



Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

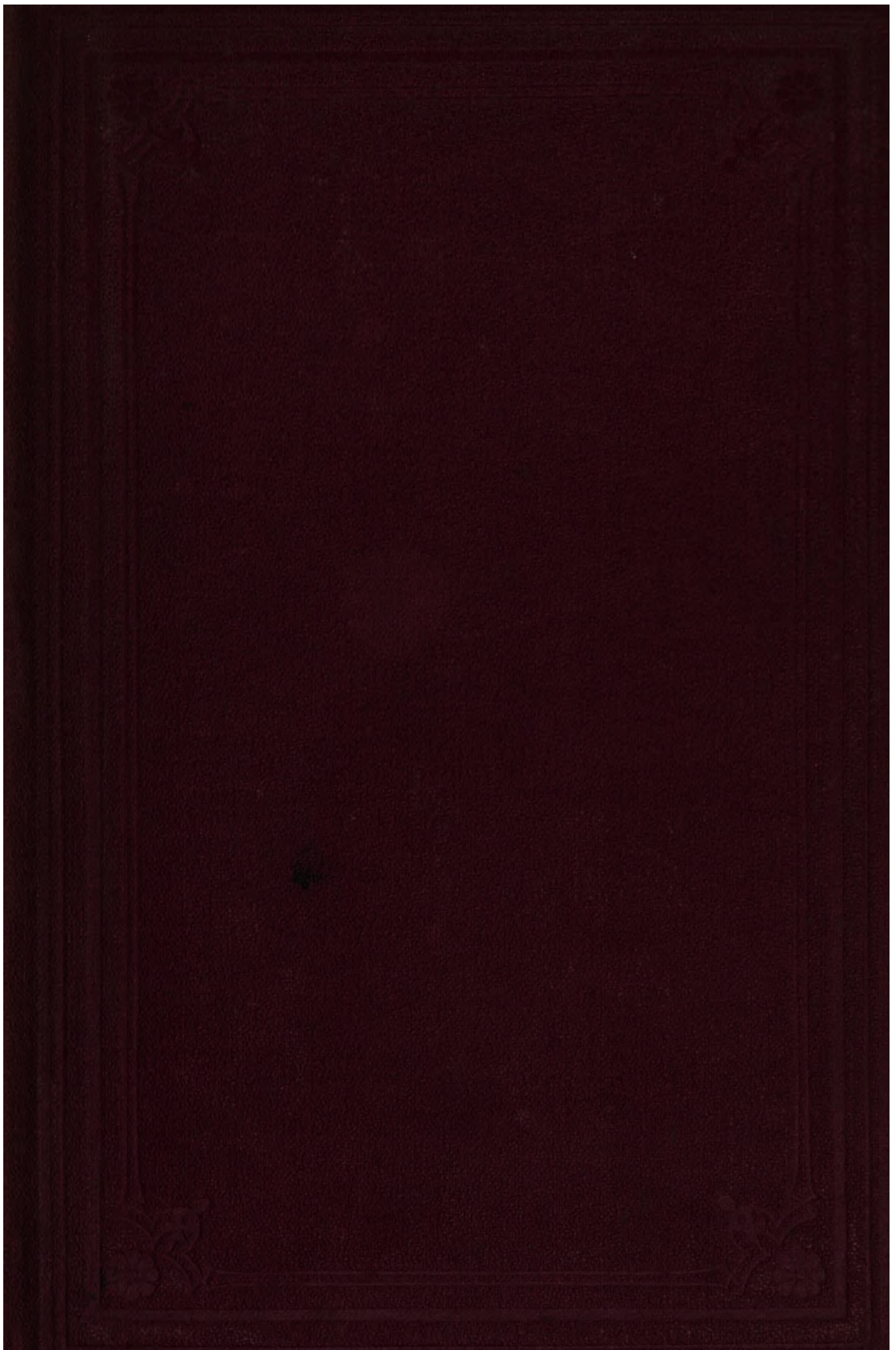
This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.

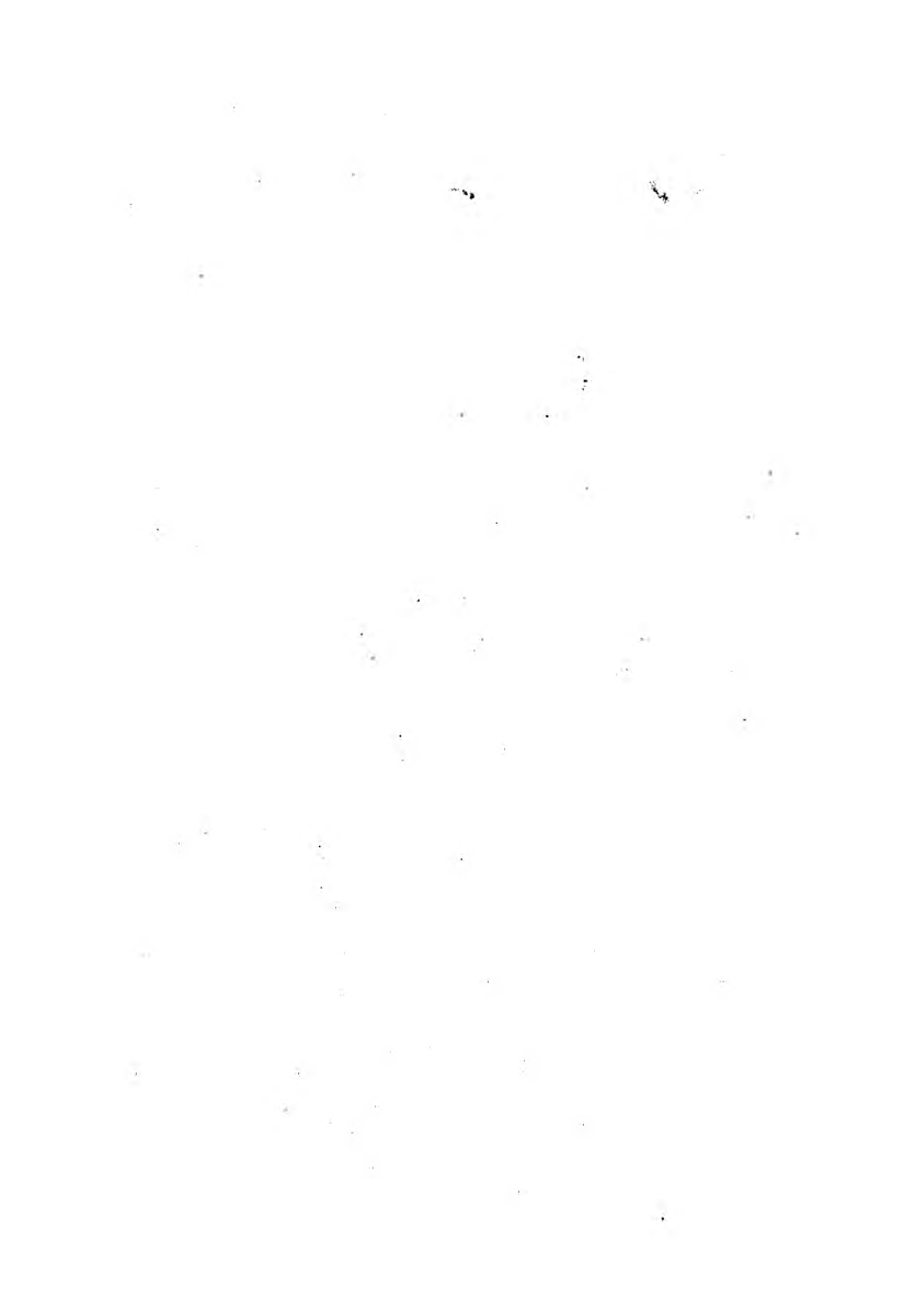




600085475Z







TRANSLATIONS

FROM

E U R I P I D E S.

BY

J. CARTWRIGHT, A.M.,

FORMERLY OF CHRIST'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

"Quot capitum vivunt, totidem studiorum
Millia. Me pedibus delectat claudere verba."

HOR. SAT., l. 2, s. 1, 28.



LONDON :

D. NUTT & Co., 270, STRAND.

293. f. 12.

PREFACE.

ÆSCHYLUS, the father of the Athenian Tragedy, properly so called, was born about 525 B.C., and fought with distinction, against the Persians, at Marathon, as well as Salamis. His genius was gloomy and severe. At twenty-five he first contended for the prize of Tragedy, but only obtained it at the riper age of forty-one, although he afterwards won it no less than twelve times. At fifty-seven he was defeated by Sophocles, and was so indignant at his failure that he retired to Syracuse, where he was accidentally killed at sixty-nine.

Sophocles was born when Æschylus was thirty years old. Although at first employed as a statesman and a commander, he left no trace in history, and died at ninety, not long before the death of Euripides, and the battle of Ægospotamos when the power of Athens fell before that of Sparta. Twenty of his plays obtained the crown, and no less than one hundred and thirteen

are attributed to him. Seven plays by him, and seven by Æschylus, are now in our hands.

Euripides, with whom we are at present chiefly concerned, wrote seventy-five pieces, of which nineteen have come down to us. He was born at Salamis on the very day of the great naval engagement.

The goddess Fame is sometimes accompanied by a little imp called Slander; and so whilst it is whispered that Æschylus was a sot and Sophocles a voluptuary, we are told that Euripides was an ill-conditioned haughty man, for the most part, living amidst storms of his own raising. Certain it is, that with all his success and popularity, which were unbounded, he was far from being a happy man. Sophocles was a constant "rock ahead," and the most intense rivalry and dislike prevailed between these two great men. Aristophanes, the comic writer, tormented him in a different way, and made him a perpetual butt for the shafts of his envenomed ridicule. Nor was this all. There were not wanting men of eminence, sticklers for the simple grandeur and dignity of Æschylus, who censured his deviation from existing rules, his small respect for the prevailing creeds, his introducing into his plays the softer emotions and the feelings and affairs of common life, and so on, just as Schlegel

and others have done in recent times. Lastly, there is reason to believe that the private as well as the public life of Euripides had its discomforts. He was married twice, but without retaining or acquiring any very high opinion of the gentler sex. One hopes, however, that the fault was, in a great measure, his own. Be this as it may, there certainly is a tinge of mysogyny in the writings of Euripides. Not, I think, that he is more severe on women than on men, or that he often fails in doing justice to the better qualities of woman; but that he is sometimes sour, like a man who has occasionally "come to grief," and can never entirely forget it. Tired out, probably, by persecution, and also by never-ending contest and excitement, he left Athens, at seventy, for the court of Archelaus in Macedonia; and at seventy-eight, after escaping from rivals, from critics, and from wives, was killed by the hounds of that monarch in the course of one of his solitary walks.

I confess that I am at a loss to know why any moderns should have gravely endorsed the censures of Aristophanes. It seems to me that Euripides hardly yields to Æschylus in grandeur of conception, or to Sophocles in grace and tenderness; and that his delineations of character, his views of life, and his superiority to many of

the prejudices of his age, give him some real advantages over both.

The development of dramatic genius at this period is, as has been well observed, a circumstance never paralleled before or since. There has been but one Homer in the world, and there has been but one Shakespear. Yet, after the Persian invasion, there arose, almost simultaneously, the three transcendent dramatic geniuses I have mentioned ; and many others scarcely if at all inferior, some of whom competed successfully with them, although their works are lost to us. Even when the *Medea* stood its trial, Euphorion, the son of Æschylus, was able to carry off the prize. A perfect flood of tragedy inundated Greece. At the Dionysiac festival, which took place at Athens in early spring, when the face of nature was all fresh and bright, each of the ten tribes was called upon to supply three plays of the first class, and one of a lighter and more festive kind. The chief men took upon them the expense, and vied with each other in the beauty and perfection of their arrangements. It is not probable that all this was literally carried out, but very many plays were certainly exhibited every year ; and thousands of people sat “from morn till dewy eve,” with untiring interest, and an almost religious zeal, bringing with them the

means of passing a great portion of the day in comfort and enjoyment.

The moral effect of all this upon the people could not but have been extremely great. They had no reading. The little that they knew, they knew from common discourse, from the lectures of philosophers, from the speeches of orators, and from observation and experience. But now a new source of pleasure and instruction was opened out to them, from which they drank with all the eagerness of a genuine thirst. Their habits were openly and avowedly licentious. But the Greek Tragedy rose, like some constellation in the gloomy sky, and all men turned to contemplate it. It seems to us a marvel that such a populace could enter so fully into the spirit of such compositions ; and it shows both how highly gifted by nature they must have been, and how vast an influence for good these representations must have exercised upon the public mind.

Thus far all is tolerably clear. But it requires some effort of the imagination to apprehend the full effect of the Attic Tragedy, as it was presented to the Athenians. Let us first consider the theatre itself. Placed at the foot of the Acropolis, it was, in part excavated from the rock, and in part constructed of solid masonry, and capable of holding more than 30,000 spec-

tators. It looked towards the south, over the plain on which Athens stood, and commanded a view of the harbour, and the sea, and of the far-famed hills around. Hymettus was on the right, and on the left the cliffs of Salamis. It was what is called hypæthral, or open to the sky, although perhaps an awning might be sometimes used. The rows of seats were semicircular, and rose above each other from the orchestra, which was at or near the bottom of the slope, and must have had some resemblance to the area of a common circus. In the centre of this was the altar of Dionysus. This altar was contrived "a double debt to pay," for the flute player and the prompter stood behind it, screened from the audience, and in front of the stage. The stage was on a level with the top of the altar, or Thymelè, and at a convenient distance from it. The choristers, about fifteen in number, stood below, and there were steps on each side, by which, when wanted to take a part in its direct business, they could go upon the stage. The stage had no great depth, and terminated in the "Scena," a wall on which appropriate paintings were hung, frequently representing the front of a palace with one state door in front, through which the chief actor alone had his "exits and his entrances," and one door on each side for the

inferior characters, the number of actors being limited to three. There is in the British Museum an Athenian coin representing the interior of this theatre. On it the seats are shown. Above the upper seats are some caverns, one of which was afterwards converted into a small temple. A fine colossal seated statue of Dionysus, now also in the British Museum, once stood on its entablature. Above rises the south wall of the Acropolis, and above all, the noble Parthenon and other buildings occupying the platform of the rock.

In reading the Greek plays, we should endeavour to bear these things in mind. It is by no means enough to be conscious of the richness, the grandeur, the power, the statuesque simplicity, the heroic dignity of the Athenian Tragedy; but we ought also to impress upon our minds the circumstances under which it first appeared before the public, the size and beauty of the theatre, its situation, the sky and scenery of Attica, the multitudes who listened with rapt attention, and the way in which the tragedies were put upon the stage and represented. The pleasure, the business, and the very religion of the Athenians, were all conducted in the open air, and it is probable that the one scene, the three performers, and the inexpensive chorus,

produced effects which all the cost, and care, and art, of more modern times have never rivalled.

It is, perhaps, a rash thing, at a time of life

— “when yellow leaves

Or few, or none, do hang upon the tree,”—

to reopen one's long-neglected Euripides, and translate, and publish. But it is more pleasant to translate than to read translations, which, after all, are but a kind of sad necessity. In what I have now done, my aim has been merely to present certain interesting plays in a popular English dress, without much reference to scholarship alone. I have adopted such readings as seemed best to answer my purpose, and have not even attempted rigidly to weigh and compare the authorities before me. I certainly have endeavoured to keep the general meaning of the text in view, and to render it as plainly and as agreeably as I could. With regard to any faults which I may have inadvertently committed, I can only entreat “my dear reader” to be “a little blind.”

M E D E A .

Characters.

MEDEA, Daughter of the King of Colchis.

JASON, a Thessalian Prince.

CREON, King of Corinth.

ÆGEUS, King of Athens.

NURSE.

TUTOR.

MESSENGER.

CHILDREN of Medea.

CHORUS of Female Citizens.

M E D E A.

Scene.—Front of a Palace in Corinth.

NURSE (*Prologue*).

AH! how I wish the vessel Argo ne'er
Had winged her flight toward the Colchian land,
Between the dark and rude Symplegades,—
That her pine timbers ne'er had been cut down
In Pelion's groves, and that she ne'er had caused
The stalwart hands of those most daring men
Who sought the golden fleece for Pelias,
To strain the oar.—Medea, whom I serve,
Would never then have sought th' Iolchian tow'rs, 10
Inflamed by Jason's love: nor, after that,
Having persuaded the Peliádes
To kill their father, have inhabited
This land of Corinth, with her spouse and sons,
Pleasing, indeed, the people amongst whom
She came, and seconding all Jason's plans,
For 'tis, indeed, the best security
When woman never differs from her lord.
Now enmity prevails, what once was dear
Is dear no more, for Jason, quitting all,
My mistress, and his offspring, finds delight 20
In an alliance with the royal house,

Having espoused the daughter of the king.
Meanwhile, Medea, wretched and disgraced,
Recalls their vows, and right hands interchanged
In holiest pledge; and bids the Gods observe
What sort of recompense she has obtained.
Fasting she lies, her frame subdued by grief,
On finding that she is so deeply wronged,
And wears each ling'ring hour away in tears.
Her eye she raises not, nor lifts her face 30
Up from the ground.— Impassive as the rock,
Or ocean-wave, she disregards each word
Of consolation from her various friends;
Or, should she chance to turn her snowy neck,
It is but to lament, all to herself,
Her own dear father, and the land and home,
Which she forsook, that she might follow one
Who now, alas! looks on her with disdain.
At length th' unhappy lady has been taught,
By harsh calamity, how wise it is 40
Not to abandon one's paternal soil.
Her children she detests, and has no joy
In looking on them, and I greatly fear
She may devise some ill. Her mind is stern,
And will not tamely bear with injury.
I know her, and my knowledge makes me dread
Lest she should plunge the sword into her heart,
Or entering the palace secretly
Where stands the couch of the new married pair,
Destroy the princess and her paramour, 50
And thus proceed to greater horrors still.

Her wrath is terrible, nor will the man
 Who dares engage in enmity with her
 Find any cause to boast of victory.—
 But here the children come, fresh from their games,
 And wholly careless of their mother's grief,
 For youth loves not to mourn.—

NURSE. TUTOR.

TUTOR.

(Coming on with the boys.)

Thou old domestic of Medea's house,
 Why dost thou stand all solitary here,
 Before the gate, lamenting to thyself? 60
 How can our mistress spare thy services?

