

INTRODUCTION.

The "Peace" of Aristophanes was produced in the spring of 421 B.C.

By that time the Peloponnesian war ~~had~~ had been going on for over ten years. However, when the Athenians took their seats in the theatre during the city festival of Dionysia and awarded Aristophanes ^{the} second prize for his play, "Peace" they knew that negotiations were going on and ^{that} peace was not far off. A few months earlier the two ^{principal} ~~principal~~ war-leaders on either side, Cleon ^(Athens) ~~leader of the Athenians~~ and Brasidas, (King of Sparta), perished ^{together} during the battle of Amphipolis in Thrace. Both were determined opponents of peace. Brasidas ^{was} ~~was~~ ^{overcoming to Thucydides: -} ~~because the~~ ^{honour which was given him} ~~because he thought that~~ ^{thought "that war afforded him success and honour"} and Cleon ^{because he was afraid} ~~because he was afraid~~ ^{that if tranquility were established} ~~his crimes would be more easily detected and his calumnies~~ ^{less} ~~effectively~~ ^{not so} ~~not so~~ ^{early} ~~early~~ ^{believed:}

Aristophanes wrote his play after the battle of Amphipolis. Earlier on in his "Acharnes" he came out in favour of peace. Now he ~~makes a direct plea~~ and calls ~~pleads directly~~ for peace and makes the fraternity of the soil - farmers, vine-growers, olive-growers, land-tillers - the instrument by which peace is "rescued".

The central character of the play is ^{the} Trygaeos, a vine-grower. Trygaeos, a typically forthright and uncomplicated Aristophanic creation, decides to go up to heaven and ~~supplicate~~ ^{supplicate} with Zeus for allowing the war to go on. He ~~finds~~ ^{finds} a gigantic dung-beetle for this purpose and is carried on its back, like Pellerophon on his Pegasus, to Olympus. There he finds that Zeus has departed -

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Lysistrata, perhaps the best known by name of all of Aristophanes' plays, was brought out ten years after "Peace" in 411 B.C. ^{The war was still going on.} Two years earlier Athens suffered a major disaster in Sicily where she lost her ships and the flower of her youth. Still she showed great resilience and was far from conquered. Aristophanes makes once again, a plea for peace. He does not attack anybody now, neither the demagogues, ~~not~~ the politicians, nor oligarchs. Things went on long enough. The war, begun by one generation was continued by another. Was it not time for Athenians and Spartans to come together, to forget their quarrels, to remember bygone friendships. This is his theme. To many of his audience, the mention of Sparta, a war-enemy for twenty-two years, must have been a shock. Aristophanes shows here as in many other plays extreme courage. He defies popular prejudice and not only pleads for peace with the Spartans but represents them and decent a people as the Athenians themselves and even in a better light.

In "Peace" there is the underlying feeling of hope; the belief running through it that everything will be alright in the end. In Lysistrata, one feels a certain tension in the writing an underlying sombreness. ^{There is up such hope.} ^{as if the} ^{callicy and jokes and} ^{phallics.} ^{in Lysistrata} ^{Aristophanes brings} ^{fore} ^{the} ^{war,} ^{to} ^{the} ^{women,} ^{the} ^{silence} ^{wordless} ^{sufferers} ⁱⁿ ^{the} ^{war,} ^{to} ^{the} ^{women.}

~~The women of Athens, led by Lysistrata, and supported by women who take the question of peace over to the men. Here Aristophanes brings the women to the fore, the voiceless sufferers in the war.~~ ^{Under the leadership of Lysistrata} ^{the women of Athens} ^{led by Lysistrata and supported by delegates from the other cities of Greece strike out against war, a) by occupying the treasury of Athens and b) by applying the self-denying ordinance of refraining from all sexual relations with men until the latter come to their senses and make peace.}

The means they choose prove successful... and peace is the result is the result.

evidently to put the chief of the Gods on the stage would have been considered "bad taste" even by ^{to} an ancient Athenian audience! - ~~Trygga~~ and that Polemos (war) was installed ~~over~~ in his place. ~~and then buried up and was busy pouring the cities in huge meters.~~ Hermes informs Trygods that Polemos has buried peace in a deep ^{pit} and the subsequent action is devoted ^{and the} to the rescue ^{and restoration} of peace. ~~and her restoration to her ancient nature amidst~~ ^{The} ~~and~~ concludes with the rejoicings of the people and the nuptials of Trygods with Opora (harvest) the attendant of Peace represented as a pretty young girl.

play

Peace is a play of hope. A few days or at the most a few weeks, after its production the peace of which Euripides sang, dawned in Greece into the "peace of Nicias" supposed to last for fifty years, but ~~through~~ unfortunately or were interbroke in vast conflict.

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