

Dion. She loves and hates and cannot do without him,
Now both of you say what you think about him (1).

Eur. "I hate a citizen by nature slow
To help his country, swift to work her woe,
Keen to his own, to her best interests blind."

Dion. (*To Aeschylus.*)
Now, sir, what suggestion can you find?

Aesch. "Rear not a lion's whelp within the State,
But if you *do*, knock under and obey it!"

Dion. (*Still perplexed.*)
By Zeus! I can't make up my mind not nearly.
This one (2) speaks cleverly, the other (3) clearly.

Plut. Decide.

Dion. (*After a short pause.*)
I have decided. Have you guessed?
I will select "the one my soul likes best." (4)

Eur. (*Anxiously.*)
Remember what a solemn oath you swore
To take me back. I was your friend before.

Dion. (*Solemnly.*)
(5) "My tongue had sworn—but" I'll choose Aeschylus.
(*Laughing and clapping Aeschylus on the shoulder.*)

Eur. (*Astonished.*)
What have you done? you villain! Scandalous.

Dion. I have only given Aeschylus first place.

Eur. And then you dare look me in the face?

(1) Euripides in his sententious style, and Aeschylus by one of his characteristic image, both sum up the character of the man. Aristophanes here seems to favour his second recall, as he is the only man left who can save Athens in the last stage of the war. (The city was taken in the following year, 404 B.C.)

(2) Euripides.

(3) Aeschylus.

(4) Possibly taken from a children's game.

(5) A parody on a line in the *Hippolytus* of Euripides, "My tongue hath sworn it, but my soul is free." All Hippolytus meant in saying this, was that he had sworn without knowing all that the oath implied, but that he is still bound by it. Aristophanes by an outrageous travesty of meaning represents Euripides as defending perjury.