NURSE.

O ancient governor of Jason's sons,
 To faithful servants, each calamity
 That falls upon their masters causes pain,
 And I had got to such a pitch of grief,
 That a desire possessed me to come here,
 And to proclaim to earth and sky, the fate
 Of my poor mistress.—

TUTOR.

Does she not, e'en yet,
 Sad as she is, relax in her complaints? 70

NURSE.

I pity thee, the mischief is, as yet,
 In infancy. The worst is still to come.

TUTOR.

O foolish woman!—if it be allowed
To speak thus of Medea,—she knows nought
Of the calamity that now impends.

NURSE.

Old man, what is it? scruple not to tell.

TUTOR.

O nothing.—I repent of what I said.

NURSE.

I pray thee, by thy beard, have no reserve
With me, thy fellow servant. On these points,
Thou may'st rely upon my secrecy.

80

TUTOR.

I heard one say, tho' seeming not to hear,
As I approached the tables where resort
The elders, by Piréne's sacred fount,
That Creon, governor of these domains,
Purposed, ere long, to banish the two boys
From Corinth, with their mother. I know not
If this be true, but hope it is not so.

NURSE.

Think'st thou that Jason will endure to see
His sons thus injured, tho' he entertain
A grudge against their mother?

90

TUTOR.

Ancient ties

Are oft abandoned for the sake of new.—
He is no longer friendly to this house.

NURSE.

All then is lost, if fresh disasters come
Before the former ones have run their course.

MEDEA.

17

TUTOR.

But, as for thee, keep silence. 'Tis no time
For her to learn such tidings. Hold thy peace.

NURSE.

You hear, O children, what your father is,—
And what he is to you.—I curse him not,—
He is my master,—yet, assuredly,
He shows himself unfaithful to his own.

TUTOR.

And what man does not? Hast thou yet to learn
That every one regards himself far more
Than he regards his neighbour, it may be
With reason, or, it may be, but to serve 100
Some private purpose.—Jason may dislike
These sons of his because of his new wife.

NURSE.

Go in, dear boys, and all will yet be well.
And thou, as far as may be in thy power
Keep them apart, and let them not come near
Their irritated mother, for, just now
I saw her glare upon them with an eye
That boded mischief; and she will not cease,
I am convinced, till some one is struck down.—
May she assail her foes and not her friends! 110

MEDEA (*within*).

Woe, woe, is me! my sorrows weigh me down,—
How can I end this hapless life of mine?

NURSE.

Thus is it, dearest children! her full heart
Begins to move,—her rage is gathering.

C

Enter, in haste, within the palace walls,—
 Come not into her sight,—approach her not,—
 And guard against the savage impulses
 Of that embitter'd, self-concentred mind.
 Go now, retreat, as quickly as you may.—
 'Tis evident that the dark cloud of woe, 120
 So long collecting, presently will burst
 With fearful violence. What will that soul,
 So great and strong, so difficult to calm,
 So stung by injuries, then dare to do?
 (*Tutor and children go in through one of the side doors.*)

MEDEA (*within*).

Alas! alas! alas! I have endured
 Things that may well be mourned. Accursed brood
 Of an unhappy mother, may ye fall
 With your own sire, and all the house go down.

NURSE.

Woe, too, to me! for I am in distress.
 But how are thy young boys accomplices 130
 In Jason's fault? Why vent thy rage on them?
 Alas, my children, how I fear for you!
 Stern is the will of tyrants; if restrained
 In trifles, tho' supreme in all besides,
 How hard it is to pacify their wrath!
 It is the best to lead a humbler life.—
 Be it my fate, if not in splendour's lap,
 To end my days in calm security.
 Fine things are said in praise of modesty,
 And moderation suits the state of man. 140
 Th' excessive influx of prosperity

Yields to mankind no real benefit ;
 But opens out a way, should fortune turn,
 For evils greater than they might have been.

CHORUS.

Th' unhappy Colchian lady's voice and cries
 Have come to me ; is she not tranquil yet ?
 Tell me, thou aged servant,—for I heard
 Shrieks from the inner room, and find no joy
 In the distresses of this family.—
 Painful and sad events are taking place. 150

NURSE.

It is no more a family, all that
 Is passed away,—he couches on the bed
 Of royalty, and she wears out her life
 In yon apartment, and pays no regard
 To aught her friends can say.

MEDEA (*within*).

Alas ! alas !

I would that heav'n's own lightning might flash thro'
 This head of mine ! why should I longer live ?
 Woe ! woe ! Ah, might I now repose in death,
 And leave this hated scene !

CHORUS.

O Jupiter,
 O earth, O light, ye hear what dismal strains 160
 The wretched wife is uttering to herself !—
 Why, hapless lady, should a mad regret
 For this desertion, urge thee to thy fate ?

O speak not thus. What if thy husband wills
 Another marriage,—be not so enraged ;
 For thine avenger shall be Jove himself.
 Then mourn not with such self-abandonment.

MEDEA (*within*).

Great Themis and Diana—venerate—
 See what I suffer ! after having bound
 My execrable husband by the vows 170
 Of sacred wedlock. Him and his young bride,
 Who have presumed to cast this slight on me,
 I fain would see, within the palace walls
 Torn limb from limb.—My father, and my home,
 Is it for this, that, having stained my hands
 With my own brother's blood, I fled from you ?

NURSE.

Hear ye her words ? and how she calls upon
 Themis, and Jupiter, whom men invoke
 When oaths are violated. It seems not
 As if our mistress were at all disposed 180
 To check the wild indulgence of her rage.

CHORUS.

How soon would she come out to welcome us,
 And gladly listen to the words we speak,
 Were her deep wrath and wilfulness repressed !
 But let us ever seek to benefit
 Our friends.—Away, good nurse, and bring her forth,
 Tell her what we have said, and lose no time,
 Lest she do injury to those within.—
 This fatal passion seems to gain on her.

MEDEA.

21

NURSE.

I will go to her—but I greatly doubt 190
Whether my mistress will attend to me.
Still, my poor services ye may command,—
Tho' like a lioness, with new-born cubs,
She scowls on her attendants, when they come
Into her presence, to converse with her.—

I say, 'twas folly in our ancestors,
Rather than wisdom, to devise sweet songs,
The charm of human life, for marriage feasts,
And for gay banquets, whilst no man has found
The means of calming down, by music's art, 200
By voice, and lyre with its resounding chords,
All those vindictive feelings of mankind
From which dark murder, and a host of ills
Come upon houses. 'Twere indeed a gain
To snatch poor mortals from such woes as these.
But when glad plenty reigns, and all is joy,
Why raise the song in vain? A rich repast
Is of itself enough delight for men.

CHORUS.

I hear the melancholy sounds of grief.—
Shrilly she calls for vengeance upon him, 210
The faithless spouse, by whom she is betrayed,
And, suffering, turns to Themis, born of Jove,
Who guards men's vows, and who conducted her
To distant Greece, across the midnight sea,
And thro' its intricate and briny straits.

MEDEA.

Ladies of Corinth! I come out to you,

Lest you should blame me—for I have known men
 Great in retirement and public life,
 And others blamed for timid backwardness.
 There is no fairness in the eyes of those 220
 Who, without caring to explore the heart,
 Hate at first sight, in no respect aggrieved.
 A stranger ought to take the utmost care
 To please the townsmen ; and I needs must blame
 The citizen himself, who, from selfwill,
 And folly, makes himself unpopular.—
 As for myself, the unexpected blow
 Inflicted on me, has upset my mind.
 Friends, I am lost ! I feel no love of life,—
 And wish to die. He who was once my all, 230
 Has, as you know, turned out the worst of men.
 Of all the beings having life and sense
 We women are the most unfortunate,
 Who first, with all the dowry we can raise,
 Must buy ourselves a husband, and a lord
 With pow'r to rule. And this is not the worst.
 It is a hazard whether we obtain
 A good man or a bad. For women, change
 Is judged unseemly, and the law allows
 No remedy. It needs a prophetess 240
 When one adopts new customs and new rules,
 Without due knowledge from some private source,
 To understand a husband's character.
 Should we do well, and should he stay at home,
 Imposing no undue restraints on life,
 'Tis enviable then,—if otherwise,

'Tis best to die.—Again, the man, if e'er
 Domestic intercourse begins to pall,
 May leave the house and ease his weariness,
 Or with some friend or else in company, 250
 Whilst we have no one else on whom to look.
 They say of us, we lead an easy life
 In privacy, whilst they go forth to war.
 They judge unwisely. I would rather stand
 Three times in battle's front than bear one child.
 But the same rule holds not with you and me,
 You have your city, and your fathers' homes,
 And all life's pleasures, and society ;
 Whilst I, deserted and disconsolate,
 Brought from a foreign land, am held in scorn, 260
 And have no mother,—brother,—relative,—
 With whom to find a refuge in distress.
 So much, however, I would ask of you,
 If any way, or plan should be found out
 Of just retaliation for these ills,—
 On Creon who assented, and the girl
 Whom Jason has espoused, be silent all.
 Woman, in some respects, is full of fear,
 Unapt for deeds of daring, or the sword ;
 But there is nought more stern and fierce of mind 270
 Than woman, wronged as to her marriage bed.

CHORUS,

We will do this, Medea, for with right,
 Thou wilt avenge thyself. I wonder not
 To hear thee mourn thy fate. But now I see

Creon, the ruler of this land approach,
With the sad tidings of his late decree.

CREON AND MEDEA.

CREON.

I order thee, Medea, dark and stern,
And angry with thy husband, to go forth
An exile from this country, and to take
Thy two sons with thee, and to linger not. 280
'Tis my command, and I will not return
To my own house till I have driven thee
Beyond the confines of the land I rule.

MEDEA.

Alas for me! for I am wholly lost,—
My foes bear down on me with flowing sail,
And no escape from woe presents itself.
Yet, injured as I am, I ask thee this,
Why, Creon, dost thou urge my banishment?

CREON.

I fear thee—'tis in vain to hide the thought—
Lest thou shouldst do my child a fatal wrong. 290
And many things contribute to my fear,—
Thou art intelligent, and well dost know
How to avenge thyself. Thou art enraged
At being banished from thy husband's bed;
And I have heard, as the report prevails,
That thou hast threatened to inflict some ill

On me, and on the bridegroom and his bride.
 I will take due precautions against this.
 'Tis better to incur thy hatred now,
 Than to relent, and then have cause to mourn. 300

MEDEA.

Creon! alas! not once, but oft, has fame
 Done me foul wrong, and wrought me num'rous woes.
 No one, who would be thought a prudent man,
 Must educate his children over well,
 For, not to speak of ev'ry idle fault
 That may be found, their brother citizens
 Will look on them with envy and dislike.
 He who brings wisdom's novelties before
 The ignorant, appears to them a fool,
 And not the wise man that he really is, 310
 Whilst he who gets a better name than some
 Who plume themselves on their accomplishments,
 Will still be deemed a nuisance in the town.
 In this position I myself am placed.
 For, being wise, some persons envy me,
 And some oppose. Yet do I not advance
 Extravagant pretensions. Fear me not
 No grievance need'st thou apprehend from me.
 I am in no condition, if I wished,
 To do an injury to royalty. 320
 In what hast thou done any wrong to me?
 Thy daughter thou hast given in wedlock, as
 Thy mind suggested. True, I hate my spouse,
 But in all this thou hast done prudently,—
 I own it, nor repine at thy success.

Go on and prosper ; but permit me still
To dwell at Corinth. Injured as I am,
I will submit to a superior pow'r.

CREON.

Thou speakest smoothly ; yet, within my mind
There lurks a fear of some dark, deep design. 330
Less than before do I confide in thee.
The woman quick in temper, or the man,
Is easier to guard against than one
Crafty and taciturn. Depart at once,
With no more words. 'Tis fixed. Thou hast no art
By which thou may'st remain against my will.

MEDEA.

Here at thy knees, and for thy daughter's sake,
I pray thee—

CREON.

Cease ! thou only wastest words.
I shall not swerve.

MEDEA.

And wilt thou drive me out,
Without respect for these my prayers ?

CREON.

I will. 340

I do not love thee more than mine own house.

MEDEA.

My country ! how I now remember thee !

CREON.

Mine, too, I hold in greater love than aught
Except my offspring.

MEDEA.

27

MEDEA.

Ah! how many ills
Do such attachments bring upon mankind!

CREON.

That is, I think, as fortune may ordain.

MEDEA.

Great Jove! let not the cause of all my grief
Escape thy scrutiny!

CREON.

Ill judging dame!
Retire, and free me from these troubles. Hence!

MEDEA.

Troubles, indeed! Are we not troubled too? 350

CREON.

Ere long shalt thou be taken hence by force.

MEDEA.

Creon! I supplicate thee, do not this.

CREON.

Woman! it seems disturbance is thy aim.

MEDEA.

No! I will leave.—It is not this I ask.

CREON.

Why then persist, and why delay thy flight?

MEDEA.

Let me remain but this one single day,
To think where we must fly, and how to find
A refuge for my boys, since their own sire
Leaves these his children unprovided for.
I think not of myself, if we must go,
But weep for them in their calamity.

360

CREON.

I have but little of the tyrant's will :
 My tenderness has often wrought me harm.
 So now, O lady, tho' I feel I err,
 Thou shalt obtain thy wish. But I declare,
 That if th' approaching lamp of day shall find
 Thee and thy children still within the bounds
 Of this my realm, thou diest, and my word
 Is one that shall not fail. If thou wilt stay,
 Stay till the morn, for in so short a time 370
 Thou hardly canst effect the crime I dread.
 (*Creon retires.*)

CHORUS.

Unhappy Lady ! how we feel for thee !
 Where wilt thou turn ? alas ! alas ! what home
 What refuge, or what land, wilt thou find out
 To shelter thee ? How has some Deity
 Launched thee, Medea ! on this stormy sea !

MEDEA (*alone*).

On all sides things go ill, who can deny ?
 But, trust me, it shall not be always so.
 Before the newly married pair is grief,
 And grief besides for all their relatives. 380
 Suppose ye I would e'er have fawned on him,
 But for some gain, or to work out some plot ?
 Or looked on him, or touched him with my hands ?
 To such a pitch of weakness has he come
 That, when he might have traversed all my schemes,
 And cast me forth, he gives me one whole day,—

And, in that day, three of my foes shall die,—
Creon, his daughter, and my worthless spouse.
But, though I see before me many ways
Of slaying them, I know not which to take,— 390
Whether to give the palace to the flames—
Or, going to their chamber privately,
Drive my well-sharpened blade into each heart.
Yet one thing gives me pause. Should I be seen
Ent'ring the house, as if clandestinely,
I shall be slain, and laughed at by my foes.
Best is the scheme I am most fitted for,
To take them off by poison.—Be it so,
Suppose them dead,—what state will take me in?
Who, off'ring an asylum and a home, 400
Will save me from destruction?—None! ah, none!
Waiting then yet a little, if, perchance,
Some tow'r of refuge may rise up for me,
In stealth and silence will I do this deed.
Should any unforeseen mischance occur,
Myself, with sword in hand, will stab them all
Though I must die.—My courage shall not fail.
By Hecaté, the mistress whom I serve
With utmost zeal,—my patroness,—whose shrine
Stands on yon hearth, not one of those who wound 410
This heart shall do so with impunity.
Bitter to them and grievous will I make
These nuptials, and the contract, and my flight.
Come then, Medea! spare not of the art
Thou art so famous for,—contrive and plot,
And dare extremities. Now is the time

For self-possession. See what thou hast borne.
 Ah! is it fit that thou shouldst be the sport
 Of Sisyphus' race! when Jason weds,—
 Thou! of the noble lineage of the Sun, 420
 Potent in knowledge, and a woman too,—
 Weak like the rest, indeed, in other things,
 But strong and subtle in contriving ill.

CHORUS.

Back flows the source of every sacred stream,
 And justice, like all else, is turned aside.
 Men's counsels are deceitful, and the faith
 E'en of the Gods is scorned. But future fame
 Will one day vindicate our character,
 And give due honour to the female race,—
 It will no longer bear an ill report. 430
 The Muses soon will leave their ancient strains
 And cease to dwell on woman's faithlessness.
 Apollo, leader of all harmony,
 Left not the heavenly music of the lyre
 In female hands, for then it might have raised
 Its voice, in turn, against the sons of men.
 And venerable eld has much to tell
 Both of the history of them and us.
 But thou, Medea, with a frenzied heart
 Hast sailed away from thy paternal home, 440
 Past those twin ocean rocks, and dwellest now
 On a strange shore,—unhappy, and thy bed
 It is deserted, and a fugitive
 Art thou thrust forth, dishonoured from the land.
 The sanctity of oaths is lost, and shame
 No longer rests in Greece—but seeks the skies.
 For thee, thrice wretched, no domestic shrine

Offers a refuge in thy deep distress,—
And in thy place another mistress reigns.

JASON AND MEDEA.

JASON.

Not for the first time now, but frequently, 450
Have I regarded inconsiderate rage
As an unmingled evil. In thy case,
When it was in thy power to enjoy
This land and palace, by submitting to
The will of those in office, thou must needs
Lose all by uttering intemp'rate words.
For this I care but little. If thou wilt,
Say still that Jason is the worst of men :
But, for reviling the authorities,
Deem it all gain that the sole punishment 460
Is exile. As for me, I always tried
To soothe the royal family, and wished
That they would suffer thee to stay with us.
Yet from thy folly thou wilt not desist,
Ever abusing those who govern here,
And therefore art thou driven from the land.
Yet, still, unalienated by this wrong,
I hither come, with so much care for thee,
That I will not permit thee to go hence,
With our two children, unattended to. 470
Thou shalt want nothing. Exile brings with it
Hardships enough, and though thou hatest me,
I never can be brought to wish thee ill.

MEDEA.

