonians had done him. In answer to which, the old man gave him this account: I am, said he, a subject to the Lacedaemonians, by whom Aristodemus was sent to Oreus to be governor of that place, where he committed several outrages and savage enormities. Among the rest, being fallen in love with my son, when he could by no fair means procure his consent, he endeavored to carry him away by main force out of the wrestling-place. But the president of the exercises opposing him, with the assistance of several of the young men, Aristodemus was constrained to retire; but the next day, having provided a galley to be in readiness, he ravished away my son, and sailing from Oreus to the opposite continent, endeavored, when he had the boy there, to abuse his body; and because the lad refused to submit to his lust, cut the child's throat. Upon his return he made a great feast at Oreus, to which he invited all his friends. In the mean while, I being soon informed of the sad accident, presently went and interred the body; and having so done, I made haste to Sparta, and preferred my complain to the Ephori, but they gave no answer, nor took any notice of the matter.

Scedasmus, having heard this relation, remained very much dejected, believing he should have no better success. However, in his turn, he gave an account to the stranger of his own sad mischance; which when he had done, the stranger advised him not to complain to the

Ephori, but to return to his own country, and erect a monument for his two daughters. But Scedasus, not liking this advice, went to Sparta, made his case known to the Ephori, and demanded justice; who taking no notice of his complaint, away he went to the Kings; but they as little regarding him, he applied himself to every particular citizen, and recommended to them the sadness of his condition. At length, when he saw nothing would do, he ran through the city, stretching forth his hands to the sun and stamping on the ground with his feet, and called upon the Furies to revenge his cause; and when he had done all he could, in the last place slew himself. But afterwards the Lacedaemonians dearly paid for their injustice. For being at that time lords of all Greece, while all the chiefest cities of that spacious region were curbed by their garrisons, Epaminondas the Theban was the first that threw off their yoke, and cut the throats of the garrison that lay in Thebes. Upon which, the Lacedaemonians making war upon the revolvers, the Thebans met them at Leuctra, confident of success from the name of the place; for that formerly they had been there delivered from slavery, at what time Amphictyon, being driven into exile by Sthenelus, came to the city of Thebes, and finding them tributaries to the Chalcidians, after he had slain Chalcodon king of the Euboeans, eased them altogether of that burthen. In like manner it happened that the Lacedaemonians were vanquished not far from the monument of Scedasus's daughters. It is reported also, that before the fight, Pelopidas being then one of the Theban generals, and troubled by reason of some certain signs that seemed to portend some ill event in the battle, Scedasus appeared to him in a dream and bade him be of good courage, for that the Lacedaemonians were come to Leuctra, to receive the just vengeance which they deserved from him and his daughters; only the ghost advised him, the day before he en-

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