

Golden Fleece is interwoven with the matter, and the enthusiasm that had been created in favour of the discovery of new regions by land and sea is loudly condemned. Various instances are given of confusions and enmities that had already arisen from a free intercourse among barbarous nations, but worse things were to be expected. The prophecy already described was then formally pronounced by the chorus.

" Venient annis
Sæc. la seris, quibus Oceanus
Vincula rerum laxet, et ingens
Pateat tellus, Tethysisque novos
Detegat orbes, nec sit terris
Ultima Thule."*

The *Medea* of Seneca was evidently constructed after the model of the *Medea* of Euripides, but we do not observe in the latter drama a prophecy of a like purport to that which is so remarkable in the former drama, although the denouement of both tragedies turns upon the conduct of *Medea*, her cruelty to her own offspring, her vengeance upon her enemies, and her own final escape into the region of space by means of her magic power as an enchantress.

The tragedies of Seneca were translated at an early period into English, and they were imitated in their plot and arrangement by a class of playwrights who were styled from this circumstance the Senecan school. Among these writers were Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, and Norton, and other contrivers of the pageants displayed before Queen Elizabeth on her visits to the Inns of Court and elsewhere, and the influence of these productions on some of the plays of Shakespeare has been traced.

Polonius' account of the accomplished actors in *Hamlet* will be remembered where he says that "Seneca cannot be too heavy" for them, "nor Plautus too light."

The ancient mind was full of vague traditions in regard to the impious audacity of those who dared to penetrate by word or deed the mysteries beyond the sphere in which they had been born. Horace himself, we shall remember, refers to these ancient speculations, when he says :—

In oak or triple brass his breast was mail'd,
Who first committed to the ruthless deep
His fragile skiff, nor inly shrank and quail'd
To hear the headlong Afric fiercely sweep,
With northern blasts to wrestle and to rave ;
Nor fear'd to face the tristful Hyades,
And Notus, tyrant of the Adrian wave,
That lifts, or calms at will, the restless seas.

* Washington Irving in the first edition of his "Life of Columbus" gave Typhis instead of Tethys, but the latter is the reading in later issues of the work. I have preferred Tethys as harmonizing better with Oceanus personified, while Typhis simply recalls the Pilot of the Argo in an expedition which already at the time of the prophecy seems to have been a past event.