Thou basest of the base!—for I can find
 No stronger term for thy unmanliness,
 Comest thou here, most odious of mankind?—
 Comest thou here? It is not bravery,—
 It is not proper feeling,—having wronged
 A wife, to stand and look her in the face.
 'Tis utter shamelessness,—the vilest blot 480
 In a man's character—and yet—'tis well—
 For speaking to thee, I shall ease my mind,
 And thou wilt writhe at what thou needs must hear.
 From the beginning will I tell my tale.—
 I saved thee, as those Grecians are aware,
 Who went on board the Argo, in thy train,
 When ye were sent to sow that deadly crop,
 With untamed bulls, whose nostrils darted flame.
 And having slain the dragon set to watch,
 And guard the golden fleece within its coils, 490
 'Twas I held out to thee the beacon light.—
 And then, betraying my own father's house,
 I came with thee to where high Pelion
 Looks on Iólchos. I was far more kind
 Than prudent, and I killéd Pelias
 As it is worst to die, e'en by the hands
 Of his own daughters. So I set thee free.
 And now, thou worst of men, when all is done,
 Thou dost betray me, and take to thyself
 Another wife, tho' children have been born. 500
 Had I been childless still, thou might'st have had
 Some slight excuse for seeking such a match.

But faith in oaths is gone. I do not know
 Whether thou deemest that the same Gods reign
 Who reignéd then, or that new rules are laid
 Upon mankind ; but this thou must concede,
 That thou hast broken all thy vows to me.
 Ah ! that right hand which thou so oft hast clasped !
 And knees !—how cruelly am I betrayed
 By a vile husband, and cut off from hope ! 510
 Yet, stay ! I will address thee as a friend,
 Not that I hope for any good from thee,
 For, being questioned, thou will seem still worse.
 Now, whither shall I turn ? Shall I go back
 To my own country, and my father's house,
 Which I abandoned—sacrificed—for thee ?
 Or to the daughters of old Pelias ?
 Welcome should I, the murd'ress of their sire,
 Appear to them !—Thus, then, do matters stand.
 I am at enmity with former friends, 520
 Those whom I had no reason to displease
 Have I made enemies by serving thee.
 And thou, forsooth, in recompense for this,
 Thou, didst distinguish me o'er all the maids
 Of Greece, and so I was espoused to thee,
 Th' admired and the true ! whom I must leave,
 Unhappy that I am ! and quit the land,
 A friendless exile, with my two poor boys.
 Oh ! shame upon the newly married man
 Who lets his children go forth destitute, 530
 And her who saved him. Why, great Jupiter,
 Hast thou set marks upon the worthless gold

Which all mankind may trace, whilst there appears
No sign by which a villain may be known?

CHORUS.

How dread the wrath, and how implacable,
When friend with friend contends, in enmity!

JASON.

I must not, as it seems, be backward, now
To speak, but like the pilot of a ship
Who trims his sails with nicest management,
Evade the storm of thy loquacity. 540
It seems to me, altho' thou boastest thus
Of all thy favours, that of Gods and men
Venus alone was guardian of my voyage.
Thou hast a subtle mind,—but to declare
How Cupid, with his darts which none resist,
Forced thee to rescue me in my distress
Were but invidious. I will not urge
This theme too far. It certainly was well
That thou didst thus assist,—but how much more
Hast thou derived of benefit than loss, 550
In so preserving me!—and first because
Instead of dwelling in a barb'rous land,
Thou art in Greece—and justice shines on thee,
And law protects, and not rude force alone.
The Greeks all know thy fine ability,—
Thou hast renown. But hadst thou still remained
In that remoter district of the earth,
No mention would have e'er been made of thee.—
Little care I for gold within my house

Or minstrelsy, as sweet as Orpheus' song, 560
 Unless I get my share of glory too.
 Of my own actions I have said thus much,
 For thou thyself provoked'st the dispute.
 As to my royal nuptials, with which
 Thou hast reproached me, I shall briefly show
 That I have acted well and prudently,
 And also kindly with respect to thee,
 And my two sons—but be not violent.
 Having come here from that Iólchian land,
 With many difficulties in my path, 570
 What better scheme could I have hit upon,
 A stranger as I was, than marrying
 The daughter of the King? not as thou say'st—
 Because I had satiety of thee,
 Or longed to take to me a younger wife,
 And to possess a larger family,—
 I have enough, I feel no discontent,—
 But, which is most important, that we might
 Subsist in comfort, and not come to want,
 For ev'ry friend avoids the needy man. 580
 'Twas that I might be able to bring up
 Our children as befits my state in life,
 By giving brothers to these sons of thine,
 On equal terms, and, by uniting all,
 Achieve success. Thou needest no more sons,
 And I may help the sons we have, by those
 I shall obtain. Have I determined ill?
 Thou wouldst not say so, wert thou not enraged
 At thy own loss; but ye have come to this

And so elaborate. A single word
 Will overthrow thee. Hadst thou not been false
 Thou wouldst have surely sought for my consent 610
 Ere entering on this marriage, and not tried
 To keep the matter secret from thy friends.

JASON.

I had been well supported in my plans
 If I had told thee of them.—Even now
 Thou canst not still the raging of thy heart.

MEDEA.

This stayed thee not,—thou wouldest not that I
 Should longer mar thy prospects in the world.

JASON.

Be well assured, I did not raise myself
 To this position for Créusa's sake,
 But, as I said before, in hope to save 620
 Thee, and in order that I might bring up
 A noble stock, together with thy sons
 To shelter and to prop this house of mine.

MEDEA.

Ah! may no bitter, prosp'rous life be mine,
 And no success that only wounds the heart!

JASON.

Would'st thou pray better, and appear more wise—
 Let no good thing seem bitter to thy taste,
 Nor happiness assume misfortune's garb.

MEDEA.

Thou may'st insult, thou knowest where to turn,
 But I, cast off by all, must quit the land. 630

MEDEA.

JASON.

'Tis thine own choice— thou hast thyself to blame.

MEDEA.

How! have I married, and deserted thee?

JASON.

Thou hast laid curses on the royal house.

MEDEA.

To thine own house, then, have I done the same.

JASON.

I will no longer stay to bandy words,
 But if thou wantest any gold from me,
 For thee, and for thy sons, to aid thy flight,
 Say so. To give with an unsparing hand,
 I am prepared, and also to supply
 Credentials for thee to my friends abroad, 640
 Who will receive thee well. Should'st thou refuse,
 'Twill be mere folly. If thou canst control
 Thine indignation, 'twill be best for thee.

MEDEA.

I scorn the help of all those friends of thine;
 Nought will I take. Afford no aid to me.
 The wicked man's assistance is no gain.

JASON.

Then do I call the Gods to witness this,
 That I am ready to supply to thee,
 And to thy sons, whatever ye may need.
 But kindness moves thee not. With pride 650
 Thou dost repel thy friends. The worse for thee!

MEDEA.

Leave me! Impatiently thou longest for
 Thy newly married wife. Thou hast staid long
 From her apartment. Marry! By God's will
 It is a marriage that thou shalt repent.

(Jason retires.)

CHORUS.

Impetuous love! where'er it finds access,
 Yields neither fame nor happiness to men :
 Should Venus gently come, no Deity
 Sheds so benign an influence on earth.
 O Goddess! aim not from thy golden bow 660
 The unerring shafts of fierce desire at me,
 But may that fairest gift of Providence,
 An equal mind, sustain me! Queen of love!
 All potent Queen! chill not my faculties
 With the rude bickering and endless strife
 Of vague alliances, but favouring
 Each peaceful marriage, guide and arbitrate.
 My native land! my home! O may I ne'er
 Become an exile, and consume my life
 In dreary indigence and hopeless pain. 670
 Ere that day comes, may I be tamed by death.
 There is no heavier calamity
 Than to be banished from one's fatherland.
 Our eyes have seen, we have not merely heard,
 That neither Corinth, nor one single friend
 Has pitied thee in thy calamities.
 May that man perish without sympathy,
 Who, having once unlocked the pure recess

Of the heart's sanctuary, can forget.*
 May no such man be called a friend of mine. 680

ÆGEUS AND MEDEA.

ÆGEUS.

Medea! hail! for no one knows a term
 More fair than this with which to greet his friends.

MEDEA.

Hail to thee too, O Ægeus! joy to thee!
 Son of the wise Pandiön! from what land
 Hast thou now turned thy steps to wander here?

ÆGEUS.

I come from great Apollo's ancient shrine.

MEDEA.

Why didst thou visit that prophetic spot,
 The centre of the earth?

ÆGEUS.

I went to find
 If I might yet perpetuate my race.

MEDEA.

Ah! art thou leading still a childless life? 690

ÆGEUS.

'Tis so! by heav'n's decree I have no child.

* — “ Be wise: not easily forgiven
 Are those who setting wide the doors that bar
 The secret bridal chambers of the heart,
 Let in the day.’ ”

MEDEA.

41

MEDEA.

Art thou then married, or without a wife ?

ÆGEUS.

I am no stranger to the nuptial yoke.

MEDEA.

And what said Phœbus to thee on this head ?

ÆGEUS.

Words far too subtle for the ears of men.

MEDEA.

I would fain know the oracle's response.

ÆGEUS.

Thou shalt,—it needs a cunning mind like thine.

MEDEA.

What was it then, if it be fair to ask ?

ÆGEUS.

He me bade not untie the wine-skin's foot—

MEDEA.

Ere doing what ? or visiting what place ?

700

ÆGEUS.

Ere I returned to my own father's house.

MEDEA.

But with what object hast thou sought these shores ?

ÆGEUS.

There is one Pittheus, the Trœzenian King,—

MEDEA.

The worthy son of Pelops, as I hear.

ÆGEUS.

To him would I submit the God's response.

MEDEA.

Well ! he is sage, and fit for such a task.

MEDEA.

ÆGEUS.

And dearest, too, of all my friends in arms.

MEDEA.

I wish thee good success, and that thou may'st
Attain thine ends.

ÆGEUS.

But wherefore has thine eye
Lost all its brightness, and thy face its bloom? 710

MEDEA.

Ægeus! my husband is the worst of men.

ÆGEUS.

How! tell me truly thine uneasiness.

MEDEA.

Jason has wronged me, and without a cause.

ÆGEUS.

In what, I pray? tell me more certainly.

MEDEA.

Another wife has superseded me.

ÆGEUS.

Ah! has he dared to do so a base a deed?

MEDEA.

It is too true, and I am put to shame.

ÆGEUS.

Was it from love? or that he hated thee?

MEDEA.

It was from love. To me he is untrue.

ÆGEUS.

Then let him go, since he is so depraved. 720

MEDEA.

He sought alliance with the royal house.

MEDEA.

43

ÆGEUS.

Who led him on? Pursue thy narrative.

MEDEA.

Creon, who governs this Corinthian land.

ÆGEUS.

Lady! thou hast, indeed, just cause of grief.

MEDEA.

I am undone! and then, besides all this,
I am an exile.

ÆGEUS.

Exiled? and by whom?

MEDEA.

Creon.—He drives me from Corinthia.

ÆGEUS.

Does Jason suffer it? It is not well.

MEDEA.

Not so expressly—yet he suffers it.

But by thy beard, and by thy knees—I pray,

730

And make myself thy humble suppliant—

Have pity on me, look on my distress,

And do not see me turned out destitute;

But grant me refuge in thy land and home.

So, by the aid of heaven, will thy desire

Of offspring be fulfilled, and life be blest.

Thou knowest not what a discovery

Thou hast made here. I have medicaments

By means of which I soon can make to cease

All thy regrets, and give thee family.

740

ÆGEUS.

For many reasons I am much inclined

To grant to thee, fair lady, thy request :
 First for the Gods, then for the sons of whom
 Thou giv'st me promise, as, in this respect,
 I felt myself almost devoid of hope.
 Thus I decide, if thou wilt come to me,
 I will endeavour to receive thee well.
 Justice I love,—but, lady, let me say,
 I cannot undertake to lead thee hence.
 Shouldst thou present thyself at my abode 750
 Thou shalt be safe. I will not give thee up.
 Quit, then, this country, of thine own accord.
 Even by strangers I would not be blamed.

MEDEA.

So be it! Had I but some pledge of this,
 I should have all I can expect from thee.

ÆGEUS.

Dost thou not trust me? what disturbs thee now?

MEDEA.

I trust, indeed, but Pelias' house,
 And that of Creon, are mine enemies,
 And, wert thou bound by oaths, thou wouldst not yield
 To those who now expel me from the state; 760
 But only promising, without the Gods,
 Thou might'st become their friend, and so accede
 To their proposals, for my cause is weak,
 Whilst they are rich, and dwell in palaces.

ÆGEUS.

Lady! discretion is in all thy words,
 And since thou deem'st it right, I will consent.
 This plan is certainly the best for me,

As giving me a pretext with thy foes ;
For thee, too, 'tis the safest. Name thy Gods.

MEDEA.

Swear by the earth's expanse, and by the Sun, 770
My father's father, and then add to them
The whole assemblage of the Deities.

ÆGEUS.

What act to do ? or what to leave undone ?

MEDEA.

Never to drive me out from thy domains ;
Nor ever, whilst thou liv'st, should any foe
Seek to recapture me, give thy consent.

ÆGEUS.

By earth, I swear, and by yon sacred light,
And ev'ry deity, to keep all this.

MEDEA.

Enough. But shouldst thou fail in this thy vow,
What penalty wouldst thou endure ?

ÆGEUS.

The woes 780

Which fall upon the vilest.

MEDEA.

Go in peace !

And I, when I have done what I propose,
And got what I desire, with utmost speed
Will on to Athens. So far all is well.

CHORUS.

And may that guiding power, Maia's son,
Attend thee thither, and may'st thou effect

That which thou hast in view! Thy character
Is stamped by genuine nobility.

(*Ægeus retires.*)

MEDEA (*alone*).

Jove, great and righteous! and thou, beaming Sun!
Now shall I easily beat down my foes: 790
My path lies straight. There is a hope at last
That I shall get redress. This man has come
Just at the time when I most needed help,
To be a rock for me in my distress,
By which to moor my bark, when I attain
Minerva's city, and her battlements.
But now will I communicate to you
All my designs. Look not for words of joy.
Some one of my domestics will I send
To Jason, to request his presence here, 800
And I will speak to him in soothing terms,
As if I deemed that all had been well done,
And all was right, and properly contrived,
And will intreat that the two boys may stay.
Not that I mean to leave my children here,
A scorn to foes, and in a hostile land,
But to destroy the daughter of the King.
I will dispatch them, bearing in their hands,
A wreath inlaid with gold, and a fair robe,
As presents. Should she put these ornaments 810
Upon her she will die—die wretchedly,—
And so will all who touch her with their hands,
In such fell poisons will I steep my gifts.

And here I pause, for I lament the deed
 Which it remains for me to execute,—
 I will destroy my sons, and none shall save.
 Thus, having smitten down false Jason's house,
 I will depart—the murd'ress of my boys—
 The perpetrator of unheard-of crime.
 Friends! to be wronged, and held in ridicule, 820
 Surpasses human patience. For the rest,
 Why should I live? I have no land or home,—
 No place of refuge from calamity.
 How did I err when I forsook the roof
 Of my own father, cheated by the words
 Of this base Greek, who, by the aid of heaven,
 Shall pay to me a fearful penalty.
 Never again shall he behold alive
 The sons he had by me, nor ever have
 A son by his young wife, for by my spells, 830
 The girl shall die an ignominious death.
 Let none suppose me tame and powerless,
 Or mild in temper. 'Tis far otherwise.
 To foes relentless; I am kind to friends,
 Like all whose lives are worthy of renown.

CHORUS.

Since thou reposest this sad confidence
 In us, who wish to serve thee, but respect
 The laws of men,—I say, it must not be.

MEDEA.

It shall be! You, indeed, may be excused
 For speaking thus; you suffer not like me. 840

MEDEA.

CHORUS.

O Lady! wilt thou dare to slay thy sons?

MEDEA.

Yes! for 'twill be the deepest wound to him.

CHORUS.

And render thee the saddest of thy sex.

MEDEA.

Then be it so! words can no more avail.
 Go summon Jason, for in everything
 Demanding trust, I may make use of you.
 Ye will tell nothing of my purposes,
 For ye are women, and have love for me.

CHORUS.

Happy were those Athenians of old,
 Descendants of the ever blessed Gods, 850
 Whose minds were fed with the exalted lore
 Of an inviolate and holy land,
 Who moved beneath that ever glorious sky,
 Where, it is said, that once upon a time,
 The yellow-haired Hermione brought forth
 The Muses nine, the sweet Pierides,
 And where, to draw from the bright flowing stream
 Of fair Cephisus, Venus also came,
 And o'er the plain breathed soft and perfumed gales,
 And binding on her flowing locks of hair 860
 Wreaths of the fragrant rose, sent forth the Loves,
 As wisdom's own assessors, by whose aid
 All kinds of excellence might be attained.

How will that city, with its sacred streams,
 Famed as it is for hospitality,
 Receive the murd'ress of her own two sons,—
 The crime-polluted woman? Oh reflect,
 Like us, upon the deed thou hast in view,
 The sort of vengeance thou art bent upon.
 Do not, ah! do not—at thy knees we pray— 870
 Incur the guilt of thine own children's blood.
 How, putting on a stern ferocity,
 Canst thou e'er steel thy heart, thy mind, thy hand,
 Against those progeny? How, when thou look'st
 Upon thy children, canst thou, without tears,
 Give them to slaughter? No! when they fall down
 Before thee suppliant, thou wilt not stain
 Thy hands with blood! No, no! it cannot be.

 JASON AND MEDEA.

JASON.

Called for, I come; and tho' thou art displeas'd,
 Still, lady, will I not deny thee this, 880
 But hear what more thou hast to say to me.

MEDEA.

Jason, I pray thee do not now resent
 What I have said. Thou shouldst bear with my wrath
 For all the kindness we have interchanged.
 I have been reas'ning with myself, and this
 Is what my mind suggests—"O hard of heart!
 Why do I rage, and bear an evil mind
 Against the very friends who wish me well?"

Why do I stand against the rulers here,
 And him who has contrived the best for us 890
 In marrying a Princess, to raise up
 Brothers and sisters for these boys of mine?
 Were it not good to quit this foolish spleen?
 What have I to complain of, when the Gods
 Thus favour? Have I then no family?
 Do I not know that we are fugitives,
 And want protection?" Thinking thus, I saw
 I had forgot myself, and chafed in vain.
 Now I commend thee, and I deem thee wise
 In making this alliance for our sake. 900
 I was unwise. I should have rendered aid
 In all these plans, and worked along with thee,
 And stood beside thy couch, and felt delight
 In rend'ring service to thy youthful bride.
 But as we are, we are,—I say no more.
 There is no need that thou shouldst act like me,
 And answer foolishness with foolishness.
 I have been wrong, and I confess the fault,
 A better spirit has come over me.

