

## THE PROPOSAL OF POLTYS.

Πόλυτος, ὁ Θρακῶν Βασιλεὺς, ἐν τῷ Τρωϊκῷ πολέμῳ, πρεσβευσαμένων πρὸς αὐτὸν ἅμα τῶν Τρώων καὶ τῶν Αἰχαιῶν, ἐκέλευσε τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον, ἀποδόντα τὴν Ἑλένην, δύο παρ' αὐτοῦ λαβεῖν καλὰς γυναῖκας.

—PLUTARCHI *Apophthegmata*.\*

AIR—*O! London is a fine town.*

**O!** POLTYS was a man of peace, and loved a quiet life ;

His neighbours, too, he tried to keep from bloodshed and from strife.

He flourished in the famous times that saw the Trojan war,

But held aloof from war's alarms, and viewed the fight afar.

The Trojans, and the Grecians too, by every art did try

To win o'er Poltys to their side, and make him an ally :

\* See also Prior's 'Alma.'

For Poltys was a king of Thrace, and lived betwixt the  
two,  
And embassies arrived to him with every wind that  
blew.

But Poltys said: "The case is this, that Paris, that  
young scamp,  
Has wheedled Menelaus' wife, and got her to decamp:  
And Menelaus wants her back, though I would not do  
so,  
For when a wife resolves to run, I'd always let her go.

"Yet I've a plan by which, I think, much mischief may  
be saved,  
For I've two comely Wives to spare, extremely well-  
behaved.  
These dames on Paris I'll bestow, if Helen he'll release;  
Then all of you, and Poltys too, may live and die in  
peace."

This course, no doubt, if followed out, had saved much  
grief and wrong;  
But Homer would have wanted then the subject of his  
song.

He never would have Hector known, or heard of  
Andro-màchè,\*

Would ne'er have been *traduced* by Pope, or *overset* by  
Blackie.

And then if Homer had not sung, we might have had  
no Greek,

And Plato and the Stagyrte would still have been to  
seek.

A poet Virgil ne'er had been but for his predecessors,  
And where should we, or Oxford, be, without our Greek  
Professors?

Then though so many heroes fell upon the Trojan plain,  
The Iliad and the Odyssey have made the loss a gain ;  
And that old Maxim may be true, by some so stoutly  
pressed,

That on the whole, and in the end, **WHATEVER IS IS  
BEST.**

\* See Swift.