

claimed descent from Thersandros, son of Polyneices<sup>1</sup>. To represent these children as the offspring of an incestuous union would have been to declare the stream polluted at its source.

We learn from Proclus that in the epic called the *Cyprian Lays* (Κύπρια), which included the preparations for the Trojan war, Nestor related 'the story of Oedipus' (τὰ περὶ Οἰδίπου) in the course of a digression (ἐν παρεκβάσει) which comprised also the madness of Heracles, as well as the story of Theseus and Ariadne. This was probably one of the sources used by the Attic dramatists. Another source, doubtless more fertile in detail, was the epic entitled the *Thebaid* (Θηβαΐς), and now usually designated as the 'Cyclic Thebaid,' to distinguish it from a later epic of the same name by Antimachus of Colophon, the contemporary of Euripides. Only about 20 verses remain from it<sup>2</sup>. The chief fragment relates to the curse pronounced by Oedipus on his sons. They had broken his strict command by setting on his table the wine-cups (ἐκπώματα) used by Laïus; and he invoked a curse upon them:—

αἶψα δὲ παισὶν εἰοῖσι μετ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἐπαρὰς  
ἀργαλέας ἤρᾱτο θεὸν δ' οὐ λάνθαν' Ἐρινύν·  
ὥς οὐ οἱ πατρώϊ' ἐνηεῖη φιλότητος  
δάσσαιντ', ἀμφοτέροισι δ' εἴοι πόλεμος τε μάχαι τε.

'And straightway, while his two sons were by, he uttered dire curses,—and the Avenging goddess failed not to hear them,—that they should divide their heritage in no kindly spirit, but that war and strife should be ever between them.'

This *Thebaid*—tracing the operation of a curse through the whole history of the house—must have had an important share in moulding the conception of the Aeschylean trilogy.

Pindar.

§ 4. Pindar touches on the story of Oedipus in *Ol.* 2. 35 ff. Destiny has often brought evil fortune after good,—

ἐξ οὐπερ ἔκτεινε Λαῶν μόριμος υἱὸς  
συναντόμενος, ἐν δὲ Πυθῶνι χρησθὲν  
παλαίφατον τέλεσσειν.

<sup>1</sup> Pind. *Ol.* 2. 35.

<sup>2</sup> See the Didot ed. of the Cyclic fragments, p. 587.