(Calling to the children.)

Children! dear children! leave the palace walls, 910
 Come out and greet your father, and with me
 Converse with him, and let us here dismiss
 All harsh displeasure, all unkindly thoughts.
 We are at peace, and anger is no more.
 Grasp his right hand. Ah me! unfortunate!
 How the dread future weighs upon my heart!
 Children, who yet may have long time to live,

Stretch forth your little arms. Wretch that I am,
 How tearful am I, and how full of fears!
 Even in ending this dispute with him 920
 My sight is dimmed by tears.

CHORUS.

From mine eyes too
 I feel the tear-drops spring. O may there be
 No greater ills in store!

JASON.

All this I praise,
 Nor can I greatly censure what is past.
 'Twas natural a woman should resent
 Being abandoned for a second wife.
 Thy mind now turns towards the better part,
 And thou hast recognised, whilst time remains,
 A prudent counsel, as beseems the wise. 930
 And as for you, dear boys, by the good will
 Of Providence, your father has laid up
 Ample provision for your future life.
 I think that you, together with the sons
 I yet may have, will hold the foremost place
 In this Corinthian land. Grow on. The Gods
 Who favour us, will look to all the rest,
 And may I see you, when bright boyhood's days
 Are o'er, well nurtured, and above the reach
 Of all our enemies. But why dost thou, 940
 With cheeks all pale and moist with flowing tears,
 Unacquiescent turn thine eyes from me?

MEDEA.

MEDEA.

Only because I feel for these poor boys.

JASON.

Be of good courage. Things are well arranged.

MEDEA.

I do not doubt thee ; but the female race
Is still susceptible, and prone to tears.

JASON.

Why, then, lament so much about thy sons ?

MEDEA.

I am their mother ! When I heard thy prayer
That they might live and prosper, tender fears
Came o'er me, lest it might not happen so.— 950

As to the subjects which demand our thought,
Some are discussed, and I will mention now
What yet remains. Since it seems good to those
Who are in pow'r to banish me from hence,
I must assent, for I am well aware
That it might be a hindrance both to thee
And to the rulers, were I to remain.

I know the royal house esteems me not :
I must then fly. But, that thy sons may still
Be brought up by thy hand, ask of the king 960
To spare them the disgrace of banishment.

JASON.

I will, although uncertain of success.

MEDEA.

Moreover, bid thy wife appeal to him
That the two children may not quit this land.

JASON.

Most readily. I think she may succeed,
If she be like most others of her sex.

MEDEA.

I will assist thee in this work of love,
For I will send her gifts more beautiful,
I know, than aught which can be now obtained.
The boys shall carry them,—a dainty robe, 970
And a crown wrought in gold. With utmost speed
Let some of the domestics bring them forth.
She will be happy, not in one respect,
But in a thousand: first, in having thee,
The best of men, to share her bridal couch;
And then in these rich presents, which the Sun,
My grandsire, once bestowed upon his race.
Take in your hands, my sons, those nuptial gifts,
And go present them to the happy bride:—
Well worth acceptance is mine offering. 980

JASON.

Why shouldst thou foolishly deprive thyself
Of treasures such as these? Dost thou suppose
The palace short of royal robes or gold?
Keep them, nor give them hastily away.
My wife, if she has any care for me,
Will value me above all worldly goods.

MEDEA.

Oppose me not, for gifts, they say, appease
The Gods themselves; and gold, amongst mankind,
Prevails far more than many thousand words.
Fortune is hers, I will increase her store. 990

Young as she is, she rules. I would redeem
 The exile of my boys, not only thus,
 But with my life. So, children, go at once
 To that fair palace with the ornaments,
 And supplicate your father's second wife,
 My mistress, that you may not quit this realm.
 But it is of the utmost consequence
 That she should take them into her own hand.
 Go quickly! I would have it. May you prove
 Successful heralds in your mother's cause. 1000

(Jason retires with the boys.)

CHORUS.

I have no longer any hope of life
 For these poor boys. They go to meet their fate.
 Th' unhappy bride will soon experience
 The deadly poison of those golden bonds.
 Around her yellow hair will she arrange,
 With her own hands, the fatal ornament.
 Its beauty, and the robe's ambrosial light,
 Will make her put them on, and, with the dead,
 Tricked out in bridal splendour will she lie.
 This is the snare that she will fall into, 1010
 Unhappy girl! This is her destiny!
 And thou, too, wretched man! unfaithful spouse,
 Allied to royalty, art not aware
 What peril thou art bringing on thy sons,—
 What certain awful death upon thy bride.
 Unfortunate! how sad a fate is thine!
 Yet do I sympathise with thy distress,
 Thou sorrowing, afflicted mother, who

Wilt even put to death thy sons, because
 Thy bed has been despised, and, quitting thee, 1020
 Thy husband consorts with another wife.

MEDEA AND TUTOR.

TUTOR (*entering with the boys*).

Lady! thy sons are spared from banishment;
 The royal bride has graciously received
 Thy gifts into her hands. The boys are safe.

MEDEA.

Ah!—

TUTOR.

Why art thou confused at such a time?

MEDEA.

Alas! alas!

TUTOR.

This is at variance

With my good news.

MEDEA.

Alas! again.

TUTOR.

Have I said aught amiss?

And do I err in deeming that I am
 The messenger of good?

MEDEA.

No! thou hast told 1030

Thy message well. I cast no blame on thee.

TUTOR.

What means this downcast eye? Why dost thou weep?

MEDEA.

MEDEA.

Old man ! there is good cause ! The gods themselves,
And I, on evil bent, have done this deed.

TUTOR.

Take courage ! Thou wilt be brought back once more
Thro' thy two sons.

MEDEA.

Others, ere then, by me
Will have been dealt with.

TUTOR.

Not thou alone art parted from thy sons.
Mortals should bear distresses patiently.

MEDEA.

And so will I. But go into the house, 1040
And there make ready what the children need.

(Tutor goes in.)

Children beloved ! you have a house and home,
Where, after leaving me disconsolate,
You will' reside far from your mother's care.
I go, an exile, into other lands,
Without the hope of e'er beholding you
Established happily, or rendering
Honour to your espousals, and your wives
And nuptial beds, or holding up the torch.
How must I sigh o'er my own wilfulness ! 1050
In vain, dear children, have I brought you up,—
In vain have I thus toil'd and spent myself,
Since the first pains I underwent for you.
There was a time when I, unfortunate,
Had many a hope in you, that in mine age

You would sustain me, and that, when I died,
 Your hands would decently compose my limbs.
 'Tis what we wish,—but that sweet hope is fled ;
 Deprived of you what still remains of life
 Will all be desolate and drear to me ; 1060
 You will no more behold with loving eyes
 Your mother, in the land to which I go.
 Woe! woe! Ah why do ye thus gaze on me,
 My children, with that look? Why smile on me
 With that last parting glance? Alas! alas!
 What shall I do? my very heart, it breaks
 As I look on each gladsome countenance.
 I cannot do it! I here bid adieu
 To my design. I will remove the boys.
 Why should I, to avenge me on their sire, 1070
 By striking them, entail upon myself
 Tenfold distress? No! I dismiss the thought.
 Yet, what have I endured? Shall I incur
 The scorn of leaving all my foes at peace?
 I never will. 'Tis my own cowardice
 That brings these tender feelings to my mind.
 Children, go in! To him who must not look
 Upon this sacrifice,—to him the pang!
 I will not stay my hand.—Alas! alas!
 My soul, abstain from prompting such a deed! 1080
 Leave them, unhappy woman! spare thy sons!
 Dwelling with me they still may give me joy.—
 No! by the dwellers in stern Pluto's realms!
 It ne'er shall be, that I will leave my sons
 To be insulted by mine enemies:

So die they must; and since they must, e'en I
 Who bore them will destroy,—it is decreed,
 And the decree shall not be set aside.

Now, with the coronet upon her head
 And in her robes, the Princess perishes. 1090

I know it all, but, in still darker paths
 I must advance. I would address the boys.—
 My children! give to me your little hands,
 And let your mother press them once again.
 O dearest hands!* and lips beloved by me!
 And forms, and noble faces, of my sons!
 May you be happy,—but it must be,—there,
 Here,—your own father murders happiness.
 O sweet embrace, soft skins, and balmy breath!
 (*Kisses the children.*)

Go! go! I am no longer equal to 1100
 The sight of you,—affliction conquers me.

(*Children go in.*)

I know what ills I go to perpetrate,
 But rage is stronger than my good intents;
 'Tis the most fertile source of grief to men.

CHORUS.

Oft have we dealt with nicer subtleties,

* Leur main! leur douce main! c'est-elle—elle me touche,
 Je sens, je sens mon cœur défaillir; et ma bouche!
 Ma bouche, malgré moi, se penchant vers la leur,
 Avant de les frapper. Non! c'est trop de douleur!
 Loin de moi, noirs desseins! loin de moi haine impure!
 Faut-il me torturer pour punir un parjure?
 Venez! venez, enfants!

Médée.

And oft with controversies which suit not
 The weaker sex, for a celestial muse
 Is present with us, and still leads on
 In wisdom's cause. It is not so with all ;
 You would but find, indeed, of womankind 1110
 A small proportion favoured by the muse.

I say that those who hold themselves aloof,
 And have no progeny, are better off
 Than those who have. The childless, who know not,
 By long experience, whether children prove
 A joy to men, or rather bring them grief,
 Escape a number of anxieties.
 Those in whose houses dwells a blooming race
 Of children, I behold o'erwhelmed with care
 Throughout their lives, first to support them well, 1120
 And then secure their future maintenance.
 Besides all this, 'tis an uncertainty
 Whether the children, for whose sake they toil,
 May turn out well or ill. One evil more,
 Far worse than all the rest, must I recall :—
 Supposing men acquire abundant means
 And that their children reach maturity,
 And seem to prosper, yet, if fate decrees,
 Death may consign them to an early grave.
 How fares it then when, to crown all, the Gods 1130
 Bring on mankind this direst grief of all?

MEDEA AND MESSENGER.

MEDEA.

Friends! for some time have I been waiting here
 In expectation of the coming storm ;

And now I see a page of Jason here,
Whose lab'ring breath too plainly indicates
That he has some bad news to tell to us.

MESSENGER (*hastening up*).

Fly! O Medea! fly! a monstrous deed
It is that thou hast done; neglect not now
The rapid transport or the bounding car.

MEDEA.

What have I done that I need take to flight? 1140

MESSENGER.

The youthful Princess has just now expired,
And Creon, too, her father, all by means
Of thy enchantments.

MEDEA.

'Tis most welcome news
Which thou relatest. I will reckon thee,
Henceforth, a benefactor and a friend.

MESSENGER.

What sayst thou Lady? Is thine intellect
All sound, or dost thou rave, who, having thus
Struck down the royal house, canst yet rejoice
Without one fear of what may next ensue.

MEDEA.

I could a tale unfold in answer to 1150
These words of thine. But, friend, remain awhile,
And tell me how they died. A twofold joy
'Twill be to me if they died wretchedly.

MESSENGER.

When the two boys, led by their sire, arrived,
And stood within the palace of the bride,

We, the attendants, who had mourned for thee,
Were glad, and rumours soon came to our ears
That thy dispute with Jason was composed.
One kissed the hands, and one the yellow hair
Of the poor boys, and I, from very joy, 1160
Pushed on with them into the ladies' room.
Our mistress, whom we serve in place of thee,
Before she caught a sight of the young pair,
Fixed her glad eyes on Jason's countenance,
But soon she checked that look, and turned away
Her beauteous cheek, displeased to see thy sons.
Then Jason soothed the anger of the girl
In terms like these :—“ Be patient with thy friends ;
Cease from displeasure ; turn to me again,
And take thy husband's friends to be thine own.1170
Accept these gifts, and, for my sake, persuade
Thy father to revoke the banishment
Of my two boys.” She, when she looked upon
The ornaments, no longer could refuse,
But yielded to her husband, and, almost
Before the father and his sons were gone,
She put on her the variegated robes,
And pressed the coronet upon her brow,
Smoothing each tress by the bright mirror's aid,
And smiling at the charms reflected there. 1180
Then, rising from her seat, she paced along
The wide saloon, with step so delicate,
And snow white feet, and oft looked down to mark
As each advanced, rejoicing in her gifts.
But soon there was a dreadful sight to see.

Her colour changed, she staggered back, her limbs
 Trembling beneath her, and had only time
 To sink upon the couch, lest she should fall.
 An aged lady, who attended her,
 Thinking that Pan, or that some other god, 1190
 Had struck her in his anger, shrieked aloud.
 But when she saw the white foam bursting forth
 Between her lips, and her expanding eyes
 Turned in their sockets, and her pallid hue,
 She uttered screams far louder than before.
 And one rushed out towards her father's room,
 And one to the new married Prince, to tell
 His bride's calamity, and the whole place
 Rang with the sounds of hasting to and fro.
 Now in the time that a pedestrian 1200
 Might take to run but a few hundred yards,
 She who till now was speechless, and whose eye
 Was closed, with heavy groans aroused herself
 As striving with a twofold agony.
 The golden crown upon her head sent forth
 A wond'rous gleam of all-consuming fire,
 Whilst the light robe, the present of thy sons,
 Ate into her fair flesh.—
 On fire, and leaping from her couch, she fled
 And shook from side to side, her head and hair, 1210
 To get rid of the crown, whose golden band
 Kept it secure. The flames, meanwhile, whene'er
 She moved her locks, broke out with tenfold force.
 Conquered at last, by suffering, down she fell
 Upon the ground, so changed that none except

A parent could have recognised that form.
For neither was th' expression of her eyes
Bright and distinct, nor was her face the same,
But blood, with flame commingled, trickled down
From where the chaplet rested, and her flesh 1220
Dropped from the bones, by subtle poison changed,
Like pitchy tear drops from some blazing pine.
The sight was too appalling, and a dread
Of touching her dead body seized us all.—
We bowed to fate. But now her wretched sire,
Not knowing what had happened, entered in
All on a sudden, and fell on the corpse,
With many a warm caress, and thus he spake,
“O hapless child! which of the deities
Has brought thee to this ignominious end, 1230
And left me, standing like an ancient tomb?
Would I might die with thee my child!” At length,
When his complaints and groans had somewhat ceased,
And the old man desired to raise himself,
He found himself held fast by that fine robe
As ivy bound upon the laurel branch.
Fiercely he struggled—Oft he tried to rise
Upon his knees—but she still held him down.
And when he strove with increased force, he tore
The worn and shrunken flesh from off his bones. 1240
At length the poor old king, o'ercome by pain,
Gave up all effort, and breathed out his life.
And so the aged father and his child
Lie dead together, a sad spectacle!
As for thine own affairs, I pass them by.

Or that thou art their mother. For one day—
 'Tis short—forget the boys; then mourn
 When all is past. Altho' thou slayest them,
 Yet were they dear, and I am full of woe.

CHORUS.

O earth! and thou far-beaming glorious Sun!
 Look down and check this lady in her rage,
 Ere she will lay her sanguinary hand
 Upon her offspring. Of thine own bright race
 Are they descended. It is to be feared 1280
 That blood divine will now be shed by man;
 Do thou, O light celestial, here restrain,
 Seize and drive out the wretched murderess—
 The fury dragged by dæmons to her fate!
 Thou hast toiled vainly for thy family,
 And vainly given birth to those dear boys,
 Leaving the most inhospitable straits
 Of the Kyanean Symplegades.
 Unhappy! why does rage thus fix upon
 Thy soul, with murder answering to its call. 1290
 Dread are the vengeance of relatives;
 For retribution from on high attends
 Domestic feud.

ELDEST BOY (*within*).

Ah me! what shall I do?
 To find protection from my mother's hands?

SECOND BOY (*within*).

I know not, dearest brother! We are lost!

CHORUS.

Hear ye those sounds? Hear ye the children's cry?

Wretched, ill-fated woman! Should we now
Go in? Methinks we ought to try
To save those children.

BOYS (*within*).

By the Gods! assist! 1300

The sword gleams over us.

CHORUS.

O! art thou stone,
Or iron, to cut down with thine own hand
The crop thyself hast raised? I know but one,
A woman of the ancient race, who laid
Her hands upon her offspring. Ino did
This crime, infuriate, for the wife of Jove
Had cast her out an exile from her home.
The hapless woman leapt into the sea,
From an impending cliff, on murder bent,
And thus she perished with her family. 1310
After such things, can aught seem horrible?
O marriage, fruitful source of varied woe!
What evils hast thou brought upon mankind.

JASON (*entering*).

Ye women, who stand here before the house,
Say, is Medea, who has done these crimes,
Within? or has she, by this time, escaped?
For now must she have sunk beneath the earth,
Or risen on wings into the azure sky,
Unless she satisfy the royal house.
Can she suppose that, having slain the chiefs 1320

Of these dominions, she can pass the gates
Unpunished? I have not the care for her
That I have for my sons. Those she has wronged
Are sure to punish. But I come to save
My children's lives, lest their stern relatives
Should injure me thro' them, and so avenge
The lawless murder which their mother did.

CHORUS.

Jason! unhappy man! thou knowest not
To what misfortune thou hast come, or else
Thou never wouldst have used these words to us. 1330

JASON.

What is it? does she wish to kill me too?

CHORUS.

Thy boys are slain, and by their mother's hand.

JASON.

Ah me? what dost thou say? Thou killest me!

CHORUS.

Cease to regard thy children as alive.

JASON.

Where slew she them? was it within the house?

CHORUS.

If thou wilt cause the gates to be unbarred,
Thou wilt behold the bodies of thy sons.

JASON.

Servants! undo the bolts with utmost haste,
 Remove the fastenings. I would look upon
 The two poor victims, and then punish her. 1340

MEDEA.

(In the chariot of the Sun, with the dead bodies.)

Why do you shake and beat against the doors,
 Seeking the dead, and me, who made them die?
 Cease your vain efforts. If thou wantest me,
 Say what thou wantest, for thine hand shall ne'er
 Touch me again. This car, the potent Sun,
 My parent's parent, sent. It will secure
 From the rude contact of unfriendly hands.

JASON.

