

*King.* First, thou knowest not how to behave as an alien.

*Her.* I know not? How? Because I but find what I had lost?

*King.* But to what patrons of our people was thy notice given?

*Her.* To Hermes the searcher,—greatest of patrons.

*King.* And though to gods, yet dost thou pay no reverence to those gods?

*Her.* It is the deities about the Nile whom I revere.

*King.* And ours are nought, as I understand thee?

*Her.* I will see whether one will take these women from me.

*King.* Thou wouldst suffer for it, if thou touchedst them, and that right soon.

*Her.* The answer I hear is far from hospitable.

*King.* Aye! for I give no welcome to sacrilegious folk.

*Her.* I will go and tell this to Aegyptus' sons.

*King.* That matter is no concern or care of mine.

*Her.* But that I may know and tell a clearer tale—for it beseems a herald to give in each particular a precise account—what shall I say? Through whose withholding shall I say that I return without their cousins, this band of women? Not indeed that the Wargod tries this case by witnesses, nor doth he settle the quarrel by damages of money; first there come to pass many fallings of men and spurnings-off of life.

*King.* What need to tell thee my name? In due time thou shalt learn and know it, both thou and thy fellows. As for these maids, should they be willing and well-inclined, and should god-fearing argument persuade them, thou mightest lead them hence. But thus hath a decree been passed with one consent by the assembly of the state,—never under force to give up this band of women. Through this resolve the nail hath been firmly driven, so that it may be fixed abidingly. This message is not written inside tablets, nor sealed up in the folds of books, but thou hearest it plainly from an outspoken tongue. And now get thee gone instantly from my sight.

*Her.* It seems we are about to risk the peril of a war. May victory and sovereignty be on the males' side.

*King.* Males! Aye, but males will ye find the inhabitants of this land; men whose drink is no barley-brew. [*Herald departs.*]

But do ye all, with your handmaids, take heart and wend your way to the well-fenced city, locked with bulwarks shrewdly devised. And as for houses, the public ones are many, and I too am housed with no niggardly hand; so that ye may live in joint abodes with many others, or, if 'tis more to your liking, ye can dwell in houses of single sort; of these, choose free of charge the best and the most to your liking; and