



**The Lysistrata of Aristophanes Acted at Athens in  
the Year B. C. 411: The Greek Text Revised With  
a Translation Into Corresponding Metres  
Introduction and Commentary (Classic Reprint)**

*Benjamin Bickley Rogers*

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Excerpt from The Lysistrata of Aristophanes Acted at Athens in the Year B. C. 411: The Greek Text Revised With a Translation Into Corresponding Metres Introduction and Commentary

It is much to be regretted that the phallus-element should be so conspicuous in the present Play; for in other respects, there are few dramas - ancient or modern - which contain more noble sentiments or more poetic beauty than the Lysistrata or Aristophanes.

And in truth this very coarseness, so repulsive to ourselves, so amusing to an Athenian audience, was introduced, it is impossible to doubt, for the express purpose of counterbalancing the extreme gravity and earnestness of the Play. The debate between Lysistrata and the Chief Magistrate, her lecture to both Spartans and Athenians on their misdoings, and even the beautiful lyrics with which the drama concludes might, unless framed in the most ludicrous and farcical setting, have well been resented as too serious for-Comedy, as dealing with matters. But none could object on this score to wise counsels and political censures delivered by a woman in Lysistrata's position; and the more practical her advice to the combatants becomes, the coarser the buffoonery with which we find it surrounded. That a Poet, from the boards of an Athenian theatre, should, for example, recommend the Athenians, for the sake of Peace, to surrender Pylus, would hardly have been tolerated unless the recommendation had been dressed up in the broadest and most-fantastical costume. The sorrows of Athenian mothers for their sons, of Athenian maidens for their lovers, who had gone to the battle-fields from which they never returned, would have been a topic far too moving and pathetic for Comedy, had it not been made a part of the quarrel between the insurgent Women and the outraged Magistrate. And amidst the wildest buffoonery, there is always perceptible an undertone of sadness, and of genuine anxiety about the terrible position in which at that moment Athens found herself placed.

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