Woman! most loathsome, and detested by
 The Gods and me alike, and all the race
 Of mortals, who hast dared to draw the sword 1350
 On thine own sons, whom thou thyself didst bear,
 And made me childless, and then having done
 This most unhallowed work, still look'st upon
 The sun and earth, may ruin light on thee!
 I am myself, I was not so before,
 When, from a distant land, I brought thee here,
 A mighty pest,—a traitress to thy sire,
 And to the country which gave birth to thee.
 On me the Gods impose this curse of thine,—
 For, having slain thy brother, who with thee 1360
 Had been brought up, at once thou didst embark
 On board the Argo my fast sailing ship.
 Thus thou beganest. Having married me,

And brought forth sons to me, thou killest them,
 And all because of a fresh marriage bed.
 Of all the women in this land of Greece
 None would have dared such crime. In preference
 To them, however, I thought fit to mate
 With thee, and 'twas a step that sealed my fate,—
 With thee —no woman, but a lioness— 1370
 Fierce as the Tuscan Scylla. But reproach,
 Ten thousand times repeated, moves thee not :
 Such is thy force and thy audacity.
 Go, doer of dark deeds ! go, murderess
 Of thine own offspring ! What remains to me
 Is to lament my own unhappy fate,
 And nuptial blessings I may not enjoy.
 My sons, whom I brought up and nourished
 I shall no more behold. All, all is lost !

MEDEA.

I might set forth a long array of words 1380
 In answer to thee, did not Jupiter,
 Father of all, know what thou hast received
 From me, and also what thyself hast done.
 'Twas not for thee, having despised my bed,
 To lead a life of joy, and mock at me ;
 Nor for the Princess, nor for Creon's self
 Who offered thee this match, to banish me
 Out of the country. Call me, if thou wilt,
 A lioness for this, or Scylla, who
 Inhabited of old the Tuscan cave, 1390
 For this, as was most fit, that heart of thine
 I, in my turn, have pierced.

MEDEA.

JASON.

Thou mournest too—
Thou, too, partakest in this common woe.

MEDEA.

Be sure of that: but yet it calms my grief
To think thou canst not mock me.

JASON.

O my sons!
What a relentless mother have you had.

MEDEA.

Children, ye died by that man's perfidy!

JASON.

It was not my right hand that cut them off.

MEDEA.

But 'twas thy scorn,—the marriage thou didst make.

JASON.

And couldst thou slay them for a cause like this? 1400

MEDEA.

Dost thou suppose that women find such loss
A trifling matter?

JASON.

Aye! the prudent do:
But every wickedness is found in thee.

MEDEA.

They are no more:—this thought will punish thee.

JASON.

On thine own head, methinks, the vengeance falls.

MEDEA.

The Gods well know with whom our ills began.

MEDEA.

71

JASON.

And the Gods know thy hateful character.

MEDEA.

Thyself art odious. Thy venom'd words
I execrate.

JASON.

And I, too, thine; but change
Is easy still.

MEDEA.

How so? what shall I do? 1410
I well may long for it.

JASON.

Permit me, then,
Here to inter the dead, and weep o'er them.

MEDEA.

No! I will bury them with my own hands
Near to the shrine of Juno, who presides
Over the citadel. No enemy
Will then tear up and violate their graves.
And in that land of Sisyphus will we
Appoint a solemn feast, with sacrifice,
To expiate this all unhallowed deed.
Myself will go where great Erechtheus reigned, 1420
And dwell with Ægeus, old Pandion's son;
Whilst thou, bad man, shalt die, as is most meet,
E'en by a fragment from the Argo's side,
And so discharge the debt thou ow'st to me.

JASON.

May the avenging dæmon of my sons,
With bloody retribution, trace thee out.

MEDEA.

MEDEA.

What deity or dæmon will give ear
To violators of domestic right ?

JASON.

Ah, hateful female ! murd'ress of thy sons !

MEDEA.

Go to the palace, and inter thy wife. 1430

JASON.

I go, and go bereaved of both my sons !

MEDEA.

It wounds thee not enough ! Stay here until
Age bows thee down.

JASON.

Alas ! my own beloved !

MEDEA.

Dear to their mother, but not so to thee.

JASON.

Yet couldst thou slay them !

MEDEA.

Aye ! to injure thee.

JASON.

Alas ! alas ! unhappy that I am,
I fain would kiss my darling children's lips.

MEDEA.

Now thou respectest and invokest them,
Whom thou hast driven from hence.

JASON.

By heaven ! I pray,

Let me but touch the bodies of my sons. 1440

MEDEA.

No! thy petition is but waste of breath.

JASON.

O Jupiter, thou hearest this! how we
Are thrust aside, and what we have to bear
From this detested murd'ress of her sons,—
This lioness. Yet do I weep and mourn,
As far as means and pow'r are given me,
Calling the Gods to witness for me now,
That, having slain my children, thou wilt not
Permit me e'en to touch or bury them [1450
When dead, whom I should ne'er have caused to live
If I had thought to see them slain by thee.

CHORUS.

Full many a weighty cause great Jove decides
On high Olympus, and the Gods conclude
Full many a matter unexpectedly,
Whilst what we do expect is not achieved;
The pow'rs supreme find out a way for men,
As in the instance of these sad events.

THE END.

IPHIGENIA IN AULIS.

Characters.

AGAMEMNON, Commander in Chief.

MENELAUS, his Brother.

ACHILLES.

CLYTEMNESTRA, Wife of Agamemnon.

IPHIGENIA, their Daughter.

ORESTES, their Infant Son.

OLD SERVANT.

MESSENGER.

CHORUS of young women from Chalcis in Eubœa.

IPHIGENIA IN AULIS.

*Scene.— Space before the Royal Tent, near Aulis.—
Time, the dawn of day.*

AGAMEMNON. SERVANT.

AGAMEMNON.

Old man, come out to me before the tent.

SERVANT.

(Coming through one of the side doors.)

I come, King Agamemnon. What new thing
Hast thou in hand?

AGAMEMNON.

Thou soon shalt hear.

SERVANT.

No time

Am I disposed to lose. Mine age allows
But little sleep, mine eyes are vigilant.

AGAMEMNON.

What is yon star that moves athwart the sky?

SERVANT.

'Tis Sirius. It holds its course not far
From where thou seest the bright Pleiades
Still in mid æther.

AGAMEMNON.

There is not a sound
From bird or ocean, and the very winds* 10
Sleep o'er Euripus.

SERVANT.

Why hast thou come forth,
O King, so soon, though Aulis is at rest,
And the guard stirs not on the battlements?
Let us go in.

AGAMEMNON.

I envy thee, old man,
And envy all who lead a tranquil life,
Unfamed, unknown, but not the men who stand
In posts of power.

SERVANT.

Nay, from thence proceeds
Each grace of human life.

AGAMEMNON.

Such graces prove
Too oft a snare. It may be sweet to strive
For glory, but when glory comes to us, 20
It has its sting. Sometimes our services,
Not fitly rendered to the Gods, o'erthrow
Our plans of life; sometimes the whims of men,
Countless and varied, agitate the mind.

SERVANT.

I am not pleased with sentiments like these

* "Mais tout dort, et l'armée, et les vents, et Neptune."
Racine's Iphigénie.

From one in power. Atreus left thee not
 All good things for thy portion ; with thy joys
 Thou must have sorrows,—thou art but a man.
 And, Agamemnon, tho' thou mayst repine,
 Yet what heaven wills must surely come to pass. 30
 But first thou writest, by the torch's light,
 This letter which thou holdest in thy hand,
 And next erasest what thou hast set down,
 Then closest it, and openest again,
 And dashest the thin pine-wood to the ground,
 Still shedding tears,—and still, in all respects,
 Acting like one insane. What is thy grief?
 What new distress has come to thee, O King?
 At once admit me to thy confidence.
 Thou speakest with a good and faithful man ; 40
 For Tyndarus bestowed me on thy wife
 As part of her rich dowry, and to be
 The fit attendant of a youthful bride.

AGAMEMNON.

Leda, the daughter of King Thespias,
 Had three fair children by old Tyndarus,
 Phœbe, and Clytemnestra my own wife,
 And Helen, for whose hand the choicest youths
 Of Greece appeared as suitors. Every man
 Vowed vengeance if he failed to gain his end.
 So Tyndarus, the father, was in doubt 50
 Whether to give her or refuse, and how
 To make the best of fortune. He did thus,—
 He caused the suitors to engage themselves,
 And join right hands, and pour libations due

Upon the sacrifice, and make an oath
That they would join in the defence of him
Who gained the prize, in case that any one
Stole her away from home, and would deprive
The robber of his spoil, and march on him,
And raze the place he dwelt in to the ground, 60
By force of arms, whoever he might be,
Barbarian or Greek. This compact done,
The aged Tyndarus, of subtle mind,
Used his advantage, and allowed the maid
Herself to choose from the competitors
As the sweet breathings of true love impelled.
She chose,—O had it been some other man,
My brother Menelaus. But, ere long,
He who, as men relate, had judged between
The rival Goddesses, from Phrygia 70
Came o'er to Lacedæmon, radiant
With dress, and gold, and foreign niceties.
Helen he saw and loved, and she loved him.
Her lord was absent. So he bore her off,
Elate, to distant Ida's cattle sheds.
Then Menelaus, stung to madness, roamed
All over Greece, and there made known his loss,
Claiming fulfilment of the vows once pledged
To Tyndarus in case of injury.
The suitors, fierce and prompt, appealed to arms, 80
And soon assembled at these narrow straits,
With ships, and all the implements of war,
And steeds and chariots, and selected me
To be commander, for my brother's sake :

Would that such honour had been ne'er conferred!
 But, though the force was ready, constant calms
 Prevented sailing,—months passed idly by.
 Chalchas, in our distress, proclaimed to us
 That my Iphigenia must be slain
 In honour of Diana, who presides 90
 Over this country. Then we might depart
 And conquer Phrygia, but not otherwise.
 When I heard all, I bade Talthybius
 With proclamation loud, disband the host,
 For I would never sacrifice my child.
 My brother, then, by dint of argument,
 Made me consent to this atrocity.
 So, writing an epistle to my wife,
 I told her to bring on her daughter here
 That she might wed Achilles, and extolled 100
 The hero's worth, and said he would not act
 Together with the Greeks, until we sent
 Her first to Phthia as a bride for him.
 With such pretexts I thought to blind my wife,
 Urging a false alliance for the maid.
 Chalchas, Ulysses, Menelaus, I,
 Alone of all th' Achæans, knew of this.
 What at that time I wrongly fixed upon
 I have annulled, and in fair characters
 Written this second brief, which thou, old friend, 110
 Hast seen me, in the shade of night unfold
 And fold again, in my anxiety.
 But now depart. My missive take with thee
 To Argos. Its contents, and what lies hid

In the dispatch, I will relate to thee,
For thou art faithful to my wife and house.

SERVANT.

Speak, and explain to me, that what I say
And that which thou hast written may agree.

AGAMEMNON.

“ Daughter of Leda, as a supplement
To what I wrote before, the following 120
Is to direct thee not to send thy child
To this indented coast, Eubœa’s wing,
The sheltered Aulis. At some future time
Will we arrange the marriage of the girl.”

SERVANT.

How can Achilles, baffled of his aim,
And justly angry, fail to raise a storm
Against thyself, and Clytemnestra too?
There is much risk. I pray, explain thyself.

AGAMEMNON.

Achilles serves me only by his name.
He knows of no alliance, he knows not 130
What we are doing, or that I e’er spoke
Of giving him the maiden for his wife.

SERVANT.

O Agamemnon! thou hast dared to plan
A frightful scheme. Upon the false pretence
That she came here for marriage, thou wouldst yield
Thy daughter as a victim to the Greeks.

AGAMEMNON.

Ah me, my reason fails! alas, alas!

I am sunk down in an abyss of woe.
Set off, exerting all the speed thou hast,
And yielding not to age.

SERVANT.

My king, I go.

140

AGAMEMNON.

Stay not to rest beside the shady streams,
Or to indulge in sleep.

SERVANT.

There is no fear.

AGAMEMNON.

When thou arrivest at the place at which
The road divides, fail not to look around
On ev'ry side, lest some swift chariot
Bearing my daughter onward to the ships,
Should pass thee unobserved.

SERVANT.

I will keep watch.

AGAMEMNON.

Leave the encampment then, and shouldst thou meet
The equipage, divert it, shake the reins
And drive it back to where the Cyclops dwelt. 150

SERVANT.

How shall I be believed in telling this
To thy fair daughter and the queen thy wife ?

AGAMEMNON.

Preserve the seal upon this letter. Go.
The pale light of the morn begins to dawn ;
The fire around the horses of the Sun
Gleams forth. Share thou my labours and my cares.

No mortal man is happy to the end,—
None wholly blest, or undisturbed by grief.

(Goes in through the middle door.)

CHORUS.

I am come hither to the sandy beach
Of Aulis on the Ocean, having sailed 160
Across th' Euripus, from my native town
Of Chalcis, where the strait contracts, and where
The far famed Arethusa has its source,
That I may view the army of the Greeks,
And the broad oars of those heroic men
Who in their thousand ships accompany
King Menelaus with the golden hair,
And noble Agamemnon, to win back
Helen, whom Paris rich in herds bore off
From the Eurotas with its reedy banks, 170
Favoured by Aphroditè, when she held
A contest—aye, a contest—for the prize
Of beauty, at the dewy fountain's side,
With Juno and with Pallas.

Thro' the grove
Of Artemis—the place of sacrifice—
I came before men's gaze, with blushing cheeks
Crimsoned by youth's untainted modesty,
Longing to see the serried range of shields,
And all the tents of Greece replete with arms,
And all her cavalry. I have beheld 180
Ajax Öileus, and bold Telamon
The crown of Salamis, and at their side
Protesilaus, all the three intent

On chess,—that game of complex interest,—
 And Palamedes, son of Neptune's son,
 And Diomed enjoying at his ease
 Th' amusement of the disk. Meriones
 Stood near, a child of Mars, who seemed to be
 The gen'ral wonder, and from Ithaca
 With mountains rude, Laertes' noble son, 190
 And Nireus also, fairest of the Greeks.
 I saw, besides, Achilles, swift of foot—
 Swift as the wind—whom Thetis bore, and whom
 Chiron brought up, upon the sandy shore,
 Attired in armour, at his exercise.
 He ran on foot, and strove for victory
 Against a four-horse chariot; whilst he
 Who drove,—Eumelus was his name, the son
 Of Pheræ's emperor,—with lash and voice
 Urged on his splendid team, whose bits were wrought 200
 In gold. The inner pair were marked with white,
 The outer horses fastened on by chains
 And bending to the turnings of the course,
 Were bay, with solid hoofs,—and bounding on,
 Pelides ran beside the glowing wheels.
 I then went forth to view the thousand ships,
 And to enjoy in full the dear delight
 That woman feels in spectacles like this.—
 Placed on the right wing the stout Myrmidons—
 * * * * *
 * * * * *
 Such is the expedition I have seen, 210
 And shall remember midst the scenes of home.

* I have omitted the catalogue of the ships.

SERVANT. MENELAUS.

SERVANT.

O Menelaus! thou art venturing
Upon a course thou oughtest not to take.

MENELAUS.

Depart. Thou art too zealous for thine house.

SERVANT.

'Tis a reproach that I accept as praise.

MENELAUS.

Thou mayst lament, if thou shouldst chance to do
What fits thee not.

(Seizes and opens the letter.)

SERVANT.

Thou hast no right to read
Th' epistle I convey.

MENELAUS.

Nor thou to bear
A message that will injure all the Greeks.

SERVANT.

Let others look to it. Give me my own. 220

MENELAUS.

I will not.

SERVANT.

Nor will I abandon it.

(Struggle.)

MENELAUS.

Then with my sceptre will I, presently,
Make thy head gush with blood.

SERVANT.

It is no shame
For me to suffer in my master's cause.

MENELAUS.

Leave loose! Thou art a slave. Thy flow of words
Is endless.

(Secures the letter.)

SERVANT.

Master, I am suff'ring wrong.
O Agamemnon! he has torn by force
Thy letter from my hands. He is unjust.

AGAMEMNON. MENELAUS.

AGAMEMNON.

(Coming out from the middle door.)

Ah! what is this disturbance at my gates?
What mean rough words like these?

MENELAUS.

It is for me 230
And not for him to speak. *(Servant retires.)*

AGAMEMNON.

Then tell me, why,
O Menelaus! hast thou come to strife
With him, and draggest him about by force?

MENELAUS.

Look in my face, and, from the very first,
I will relate the cause of this dispute.

AGAMEMNON.

Think'st thou that I, the son of Atreus, too,
Need turn mine eyes from fear?

MENELAUS.

Dost thou then see
This letter, which enfolds such base contents?

AGAMEMNON.

I see it, and I bid thee give it up.

MENELAUS.

No! not till I have shown to all the Greeks 240
What thou hast written.

AGAMEMNON.

Was it not most base,
In such a way, to know these things at all?

MENELAUS.

Aye! to thy sorrow I have opened out
The ills which thou hast done in privacy.

AGAMEMNON.

How hast thou got possession? O ye Gods!
How wholly shameless art thou!

MENELAUS.

Waiting here
To meet thy daughter, should she come to us
From Argos, I obtained it.

AGAMEMNON.

And what right
Hast thou to make thyself a spy on me?
How gross and how indelicate is this! 250

MENELAUS.

It was my pleasure.—I am not thy slave.

AGAMEMNON.

It is atrocious, and I will permit
No one to meddle thus with my affairs.

MENELAUS.

Thy policy was ever indirect.
It is so now, and so 'twill ever be.

AGAMEMNON.

Skill'd art thou in reviling ; bitter tongues,
Like thine, are odious.

MENELAUS.

Inconstant minds,
Misleading every friend, are odious.
But I would reason with thee. Do not thou,
In thy displeasure, seek to wrest aside 260
The truth. I find but little room for praise.
Thou knowest when thou didst desire to lead
The Greeks to Troy, but wouldst not own the wish
So deeply felt, with what humility
Thou didst conduct thyself, and grasp each hand
That offer'd, and didst keep an open house
For all the people, giving free access
To each in turn to speak,—nay, courting speech,
And seeking, with all affability,
The voices of the crowd. But, having gained 270
The chief command, then came a sudden change.
No longer wert thou friendly to thy friends,
As thou hadst been before. Access to thee
Within thy doors, was difficult and rare.
It is not seemly in an honest man,
Engaged in great affairs, to waver thus.

