

4. HIS BOAT



his boat you see, friends, will tell you
 that she was the fastest of craft,
 not to be challenged for speed
 by any vessel afloat, whether
 driven by sail or the labour of oars.
 The threatening Adriatic coast won't deny it,
 nor the isles of the *Cyclades* [p. 208],
 nor noble Rhodes, nor fearful *Bosphorus* [p. 228],
 nor the grim bay of the *Black Sea* [p. 228]
 where, before becoming a boat, she was
 leafy wood: for on the heights of *Cytorus* [p. 209]
 she often hissed to the whispering leaves.
 The boat says these things were well known to you,
 and are, *Amastris* [p. 197] and box-wood clad Cytorus:
 she says from the very beginning she stood
 on your slope, that she dipped her oars
 in your water, and carried her owner from there
 over so many headstrong breakers,
 whether the wind cried from starboard
 or larboard, or whether *Jupiter* [p. 216] struck at the sheets
 on one side and the other, together:
 and no prayers to the gods of the shore were offered
 for her, when she came from a foreign sea
 here, as far as this limpid lake.

But that's past: now hidden away here
she ages quietly and offers herself to you,
Castor^[p. 205] and his brother, heavenly Twins.



'Castor and Pollux Rescuing Helen'
Sébastien-Louis-Guillaume Norblin de la Gourdain
(French, 1796 - 1884)
National Gallery of Art