

THE PENGUIN CLASSICS

Editor: E. V. RIEU, Hon. Litt.D.

31 COOLHURST AVENUE, LONDON N8, MOUNTVIEW 4178

Dec. 12th 1952

Dear Sir,

Your letter of Dec. 8th has been sent to me by Penguin Books.

I have seen several attempts to get Aristophanes 'across' to our modern public, and as a result have come to the conclusion that he is impossible.

If, after this discouraging statement, you would still like to send me one of your translations, I would certainly give it a careful reading.

Yours faithfully
E. V. Rieu

THE PENGUIN CLASSICS

Editor: E. V. RIEU, Hon. Litt.D.

31 COOLHURST AVENUE, LONDON N8, MOUNTVIEW 4178

Dec. 16th 1952

Dear Mr. Alastor,

Thank you for your very kind letter and for the TS of your hypisbata.

I have read your translation with great appreciation. Nevertheless I am not convinced. You do not seem to me to have achieved a completely natural & uniform style. It runs quite smoothly - and then one bumps into sentences such as: 'Did the wanton lustfulness of women burst forth again?', which it is difficult to accept as normal, contemporary English, particularly if they are to be spoken on the stage.

I am sorry to disappoint you, but as I said, Aristophanes is next door to impossible.

Yours sincerely

E. V. Rieu

3, Causton Road,*
Highgate, N.6.

8th December 1952.

Penguin Books.
Harmondsworth,
Middlesex.

Dear Sirs,

I have translated two plays of Aristophanes, namely "Peace" and "Lysistrata". The translations are in prose and are carefully and accurately done, but at the same time, in a form and language to appeal also to the general reader. I have been anxious to preserve the spirit of Aristophanes and that of his time but have avoided expressions which nowadays are considered crude.

There are no modern translations of Aristophanes and most of the old ones would only appeal to classical scholars. Therefore I feel that a modern translation might not fail to have a wide reading public.

Both plays together run to about 35,000 words and I propose to write a foreword of approximately 5,000 words.

I am the author of a book on the Balkans published by the Bodley Head and of a biography of Venizelos published by Lund Humphries. Both had a pretty good press. I am now working on another of Aristophanes' Plays.

I shall be glad to forward the Ms. of the above two plays if you are interested.

Yours faithfully,

Mr.) D. Alastos.

Are you interested in
 Aristophanes, perhaps ^{one of} the greatest
 certainly the most lyrical and
 most 'modern' of all classical
 writers; ~~has~~ If so I have a
 translation ready of his two
 Peace plays "Peace" and "Lysistrata"
 which I can send along to you
 to look them over with a view
 to publication, if found suitable.

The Translation is ^{in prose} ~~is~~ although
 absolutely faithful to the text of
 Aristophanes, is done in such a
 way as to ~~enable the reader to~~
~~understand fully and interpreted~~
 with explanations in the text
 wherever necessary so as to enable
 the reader to understand him
 fully and appreciate him. Certain
 words that may sound objectionable
 to modern ears have been glossed
 over. Both plays run to about
 40,000 words and along with an introduction
 that I propose to write they can make
 a fat. size volume.

I am the author of a

Lawrence and Richards.

Dear Sir,

I don't know whether you will be interested in the following but I feel it only right to approach you first.

I have translated two plays of Aristophanes "Peace" and "Lysistrata" in prose. Both are powerful plays and deal with the question of peace. They extend to approximately 80,000 words each and with a foreword which I propose to write ~~them~~ ^{can} make a fair-size book.

Needless to add anything about the quality of Aristophanes' writings. The translation is done conscientiously in no way departing from the spirit and letter of the Aristophanic text except for the glossing over of certain words that modern readership finds objectionable.

In my translation I have avoided as much as possible the use of footnotes which detract attention and have enclosed where it was necessary explanation in the text itself (in brackets) to facilitate the reader. This is necessary as far

3, Causton Road,
Highgate, N.6.

14th December 1952.

Dr. E.V. Rieu,
31, Coolhurst Avenue, N.8.

Dear Sir,

Thank you very much for your letter of the 12th inst. I greatly appreciated your remarks but...nevertheless, I am taking advantage of your kind offer to read one of my translations and enclose herewith a copy of "Lysistrata".

The only thing I should like to say is that I have steeped myself in Aristophanes, I feel with him about the issues he writes and have tried my best to get the spirit of his plays across.

Insincerely hope you like my effort and if you do, but have reservations, which are not insurmountable, I hope you will not reject it out of hand. In any case, I shall be grateful to have your opinion, and I shall value it as the judgement of a great Greek scholar.

May I take this opportunity to tell you how much I liked your superb translations of Homer.

Yours faithfully,

D. Alastair

3, Causton Road,
Highgate N.6.

December 6th 1952

Messrs John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd.,
8, Bury Place W.C.I.

Dear Sirs,

Just before the war you published a book by me with the title 'Balkans & Europe' I mention this just by way of an introduction.

Now I approach about a different matter altogether. Recently I have translated two of Aristophanes' plays - his 'Peace' and his 'Lysistrata'. Both plays deal with the issues ~~xxxxx~~ about which our times feel very deeply. The translation is done in prose and the only that I can say is that it is done conscientiously and faithfully and brings out Aristophanes quite alive. My intention was to produce a readable translation to make Aristophanes come out alive and not a heavy scholarly translation with lots of footnotes and explanations that overload and embalm the text.

Both plays run to just over 40,000 words and with a forward I propose to write on Aristophanes can make a fair sized volume. The only thing I must add here is that certain words or phrases that contemporary readers might find objectionable have been glossed over or omitted.

If you are interested I can send you the MSS along to have a look at it.

3, Causton Road,
Highgate, N.6.

8th December 1952.

Messrs. John Lane
The Bodley Head,
8, Bury Place, W.C.1.

Dear Sirs,

Just before the war you published a book by me entitled "Balkans and Europe". Now I have translated two plays of Aristophanes, namely "Peace" and "Lysistrata". The translations are in prose and are carefully and accurately done, but at the same time, in a form and language to appeal also to the general reader. I have taken pains to preserve the spirit of Aristophanes and that of his time, but have avoided expressions which nowadays are considered crude.

There are no modern translations of Aristophanes and most of the old ones would only appeal to classical scholars. Therefore I feel that a modern translation might not fail to have a wide reading public.

Both plays together run to about 35,000 words and I propose to write a foreword of approximately 5,000 words.

I shall be glad to forward the Ms. of the above two plays if you would care to see them.

Yours faithfully,

D. Alastos.