Then, most of all, his friends should find him firm,
 For in prosperity he has the pow'r
 To be of greatest use. I stated this,
 For the first time, when I first saw thee fail. 280
 Arrived at Aulis, with the host of Greece,
 Thou wert a nullity, and overwhelmed
 Because the Gods withheld a fav'ring wind,
 And the Greeks urged thee to dismiss the ships,
 And wait no longer here. Thine eye was dim,
 Thy heart disturbed, lest thou shouldst lose the fleet,
 And fail to occupy King Priam's land
 With armed multitudes. And so to me
 Thou camest to demand,—“What shall I do?
 And how escape from my embarrassments, 290
 And save the loss of power and of fame?”
 And then when Chalchas, at the sacred rites,
 Said that thy daughter must be sacrificed
 In order that the Greeks, at length, might sail,
 Most readily thou gavest thy consent,
 And wrotest to thy wife, of thine own will,
 Not by compulsion,—never urge this plea,—
 To bring thy daughter hither, on pretence
 That great Achilles was to be her mate,
 The very air around us heard the words. 300
 Then, turning round, thou art found out at last
 Sending a different message.—Thou wilt not
 Be accessory to the maiden's death.
 Many, besides thyself, have acted thus,
 Grasping with eagerness, and then with shame
 Abandoning the task, and giving way

To vague opinion or necessity,
 Because they could not rightly guide the state.
 I chiefly mourn the lot of hapless Greece.
 She wished to do some mighty deeds, and now 310
 Must let the vain barbarian escape,
 And laugh at her, because of thee and thine.
 I ne'er would give a man authority,
 Or place him in command, for wealth alone.
 A ruler ought to be a man of mind,—
 The best man in the state, the foremost man.*

CHORUS.

How sad it is when brothers disagree,
 And contests rise from their unguarded words!

AGAMEMNON.

I will say briefly what I have to say
 Of ill to thee, not suffering mine eye 320
 To show defiance, but with self-restraint.
 Thou art my brother, and all good men wish
 To act with dignity.—Why dost thou rage
 With bloodshot eyes? say, who has injured thee?
 What wantest thou?—thine exemplary wife?
 I cannot aid thee; thou hast managed ill
 That which thou hadst. Must I, who have not erred,
 Now pay the penalty for thy offence?
 Does my ambition gall thee? Wouldst thou have

* ——— “Es sey der Erste, Beste,
 Der Einsichtsvolle! Er soll König seyn.”
Schiller's translation.

A lovely woman in thine arms, all sense 330
 And fitness set aside? The very joys
 Of wicked men are low. If I, misled
 At first, have changed my cruel purposes,
 Am I to blame? or thou, who having lost
 An evil partner, seekest her again,
 Relying on the favour of the Gods?
 True, the wrong-headed suitors, passion-tossed,
 Did swear to Tyndarus; but Hope, I think,
 The Goddess Hope, had more to do with this
 Than thou, and all thy might. Go, then, with them, 340
 For such a folly they are quite prepared.
 But Heav'n sees all, and can well understand
 The ill-compacted and extorted vow.
 I will not slay mine offspring.—Thy pursuit
 Of vengeance for an execrable wife,
 Exceeds all right. My days and nights will pass
 Henceforth in tears, if I do wickedly
 To that poor girl, who owes her life to me.
 What I have said is brief, and true, and plain.
 If thou wilt not think rightly, yet must I 350
 Arrange my own affairs as best I may.

CHORUS.

These words are unlike those we heard before,
 And he is right in pleading for his child.

MENE LAUS.

Alas! alas! my friends abandon me.

AGAMEMNON.

They would be true, if thou wert true to them.

MENELAUS.

How little like a brother dost thou act!

AGAMEMNON.

I would speak calmly with thee, not contend.

MENELAUS.

Between us two there should be sympathy.

AGAMEMNON.

If thou dost well, I am thy friend,—not when
Thou wrongest me.

MENELAUS.

Does it not seem to thee 360

That 'tis our duty to be true to Greece.

AGAMEMNON.

Hellas, like thee, is now beside herself.

MENELAUS.

Thy pow'r thou usest to betray my cause,
To other plans I now address myself
And other friends.

MESSENGER (*coming up*).

O King of all the Greeks,

Great Agamemnon! I am just arrived,

And bring Iphigenia to the camp.

Her mother, Clytemnestra, is with her

In person, and Orestes too, thy son,

And thou wilt have great joy in seeing them 370

After so long an absence from thine home.

But having journeyed far, the female train

Rests by a flowing stream. The weary steeds

Have we turned out upon the verdant plain,

To graze at will. So I ran on before

To give thee notice. All the host has heard,
 Since fame flies fast, of this important news,
 And they are rushing out to see the sight.
 On fortune's favourites the eyes of men
 Are ever turned with wonder and regard. 380
 Some ask,—is there a marriage to take place?
 What is it?—Or has Agamemnon brought
 His daughter here to keep him company?—
 Others suppose they mean to consecrate
 The youthful maid to Artemis, who reigns
 O'er Aulis.—Let it pass. Set forth the gifts,
 And crown her head, and Menelaus, too,
 Let him assist. Prepare the festival,*—
 Let music sound, and bounding feet be heard
 Throughout the camp, for her the present day 390
 Can hardly fail to be a happy one.

AGAMEMNON.

Thou hast done well. But go into the tent,
 All will succeed, if fortune favour us.—
 (*Messenger retires.*)
 Ah me, unhappy! what shall I now say,
 Or where begin? The chain of destiny
 Is woven round me, and a dæmon comes,
 More subtle than my nicest subtleties.

* ——— “ Du ordne
 Des Festes Freuden an! Es halle von
 Der Saiten Klang und von der Füsse Schlag
 Der ganze Palast wieder. Siehe da
 Für Iphigenien ein Tag der Freude!”

Schiller's translation.

The low estate has its advantages,—
 It leaves a man at liberty to weep,
 And tell his miseries. To higher men 400
 These comforts are denied. The claims of state
 Impede our life;—we serve the populace.
 I am ashamed to let one tear escape,
 And, on the other hand, to keep it back,
 Sunk, as I am, in utter misery.*
 So must it be. What shall I tell my wife?
 How welcome her? what countenance assume?
 For, in the evil plight in which I stand,
 Her unexpected visit ruins me.
 And yet she acted right. She came to wed 410
 Her daughter, and to do a mother's part,
 Only, alas! to find herself betrayed.
 And as to my poor girl,—yet why should I
 Speak of her thus, who soon will be the bride
 Of Pluto! Ah, how deeply do I feel
 For her! I almost fancy that I hear
 Her pleading thus:—"My father, wilt thou slay
 Thy child? If so, on thee and on thy friends,
 May retribution fall!" Orestes, too,
 Who is but yet a boy, will witness this, 420
 And give vent to his sorrow. Woe is me!
 Ah! how has Paris, Priam's son, brought down
 Destruction on me by these acts of his!

* "Es ist unköniglich, zu weinen—ach,
 Und hier nicht weinen, ist unväterlich."

Schiller's translation.

CHORUS.

We sympathise with thee, as strangers should,
When sov'reigns fall into calamity.

MENELAUS.

Brother, give me thy hand.

AGAMEMNON.

I give it thee.

Thine is the strength, and mine the misery.

MENELAUS.

I swear by Pelops, who was grandfather
To thee and me, and by our parent, too,
That I will speak to thee, without reserve, 430
The dictates of my heart, and will say nought
That is not fitting, and I do not feel.
When I beheld thine eyes suffused with tears,
I pitied thee, and I shed tears myself.
I here revoke the words that I have used.
I am not harsh to thee: I put myself
Into thy place, and truly counsel thee,
On no account to sacrifice thy child.
Lament me not. It is by no means right [440
That thou shouldst mourn, whilst all goes well with me.
That thine should die, and mine enjoy the light.
What would I then? If I desired to wed,
Might I not find again some noble mate?
And shall I wrong my brother, whom I love,
To follow Helen, and take ill for good?
I erred, for I was young, until I looked
On things more closely, and began to see
What such a sacrifice as this involves.

Besides all this, I feel compassion for
 Th' unhappy maiden, and I think upon 450
 Our near relationship, and that 'tis she
 Who for my injuries is doomed to die.
 What has the girl to do with Helena?
 Disband the army, then, let it depart
 From Aulis. Let thine eyes no more be dim
 With tears, my brother, nor cause mine to weep
 For thee. If any prophecy affects
 Thy daughter, tell it. I give up to thee
 My interest in this, and I recall
 My rash expressions, for a brother's love 460
 Has changed me. Men who are not wholly base
 Ever incline towards the better part.

CHORUS.

Thou speakest nobly, as might Tantalus,
 The son of Jove, and thou disgracest not
 The memory of thy great ancestors.

AGAMEMNON.

I praise thee, Menelaus! far beyond
 All expectation hast thou spoken thus,
 And as becomes thy character. But yet
 It unavoidably has come to this,
 That I must on, and shed my daughter's blood. 470

MENE LAUS.

How? what can force thee to surrender her?

AGAMEMNON.

Th' united voice of all Achæa's host.

MENELAUS.

What if to Argos thou shouldst send her back ?

AGAMEMNON.

So much I might effect,—but 'twould be vain.

MENELAUS.

I understand thee not. One should not fear
The multitude too much.

AGAMEMNON.

The multitude
Will hear too soon what Chalchas has to say.

MENELAUS.

Then let the secret perish with the priest !

AGAMEMNON.

A pest, in truth, is all that haughty tribe !

MENELAUS.

A pest it is, and tending to no good.

480

AGAMEMNON.

Dost thou not fear for me, as I now stand ?

MENELAUS.

I cannot guess at what thou dost not tell.

AGAMEMNON.

He who calls Sisyphus his ancestor,
Knows all.

MENELAUS.

Ulysses cannot injure us.

AGAMEMNON.

He always has some subtle game to play.

MENELAUS.

That bane, ambition, truly, warps his mind.

AGAMEMNON.

Dost thou not think, then, that he will stand up
 Amidst the Argives, and declare to them
 The fatal sentence Chalchas has pronounced,
 And how I undertook—but broke my word— 490
 A victim to supply for Artemis?
 Then, will he gain the ear of all the troops,
 And so persuade them, having put to death
 Both thee and me, to sacrifice the maid.
 And even should I manage to escape
 To Argos, they will come before its walls,
 And lay my country waste. Such is my fate!
 Unhappy that I am! The Gods themselves
 Have driven me to this extremity.
 But one good office canst thou render me, 500
 O Menelaus, as thou passest thro'
 The camp, beware lest Clytemnestra hear
 The news, until I take and offer up
 My daughter, so that I may execute
 This awful duty with the fewest tears.
 You women, too, who have come over here,
 I caution to observe strict secrecy.

CHORUS.

Happy are they who prudently enjoy
 The bliss that Venus gives, and cultivate
 Repose of mind, e'en when the flame of love 510
 Burns fiercest!—Cupid with the golden hair
 Directs two arrows, by the Graces winged.
 The touch of one ensures a happy life,

The other but confounds man's destiny.
 O fairest Goddess! this I deprecate
 Whene'er I marry. Calmer impulses
 And just desires, are all that I affect.
 I would be Aphroditè's votary,
 But cast away from me all vain excess.

Men's natures differ, and their habits too, 520
 But what is truly good admits no change.
 How does the force of discipline conduce
 To virtue! Wisdom comes with modesty.
 The pow'r of apprehending what is right
 Bestows a charm which compensates for all.
 It is a pow'r that gives to human life
 A constant dignity, and endless fame.
 'Tis great to seek for virtue.* In the case
 Of women, it should be reserved, and marked 530
 By gentle feeling; whilst with man a sense
 Of firm internal rectitude should guide,
 And make him seek the welfare of the state.

* * * * *
 * * * * *

Ah! what felicity attends the great!—

(Seeing the chariot.)

My queen Iphigenia, ye behold,
 And Clytemnestra, sprung from Tyndarus.

* “Gross ist's, der Tugend nachzustreben :
 Das Weib dient ihr im stillen Leben
 Und in der Liebe sanftem Schoss ;
 Doch in des Mannes Thaten malen
 Sich prangend ihre tausend Strahlen,
 Da macht sie Städt' und Länder gross.”

Schiller's translation.

Of noblest ancestry. To what a height
 Of fortune's favour have they now attained!
 The Gods, those arbiters of human weal,
 Are they who raise mankind. But let us stay,
 Ye women, natives of the Chalcian land, 540
 In order to receive the royal maid
 Alighting from her car, and to prevent
 Her feet from slipping on th' uncertain ground,
 With hands held out and glad civility,
 Lest the fair visitor—the noble child
 Of Agamemnon—should have cause for fear.
 Strangers ourselves, we yet may welcome them,
 Without disturbance, and without alarm.

AGAMEMNON. CLYTEMNESTRA.

IPHIGENIA.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

(In the chariot with Iphigenia.)

We reckon as a happy augury
 Your warm reception and your courtesy. 550
 I have good hope that I bring here a bride,
 Whose lot in life will be most fortunate.
 But now take out the presents I have brought,
 And lay them carefully within the tent.
 And thou, my daughter, from the car descend,
 Guarding thy delicate and tender feet.
 You gentle maidens, take her in your arms,
 And set her down. Let some one, too, afford
 Th' assistance of a helping hand to me,

That I may quit my seat more easily.
 And stand before the horses, for their eyes
 Look wild. They little heed the voice alone.
 Take now this boy, he is a child as yet,
 The son of Agamemnon.—Sleepest thou,
 Worn out by travelling so long a time?
 Arouse thyself! Thy sister's marriage calls,
 And thou wilt gain a noble relative,
 From Thetis sprung, and ranking with the Gods.

(*Seeing Agamemnon.*)

King Agamemnon! whom I honour most,
 We come, obedient to thy commands. 570

IPHIGENIA.

O mother! be not angry, I will run
 And throw myself upon my father's breast.
 Father! I long to be within thine arms,
 And meet thy glance. Be not displeas'd with me.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

'Tis well, my child! of all my progeny
 Thou hast most loved thy father.

IPHIGENIA (*running on*).

Father, dear!

How gladly do I see thee once again,
 After so long an absence!

AGAMEMNON.

And I thee,—

The same expression serves for both of us.

IPHIGENIA.

Well hast thou done in sending for me here! 580

AGAMEMNON.

I know not what to say or what to hide.

IPHIGENIA. (*Aside, weeping.*)

Alas! I see thy joy is not unmixed.

AGAMEMNON.

No! kings and leaders have anxiety.

IPHIGENIA.

Leave all thy cares, devote thyself to me.

AGAMEMNON.

And do I not? am I not at thy side?

IPHIGENIA.

Then smooth thy brow, and look as thou wert wont.

AGAMEMNON.

I certainly rejoice at seeing thee.

IPHIGENIA.

And yet the tears are streaming from thine eyes!

AGAMEMNON.

Aye! our next separation will be long.

IPHIGENIA.

I know not, dearest father, what thou sayst. 590

AGAMEMNON.

Because thou speakest well, I feel the more.

IPHIGENIA.

I would speak ill, could I but gladden thee.

AGAMEMNON (*aside*).

Ye Gods! it is too much. I praise thy love.

IPHIGENIA.

O father! stay with thine own family.

AGAMEMNON.

I would do so, if it were possible.

IPHIGENIA.

Away with Menelaus and the war

AGAMEMNON.

Ah! let us first put down our enemies.

IPHIGENIA.

How long a time hast thou been ling'ring here
In the retreats of Aulis!

AGAMEMNON.

Something still
Prevents the force from moving. I must wait. 600

IPHIGENIA.

Father! where is the land in which they say
The Phrygians reside?

AGAMEMNON.

Where I could wish
That Paris, Priam's son, had ne'er been born.

IPHIGENIA.

Wilt thou sail far, and wilt thou leave thy child?

AGAMEMNON.

Thou, too, must sail,—thou wilt remember me.

IPHIGENIA.

Shall I go with my mother, or alone?

AGAMEMNON.

Alone. Thy father and thy mother, too,
Must give thee up.

IPHIGENIA.

Wilt thou establish me,
My father, in another home.

AGAMEMNON.

Enough!

Maidens should not be told of things, like these. 610

IPHIGENIA.

Father, make haste! conclude with all dispatch
The war in Phrygia, and come back to us.

AGAMEMNON.

Ere then I must perform a sacrifice.

IPHIGENIA.

And with the priests arrange each sacred rite?

AGAMEMNON.

I will inform thee, for thou must assist.

IPHIGENIA.

Is there to be a chorus round the shrine?

AGAMEMNON.

I reckon thee more happy than myself,
In that thou knowest nought. But go at once
Into the tent, and let thy maidens see
Their guest. Thy kiss and thy embrace 620
Are very sad, for long will be the time
That thou wilt have to dwell apart from me.
Ah! that young breast, and cheeks, and golden hair!
What grief have Troy and Helen brought to us!
I say no more,—tears gush into mine eye
At thy fond touch. Go in.

(Iphigenia retires—Agamemnon goes to Clytemnestra.)

But pardon me,

Daughter of Leda, that it cuts my heart
To yield my daughter to Achilles' arms.
'Tis good a child should marry; ne'ertheless,

It wounds the parent, after all his cares,
To give his offspring to another house.

630

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I feel no weakness of this kind, but think
That we shall bear our lot most patiently,
When I bring up the girl to be a bride.
The time—the law itself—demands all this.
I know the name of him to whom her hand
Has been assigned by thee, but wish to learn
Also his family, and whence he comes.

AGAMEMNON.

There was a maid, *Ægina*, and her sire
Was King *Asopus*.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Did some mortal man,
Or else some God, select her for a wife?

640

AGAMEMNON.

'Twas *Jupiter* himself; and *Æacus*,
Commander of *Ænòna*, sprang from them.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And, after *Æacus*, who filled his place?

AGAMEMNON.

Peleus, and he had *Thetis* for his wife,
Daughter of *Nereus*.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Did the Deity
Give her, or did he take her off by force?

AGAMEMNON.

Jove gave assent,—her father murmured not.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Where did they marry?—on the ocean wave?

AGAMEMNON.

No! in the honoured land where Chiron dwelt 650
On Pelion.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Where, as they say, the tribe
Of Centaurs lives?

AGAMEMNON.

There, then, the Deities
All met, to celebrate the marriage feast.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Did Thetis, or his father, take the charge
Of young Achilles?

AGAMEMNON.

Chiron did so, lest
He should contract the manners of bad men.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ah! wise he was, and Peleus wiser still.

AGAMEMNON.

Such is the man who is to wed thy child.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

A match, indeed! but where does he reside?

AGAMEMNON.

On Phthia's confines, near th' Apidanus. 660

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Wilt thou thyself conduct our daughter there?

AGAMEMNON.

He must direct all this,—she will be his.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

May they be happy! Has the day been fixed?

AGAMEMNON.

It should be when the moon is at the full.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Hast thou yet offered the first sacrifice?

AGAMEMNON.

Ere long I will. It occupies my thoughts.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And then will come the marriage festival.

AGAMEMNON.

Aye! when I have performed the sacrifice
The Gods exact from me.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

But where shall I

Then entertain the women who attend?

670

AGAMEMNON.

Here by the well appointed ships of Greece.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

There is no help for it. I must give way.

AGAMEMNON.

How far thou knowest not,—attend to me.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What is it? I am used to do thy will.

AGAMEMNON.

Here am I, and here, too, the bridegroom is.—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Wouldst thou thyself assume the mother's part,
And leave me out?

AGAMEMNON.

Thy daughter must I give
In presence of the army.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

But meanwhile,
What shall I do ?*

AGAMEMNON.

Return to Argos, where
Thy family awaits thee. 680

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And leave my daughter ? Who will raise the torch ?

AGAMEMNON.

I will perform all customary rites.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Thou knowest that the custom is not so.

AGAMEMNON.

It is unseemly that thou shouldst appear
Amidst th' excited host.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

It is not so
That I, a parent, should attend my child.

* " AGAMEMNON.

" Madame, au nom des dieux, auteurs de notre race,
Daignez à mon amour accorder cette grâce.
J'ai mes raisons.

CLYTEMNESTRE.

Seigneur, au nom des mêmes dieux,
D'un spectacle si doux ne privez point mes yeux."
Racine's Iphigénie.

AGAMEMNON.

Besides, thou shouldst not leave thy girls alone.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

They are well guarded in the women's rooms.

AGAMEMNON.

Obey!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

No ; by the queen, the patroness of Greece !
 Depart, and do what must be done outside, 690
 Whilst I, within, provide for what a maid
 Requires, on entering the marriage state.

(retires.)

AGAMEMNON *(alone)*.

Alas ! I came in vain, all hope is o'er
 Of sending Clytemnestra out of sight.
 I plot, and try all arts with those I love,
 And yet I find defeat on ev'ry side.
 A wise man ought to have within his house
 A calm submissive wife, or none at all.

CHORUS.

Near Simois, and its fair silver streams,
 All the vast host of Greece's armament 700
 Will reach the town Apollo helped to build,
 The Trojan Ilium. Methinks I see
 Cassandra there,
 Waving her golden hair
 Encircled with a wreath
 Of verdant laurel, whilst the Gods
 Around her, all their inspiration breathe.

Then by the tow'rs of Troy, and on her walls,*
 The citizens will stand, when Mars all armed
 With brazen shield approaches o'er the sea, 710
 Driving his rapid barks with many an oar
 To the clear waters of the Simois,
 Resolved on winning back from Priam's grasp
 Helen, the sister of th' heroic youths,
 Twin sons of Jove, whose glowing stars, by night,
 Shine in the firmament, with dazzling light,
 And with the spear and shield
 Which the stern Argives wield,
 Bearing her home to her own land again.

And, having circled in old Pergamus, 720
 Defended by its battlements of stone,
 With all the appliances of murd'rous war,
 And cut from many a trunk the ghastly head,
 And laid the city low,
 What burning tears will they then cause to flow
 From virgin eyes, and how will Helen weep,
 On leaving him whom she has loved so well!—
 May I and mine ne'er have before our sight
 That which the wealthy Trojan matrons fear,

* "Sie rennen auf die Mauern!
 Sie steigen auf die Burg!
 Sie erblicken mit Schauern,
 Hoch herunter von Pergamus Burg,
 Den unsre schnellen Schiffe brachten,
 Den fürchterlichen Gott der Schlachten,
 Der in tönendes Erz eingekleidet
 Sich um den Simois zahllos verbreitet," etc.

Schiller's translation.

When they sit at their needlework, and ask, 730
 "What man will seize us by these flowing locks,
 And drag us captive from our ruined home,
 On thy account, thou daughter of the swan,
 If the strange tale be true that men relate,
 How Leda bore thee, after Jove assumed
 The likeness of a bird.—Altho', perchance,
 'Twas but tradition, which conveys to men
 Things of no purpose or reality."

CLYTEMNESTRA. ACHILLES.

ACHILLES (*alone*).

Where is the leader of the Grecian host?
 From which of his attendants here can I, 740
 Achilles, son of Peleus, get to know
 Where I may find him at these entrances.
 Our halt by the Euripus suits me not.
 Some of us are unmarried, and stay here
 Upon the shore, and leave but empty walls;
 Others have wives and children. Such deep zeal
 For this invasion do the Gods infuse!
 What I deem right I therefore must declare,
 And let the rest, who wish, speak after me.
 For quitting Pharsalus, where dwells my sire, 750
 I linger here becalmed, and try to soothe
 The Myrmidons who ever press on me,
 Saying "Achilles, why do we delay?
 How long a time must we still wait, before
 The expedition is to sail for Troy?"

Do what thou purposedst, or send away
The forces homeward, and no longer heed
What future schemes th' Atridæ may design."

CLYTEMNESTRA (*coming out*).

Son of the Goddess Thetis, as I heard
Thy voice within, I come at once to thee. 760

ACHILLES.

What fine propriety!—who is this dame,
Of graceful carriage, whom I now behold?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

It is no wonder that thou know'st me not,
Whom thou hast never seen before. I praise
Thy deep respect for female modesty.

ACHILLES.

Who art thou, lady? Wherefore hast thou come
Alone amidst these mail-clad rugged men?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I am the child of Leda, and my name
Is Clytemnestra, and my husband is
King Agamemnon.

ACHILLES.

Thou hast spoken well 770
And briefly that which thou hast got to say,
'Tis not for me, however, to converse
With women.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Stay! Why so? Let thy right hand
Touch mine. 'Tis thus espousals should commence.

ACHILLES.

What! thy right hand? I have too much respect

For Agamemnon e'er to touch what I
Ought not to touch.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O son of Thetis! it is surely right,
When my own daughter is to be thy bride.

ACHILLES.

What art thou talking of? Astonishment 780
Closes my lips,—it must be some mistake
That has caused this.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

It is but natural
To be reserved with recent friends who talk
To us of marriage.

ACHILLES.

I have never made
Proposals for thy daughter, and no word
Respecting marriage has been said to me.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

How is all this? Thou wonderest at me,—
I am no less perplexed on thy account.

ACHILLES.

Try to conjecture,—it concerns us both.
No doubt we have been grossly played upon. 790

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I am, indeed, ill-used. I prosecute
A false alliance, as it seems, and shame
Oppresses me.

ACHILLES.

Some one has sported with

Both thee and me. But let it pass and take
All easily.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Farewell! I cannot bear
To look thee in the face. I am misled,
And have been made to suffer wrongfully.

ACHILLES (*about to retire*).

It is the same with me. And now I go
To try to find thy husband in the tents.

SERVANT (*looking out*).

O stranger sprung from Æacus, remain, 800
I would speak with thee, noble as thou art,
And with thee, Clytemnestra!

ACHILLES.

Who is it
That from yon door calls us so urgently?

SERVANT.

I am a servant.—I do not presume,
My state permits it not.

ACHILLES.

Whose art thou, then?
Thou art not mine; my quarters are distinct
From Agamemnon's.

SERVANT.

Her's, who stands before
These tents,—the gift of Tyndarus her sire.

ACHILLES.

Well! if thou wantest aught with me speak out;
Here are we, say why thou detainest me. 810

SERVANT.

Are ye alone ?

ACHILLES.

Thou mayst believe it so.
But first come forth out of the regal tent.

SERVANT.

O fortune, and my own good genius,
Save those I wish to save ! *(Comes forward)*.

ACHILLES.

What thou wouldst say
Must needs be weighty. Thou beginnest well.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

By thy right hand, delay not, if thou wilt
Communicate with us.

SERVANT.

Thou knowest well
What I have ever been to thee and thine.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

An old and faithful servant hast thou been
To all my family.

SERVANT.

And dost thou know 820
That Agamemnon took me as part
Of thy possessions ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Aye, thou cam'st with me
To Argos, and thou hast been always mine.

SERVANT.

'Tis so, and I have ever felt good will
To thee, altho' not quite so much to him.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Disclose, then, what thou hast to say to me.

SERVANT.

Her father means to sacrifice thy child
With his own hand.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

How!—Old man, I abhor
Thy words,—thou ravest.

SERVANT.

No! the beauteous neck
Of that unhappy maid he means to strike 830
With his own sword.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ah me! Is he insane?

SERVANT.

He is not so, save with regard to thee
And thy poor child. In this his reason fails.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What can the motive be? What deity
To vengeance urges him?

SERVANT.

As Chalchas says—
An oracle—in order that the fleet
May sail at once.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And whither? Ah! for me,
And her, thrice wretched, whom a father's hand
Is raised to kill!

SERVANT.

They wait that they may go

To th' land of Dardanus, and bear from thence 840
The wife of Menelaus.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

So, it seems,
Iphigenia dies for Helen's sake?

SERVANT.

Thou hast it all. Her father is prepared
To offer up his child to Artemis.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And on what pretext does this marriage rest
For which I came?

SERVANT.

'Twas that thou mightest bring
Thy daughter here with joy, as if to wed
Her to Achilles.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Thou, then, dearest girl,
Hast only come with me to meet thy fate.

SERVANT.

You both are to be pitied. Fearful schemes 850
Has Agamemnon planned!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I am undone!
I can no more restrain my gushing tears.

SERVANT.

Truly the grief of one abused like thee
Is hard to bear.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

But say, old man, from whence
Hast thou these tidings?

SERVANT.

I was setting out
To bear a letter to thee, after that
Which was first written.—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Was it to prevent,
Or still to bid me bring my child to die?

SERVANT.

'Twas to prevent. Thy husband, then, had thought
Long on the subject.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

How came it to pass 860
That, having got the letter, thou didst not
Deliver it to me?

SERVANT.

It was because
King Menelaus seized it. He it is
Who causes all these ills. (Goes in.)

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O noble son
Of Peleus and of Thetis, dost thou hear?

ACHILLES.

I hear that thou art wretched,—and my part
In this affair is not what I approve.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

They slay my child, and plead a match with thee.

ACHILLES.

I blame thy husband, and am not disposed
Calmly to acquiesce in such a wrong. 870

CLYTEMNESTRA (*kneeling*).

It shames me not to fall before thy knees,—
 Altho' a mortal thou art Goddess born.
 And why should I be proud? In what ought one
 To labour more than in a daughter's cause?
 Help me, thou son of Thetis, in my woe;
 Help her who has been mentioned as thy wife,
 However vainly,—help her ne'ertheless.
 Decking her brow with wreaths, I brought her here
 To marry thee,—but only brought to die.
 Disgrace will fall on thee, shouldst thou neglect 880
 To succour her, for tho' thou art not joined
 With her in wedlock, yet thou hast been named
 The husband of that most unhappy girl.
 By thy right hand, thy beard, thy mother's self,
 I supplicate. Thy name has ruined me,—
 Thy name it is a duty to defend.
 I have no shrine to which I may resort
 Except thy knees,—no friend to smile on me.
 All Agamemnon's rash and cruel schemes
 Thou knowest. I, a woman, come amongst 890
 This naval host, so insubordinate
 And strong for evil, and for good besides
 When they so will. If thou wouldst only dare
 To give thy hand to me, all might be well,
 Else I am lost.

CHORUS.

It is a mighty charge
 To have a family,—and impulses

Which all experience compel mankind
To labour for their offspring.

ACHILLES.

I myself

Look farther. In adversity, indeed, 900
I grieve, but take the good with modest joy.
I was brought up by Chiron wise and good,
And learnt from him simplicity of life.
I will obey the sons of Atreus when
They rule with justice, but not otherwise.
Yet here, and afterwards, with heart and hand
Must I do honour to the God of war,
As far as in me lies, in feats of arms.
Thy daughter, who has been proclaimed as mine,
Shall ne'er be slain by her own father's hand. 910
I will not let myself be made the tool
Of this thy husband. It will be my name,
Tho' I lift not the sword, that will destroy
Thy child, he being guilty. I shall be
No longer honourable, if thro' me
The maiden dies who has endured so much.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Oh, would that I could praise thee as I ought,
And not exaggerate, nor yet omit
That which is due. 'Twould seem that worthy men
Somehow dislike the voice of flattery. 920
I blush to speak to thee in moving terms
Of my more private wrongs, they touch thee not.
But yet how well it looks when a good man,

Altho' a stranger, helps th' unfortunate!
 Then pity us, for we have suffered things
 Demanding pity.—All my hopes are vain
 Of having thee to be my son-in-law.
 And for thyself, when thou dost take a wife,
 My murdered child perchance may cast a blight
 On thee, unless thou aid her. All that thou 930
 Hast said is well. So now fulfil thy words.
 If thou determinest, my child is safe.
 Wilt thou that she should fall before thy knees?
 'Tis not a maiden's part, yet if it be
 Thy pleasure, she shall come, and that with all
 The modest freedom that beseems a maid.
 Yet if I can obtain this boon from thee,
 Without her presence, let her stay within.
 Respect is due to virgin diffidence.

ACHILLES.

Bring not thy daughter forth into my sight, 940
 Nor let us foolishly incur reproach.
 The army, loose from all domestic ties,
 Delights in base and idle gossiping.
 'Twould be the same whether ye came to me
 As suppliants or no. My chiefest wish
 Is to deliver you from all your ills,
 So understand at once I am sincere.
 If I speak falsely or if I deceive,
 Be death my lot; but if I save the girl,
 So may I prosper.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Happiness be thine! 950
 Thou art not backward to relieve distress.

ACHILLES.

Then listen to me whilst I tell thee how
We should proceed.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

There is but little need
To bid me listen to advice from thee.

ACHILLES.

What we must try to do is to persuade
Her father to adopt a better course.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

He is time-serving, and he fears the host.

ACHILLES.

Yet arguments may conquer arguments.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Faint is the hope. But what ought I to do?

ACHILLES.

Firstly implore him to renounce this deed. 960
Should he deny thee, have recourse to me.
The army cannot blame me, if in this
I use persuasion rather than mere force.
Should all go well for thee and for thy friends
My further intervention may be spared.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

How wisely hast thou spoken!—be it so.
But if I cannot do what I desire,
Where shall we meet again? Where shall I go,
In my distress, to find thy helping hand?

ACHILLES.

I will watch o'er thee on emergency, 970
Lest some one see thee wand'ring, in alarm,

Amidst the army, and lest thou disgrace
 Thy father's house, for Tyndarus ought not
 To feel the breath of censure. He stands high.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Proceed, I must obey. If there be gods,
 A man so good as thou art must prevail,
 If not, alas ! all labour is in vain.

CHORUS.

What marriage strain* was that which, aided by
 The flute of Libya and the harp that leads
 The voice so well, and by the pipes of reed, 980
 Sounded so sweet? 'Twas when o'er Pelion
 The fair-haired Muses came, in festal guise,
 Printing their golden sandals on the ground,
 To honour Peleus on his wedding-day,
 And sang in tones of richest melody,
 Throughout the Centaur's mountainous retreats
 And the fir-groves of Pelion, the praise
 Of Thetis and the son of Æacus.
 Then Ganymede, the Phrygian, who owed
 His birth to Dardanus, of Jove beloved, 990
 Poured forth the nectar into golden cups,

* "Wie lieblich erklang
 Der Hochzeitgesang
 Den du der Cither tanzlustigen Tönen,
 Zur Schalmei und zum libyschen Rohr
 Sang der Kamenen
 Versammelter Chor
 Auf Peleus Hochzeit, und Thetis der Schönen."
Schiller's translation.

And on the fair white sand
 A blooming band
 Of fifty Nereids, still dancing round,
 Displayed their joy in many a fairy bound.

With staves of pine and verdant coronets,
 A mounted troop of Centaurs gaily came
 To revel with the Gods, and quaff the wine,
 And loudly cried, "O Thetis, he who knows
 The course of fate, old Chiron, says that thou 1000
 Shalt bear a son, the light of Thessaly,
 Who with his spear-armed band of Myrmidons,
 Shall go to wrap in flames the far-famed land
 Of Priam, cased in panoply of gold
 By Vulcan wrought, having received the gift
 From his own mother, Thetis the divine."
 Then did the splendid conclave celebrate
 The marriage of the chiefest Nereid
 And Peleus.

As for thee, the Greeks shall crown
 Thy head with its bright locks of clust'ring hair, 1010
 As they might crown a heifer—whose retreat
 Is in some mountain-cave—for sacrifice,
 And stain thy snowy neck with drops of gore.
 Yet wert thou not brought up amidst the sound
 Of rural music and the lowing herds,
 But by thy royal mother for a bride.
 Where is the force of virtue and of right,
 When wickedness prevails, and men neglect
 All good, and rampant licence rears its crest,
 So that the race of mortals cares no more 1020
 To shun the just displeasure of the Gods?

AGAMEMNON. CLYTEMNESTRA.
IPHIGENIA.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

To seek my husband who has left the tent
A long time since, and has not yet returned,
Am I come forth, and my unhappy girl
Is now in tears, and rings the changes on
Her theme of woe, for she has heard what death
Her father wills her. It occurred to me
That he, this Agamemnon, was at hand,
Who soon will be convicted of a crime
Unparalleled against his family. 1030

AGAMEMNON (*coming up*).

Daughter of Leda, it is opportune
That I have found thee here outside the tent,
Since I would speak to thee apart from her
Of things it is not fit a maid should hear.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What is it, then, that suits the hour so well?

AGAMEMNON.

Entrust the maid to me, and send her out.
The sacred water is in readiness,
And salted meal for pious hands to cast
Into the lustral flame,—the victim too,
Which for the Goddess Artemis must fall 1040
And shed its blood to consecrate the rite.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Thy words are fair, I would thy deeds were so.
Come forth my daughter, for thou art aware

Of all thy father's plans, and bring with thee
 Beneath thy robes, the boy Orestes. See!
 The maid, so good and dutiful appears.
 For her and for myself will I speak out.

(Iphigenia comes out with the child).

AGAMEMNON.

Why dost thou weep, poor girl, and look so sad,
 With eyes cast down and in thy mantle veiled?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Alas! how can I open out my case? *(Aside.)* 1050

AGAMEMNON.

What has occurred, that all, with one consent,
 Come here disturbed, and with such looks as these?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Tell me, O husband, plainly what I ask.

AGAMEMNON.

I need no urging, I desire to speak.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

In one word, is it thine intent to slay
 Our darling child Iphigenia?

AGAMEMNON.

Ah!

Thou speakest harshly and suspectest ill.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Be calm, and, in the first place, answer me.

AGAMEMNON.

Ask what is fitting, and I may reply.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

[1060

I ask nought else, and nought else shouldst thou say.

AGAMEMNON.

O fate divine, and chance, and destiny !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

My destiny and hers, as well as thine.

AGAMEMNON.

Whom have I injured ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Canst thou ask me this ?

The balance of thy mind is surely lost.

AGAMEMNON.

I am undone, my secret is betrayed. *(Aside.)*

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Aye ! I know all, thy purpose I have heard.

Thy very silence, and thy frequent groans,

Betray thee of themselves. Thou needest not

Use studied words.

AGAMEMNON.

No ! I should be ashamed

To treat distress with insincerity. 1070

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Then listen, and I will my tale unfold,

In which there shall be nought irrelevant,

And nought obscure. My first reproach is this,

That having slain my husband Tantalus,

Thou tookest me by force to be thy wife,

Dragging my sucking infant from my breast.

And so my brothers, the two sons of Jove,

Renowned for horsemanship, made war on thee,

But Tyndarus, my aged father, heard [1080

Thy prayers, and saved thee. I became thy wife.—

A blameless wife I was, as thou must own,
 Pure in affection, and augmenting still
 Thy substance, and thy state, and making thee
 Happy at home and prosperous abroad,
 'Tis rare for man to win a spouse like this,
 It is not so to find a worthless one,
 Three daughters and a son I bore to thee,
 Of one of whom thou wouldst deprive me now,
 And, ah, how cruelly!—Should one demand
 The cause for which thou seekest her young life, 1090
 What couldst thou say? I will reply for thee,—
 That Menelaus might have Helena.
 'Tis well in thee, for one base woman's sake,
 To slay thy children, and redeem the thing
 We most abhor, with what we hold most dear.
 And now shouldst thou set sail, and stay away
 For a long season, leaving me at home,
 What thinkest thou must be my feelings there,
 When I behold her places of resort
 All desolate, and her apartment void? 1100
 Then must I sit in tears lamenting thus,—
 “O daughter, he to whom thou ow'st thy life
 With his own hand hath taken it away.
 Such is the boon he gives his family!”
 Methinks 'twould need but slight apology
 Were I and the poor children thou dost leave,
 To welcome thy return as it deserves.
 Compel me not, I pray thee by the Gods,
 To turn against thee. Wilt thou slay thy child?
 What prayer canst thou put up—and what expect 1110

In sacrificing her, or how come back
 Except in shame, having begun so ill ?
 Can I myself wish any good to thee ?
 I should impugn the wisdom of the gods
 Were I to sanction such atrocity,
 Wouldst thou ask pardon of thy family
 On thy return to Argos ? There will be
 No room for this, for which of them can look
 On thee as on a father, having slain [1120
 One in cold blood ? Hast thou considered this ?
 Art thou, indeed, the leader and the king ?
 Then 'tis thy duty to be just, and say,—
 “ Would ye, O Greeks, pursue the way to Troy—
 Draw lots, and so decide whose child must die.
 All are concerned alike.” It is not fair*
 That thou shouldst be thus singled out to give
 Thy daughter as a victim to the cause.
 Rather than this should Menelaus kill
 Hermione for her own mother's sake.
 Th' affair is his. Yet I who have been true 1130
 To thee must suffer, whilst the guilty wife
 Safe to her child and Sparta will return,

* “ Si du crime d'Hélène on punit sa famille,
 Faites chercher à Sparte Hermione sa fille :
 Laissez à Ménélas racheter d'un tel prix
 Sa coupable moitié, dont il est trop épris.
 Mais vous, quelles fureurs vous rend sa victime.
 Pourquoi vous imposer la peine de son crime ?
 Pourquoi moi même enfin, me déchirant le flanc,
 Payer sa folle amour du plus pur de mon sang ?”
Racine's Iphigénie.

And there live happily. Now answer me
 If I have said aught amiss—if not, be wise,
 And spare the maiden who is thine—and mine.

CHORUS.

O Agamemnon yield! It must be right
 Thine offspring to protect. None can gainsay.

IPHIGENIA.

O father, if I had the eloquence
 Of Orpheus, to persuade the very rocks
 To follow me, and by my words to charm 1140
 The souls of men, I should feel confident.
 But, now, I must rely upon myself,
 And have nought else to offer, save my tears.
 This frame of mine, which she did bear to thee,
 A suppliant I prostrate at thy knees.
 Slay me not in my prime. 'Tis sweet to see
 The light of day. Compel me not, as yet
 To contemplate what lies beyond the grave.
 I was the first to call thee father,—thou
 First calledst me thy child. I was the first 1150
 To rest upon thy knees, I gave to thee
 A father's joy, and I myself was glad.
 Thus wert thou wont to speak, "Beloved child!
 May I behold thee living happily
 Beneath a husband's roof, and prospering
 As I could wish." And I was wont to say,
 Caressing that dear face on which my hand
 Now rests,—“How gladly should I welcome thee
 My dearest father, as thou growest old,

Within the shelter of a home of mine, 1160
 And recompense thy early care for me.”
 These words I cherish in my memory,
 Thou hast forgotten, and wouldst let me die.—
 By Pelops, and by Atreus thine own sire,
 And this my mother who gave birth to me
 And now endures a second agony,
 O spare my life. Say what have I to do
 With Alexander’s and with Helen’s fault?
 Why should my father seek to cut me off?
 Turn to me, give me but one look, one kiss! 1170
 That if thou wilt not hear, and I must die,
 I yet may have some sweet memorial.
 Brother, thou art but a young advocate,
 Yet blend thy tears with mine, and so entreat
 Our father not to shed thy sister’s blood.
 E’en infants have a sense of coming ill.
 Father, behold how silently he prays!
 Then have respect to me, and spare my life.
 See how we too, so dear, before thee kneel,
 He still a child, I in maturity. 1180
 In one short word I sum up all. This light
 Is sweet to man, not so the gloom of death.
 It is insanity to long to die.
 ’Tis better e’en to live unhappily
 Than to die nobly but before the time.

CHORUS.

O ill-starred Helen! on account of thee
 And thy elopement, what a gulph divides
 The sons of Atreus, and the family!

AGAMEMNON.

I know what pity claims from me, and know
 What pity cannot claim. I love mine own, 1190
 Not to do this were mere insanity.
 'Tis sad for me, my child, to dare this deed,
 'Twere sad to quail. I must—I must—go on.
 Ye see this mighty naval armament.
 Ye see these leaders of the hosts of Greece
 In brazen panoply, who ne'er will reach,
 As Chalchas says, the towers of Ilium,
 Or throw that famous fortress to the ground,
 Unless I give thee up. In the meantime,
 A passion rages amongst all the troops 1200
 For sailing promptly to that distant land
 And there avenging all our injuries.
 My other girls at Argos will they slay,
 And thee and me, if I should set at nought
 The Goddess' decree. 'Tis not the will
 Of Menelaus which has conquered me,—
 'Tis not his judgment unto which I yield,—
 'Tis Greece. To her, whether I will or no,
 I must surrender thee. Necessity
 Is here my master. Hellas must be free 1210
 As far as thou and I can make her so,
 Nor must barbarians, by violence,
 Invade her dearest and most sacred rights.

(*Goes in.*)

CLYTEMNESTRA. IPHIGENIA.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O friends! O daughter! how this sacrifice

Appals my soul ! Thy father flies from thee,
And gives thee to the grave. (Retires.)

IPHIGENIA (*Monody*).

Ah me ! no more

May I enjoy the light, no more the sun
May cheer me with its beams. The same sad note
Sounds in the ears of both. Alas ! alas !
For Ida's snow-clad peaks, and for the grove 1220
Where Priam once cast forth his infant child,
'Torn from the mother's breast, and left to die !—
'That child was Paris, whom the citizens
Called the Idæan Paris. Would that he*
Had never been brought up amidst the herds
'To be their keeper, and had never dwelt
By the clear water where the fountains gush
And nymphs resort, and where the verdant meads†

* "O hätt' er's nimmermehr gethan ! den Hirten
Der Rinder, diesen Paris, nimmermehr
Am klaren Wasser hingeworfen, wo
Durch grüne, blüthenvolle Wiesen, reich
Beblümt mit Rosen, würdig, von Göttinnen
Gepflückt zu werden, und mit Hyacinthen,
Der Nymphen Silberquelle rauscht," etc.

Schiller's translation.

† ——— "The crocus brake like fire,
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
Lotus and lilies : and a wind arose,
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
'This way and that, in many a wild festoon,
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs
With bunch, and berry, and flower, thro' and thro'."

Tennyson's Ænone.

Bloom with bright flowers, and rosy hyacinths
 Meet for the hands of Goddesses to pluck. 1230
 Thither came Pallas, and, with wiles begirt,
 Venus, and Juno, and along with them
 Hermes, Jove's messenger,—the queen of love
 Exulting in her charms, and Pallas armed,
 And Herè wife of regal Jupiter.
 For beauty's fatal contest they appeared,
 To me the cause of death, but to the Greeks
 A source of glory.—Mother, mother dear!
 He goes, and leaves me all alone to die.
 Unhappy that I am in having seen 1240
 That baneful evil woman Helena!
 Oh! I am murdered by the lawless hands
 Of my misguided parent! how I wish
 That Aulis never had received our ships
 With brass-defended prows! I wish that they
 Had been allowed to steer direct for Troy,
 And that great Jupiter, with adverse winds
 Thro' the Euripus, had not checked their course.
 For certain men he tempers the rude gale,
 And makes them glad, but causes grief to some 1250
 And binds them in inevitable ties,
 Some are permitted to go on their way,
 Some vexed by tedious impediments.
 Certainly men are born to misery,
 But why should they themselves enhance it thus?
 Daughter of Tyndarus, thou hast brought down
 Loss and distress enough upon the Greeks.

CHORUS.

We pity thee, thy lot in life is hard,
 And it is one that thou hast not deserved.

CLYTEMNESTRA. IPHIGENIA. ACHILLES.

IPHIGENIA.

My mother, I behold a crowd of men 1260
Approaching us.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Aye, and the godlike man
Whom thou cam'st here to marry.

IPHIGENIA (*to attendant inside*).

Let the doors
Be opened for me that I may retire.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What dost thou fly from, child?

IPHIGENIA.

Achilles, whom
I am ashamed to meet.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And why?

IPHIGENIA.

Because
Of this unhappy marriage.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

In a case
Like ours there is no need of vain reserve.
Stay where thou art. Such delicacy now
Is but ill-timed.

ACHILLES (*coming up*).

O most unhappy queen,
From Leda sprung!

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Thou hast described me well. 1270

ACHILLES.

Words of grave import circulate amongst
The Greeks.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What words, I pray? keep me not in suspense.

ACHILLES.

About thy daughter.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

It is ominous.

ACHILLES.

They say she must be slain.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Did none oppose?

ACHILLES.

I did, and so brought peril on myself.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Of what?

ACHILLES.

Of being stoned.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And this thou didst

To save the girl?

ACHILLES.

Just so.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And who would dare

To touch thy person?

ACHILLES.

All the host of Greece.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

But were not thine own Myrmidons with thee? 1280

ACHILLES.

My Myrmidons were hostile as the rest.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Then, daughter, hope is o'er.

ACHILLES.

They taunted me
With being far too weak to stand against
A flatt'ring offer.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What didst thou reply?

ACHILLES.

I said they should not kill the maiden, whom
I purposed to espouse.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Thou saidest well.

ACHILLES.

A maid whom her own father offered me.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And hither brought from Argos.

ACHILLES.

Noise prevailed.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

An evil, truly, is the fickle crowd.

ACHILLES.

Yet will I aid thee.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And wilt thou alone 1290
Contend with numbers ?

ACHILLES.

Seest thou these men
All bearing arms ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Success and joy be thine !

ACHILLES.

I doubt not of it.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And will not my child
Be slain ?

ACHILLES.

Not if I have the means to interpose.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

But will they not come here to seize on her ?

ACHILLES.

Aye ! thousands will,—Ulysses at their head—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

The son of Sisyphus ?

ACHILLES.

The very same.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Upon his own account, or chosen by
The army ?

ACHILLES.

Willingly, and chosen, too.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

It is a cruel choice to stain one's soul 1300
With murder.

ACHILLES.

I will baffle his intent.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Can he, then, drag her hence against her will ?

ACHILLES.

Aye ! by her golden locks.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What must I do ?

ACHILLES.

Keep at her side.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I will prevent all ill

As far as in me lies.

ACHILLES.

'Twill come to blows.

IPHIGENIA.

Mother, attend to me, for I perceive

That all thine indignation is in vain.

We cannot brave impossibilities.

As for this stranger, it is right that we

Should give all praise to his devotedness. 1310

Yet should we look to this,—he must not rouse

The anger of the army, and incur

The risk of injury, on our account,

For we are helpless, and can do no more.

Hear then, my mother, what occurs to me

After due thought. I have made up my mind

To perish, and my only object is
 To do so nobly, and to cast aside
 All sordid thoughts and feelings. O reflect,
 And thou wilt own that what I say is right. 1320
 The whole of mighty Hellas looks to me ;
 On me depends the sailing of the fleet,
 And the just overthrow of Phrygia.
 Should the barbarians attempt again
 Aught against women, they will never more
 Seek for their prey upon these happy shores,
 When they have paid so dearly for the rape
 Of Helen, whom young Paris snatched away.
 All this, my sacrifice will now effect,
 And I shall have the enviable fame 1330
 Of having rescued Greece. Ah, why should I
 Be so in love with life? I was not born
 For thee alone, but for my country's sake.
 Ten thousand shielded warriors are here,
 And mariners, who, for the injury
 Done to their country, are prepared to march
 Against the foe, and to lay down their lives.
 Shall my one life, I ask, impede all this ?
 Against such arguments what can be urged ?
 It comes to this.—Achilles must not strive 1340
 With all the Greeks for me, and risk his life.
 A man like him is worthier to live
 Than hosts of women. And if Artemis
 Deigns to accept this body, how can I
 A mortal, stand against the will divine ?
 No! no! I freely give myself to Greece.—

Slay me ! devastate Troy !—this monument
 Will stand for long, and it will be at once
 Alliance—offspring—immortality.—
 Greeks o'er Barbarians should rule, and not 1350
 Barbarians o'er Greeks, for they are slaves
 And we are free.

CHORUS.

Lady ! most nobly hast thou done thy part,
 Struck both by fortune and the Deities.

ACHILLES.

Daughter of Agamemnon, if some God
 Enabled me, indeed, to win thy hand,
 I should be blest, for Greece may well be proud
 Of thee, as much as thou art proud of Greece.
 Thy words are right, and such as well befit 1360
 The country's dignity. To strive with heav'n
 More powerful than us, thou dost decline.
 But as I contemplate thy qualities
 The stronger grows my wish to marry thee,
 For great art thou ! Now look !—I would befriend
 And take thee hence, and 'twill be grief to me,
 Thetis be witness, if I save thee not,
 By doing battle with thine enemies.
 Think on it well. 'Tis terrible to die.

IPHIGENIA.

Spontaneous and unbiassed are my words. 1370
 Be it enough that Helen with her charms
 Occasions war and slaughter amongst men.—

But thou, a stranger, hazard not thy life,
 Nor take another's life because of me.
 Let me save Hellas, if indeed I can.

ACHILLES.

Grand is thy purpose. I have nought to say
 In answer to thee, since thou art resolved,—
 There is nobility in that intent.
 Yet why should any one conceal the truth?
 It may be that thou wilt repent at last. 1380
 And, that thou mayst remember what I say,
 Near to the altar will I place these arms,
 In token that my wish is to avert,
 And not to aid thy death. Too soon, alas!
 Thou mayst have reason to avail thyself
 Of me, when thou beholdest the bright sword
 Approach thy neck. I will not suffer thee
 To die by thy own rashness, but will go
 Prepared towards the temple, and await
 Thy presence there. (Retires.)

IPHIGENIA.

O mother, why dost thou 1390
 So silently bedew thy cheeks with tears?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Unhappy that I am, have I not cause
 For all my grief?

IPHIGENIA.

Yet cease to cast me down
 By these regrets, and hear my last request.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What wouldst thou, daughter? I will do thy will.

IPHIGENIA,

Then cut not off thy waving locks of hair,
Nor wrap thy person in the garb of woe.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What sayst thou? am I not to mourn for thee?

IPHIGENIA.

Ah, no! no tomb will stand o'er my remains.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What then? Thou diest,—will there be no tomb? 1400

IPHIGENIA.

The altar is to be my monument.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Dear daughter, I obey, thou sayest well.

IPHIGENIA.

I shall be blessed in benefitting Greece.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What message to thy sisters must I bear?

IPHIGENIA.

I would not have them clad in mourning weeds.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What kindly words from thee shall I convey?

IPHIGENIA.

One word,—farewell!—With care and tenderness
To manhood rear Orestes for my sake.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

For the last time embrace and look on him.

IPHIGENIA (*embracing the boy*).

My dearest, thou at least hast aided us 1410
As far as thou hadst power.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What besides,
When I arrive at Argos, can I do
To execute thy will?

IPHIGENIA.

Hate not, I pray,
My father, and thy husband.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

He will have
Enough to suffer on account of thee.

IPHIGENIA.

Unwillingly he gives me up for Greece.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

His ways are indirect, and ill become
A son of Atreus.

IPHIGENIA.

Who will lead me hence,
Before they come and seize me by the hair?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I will attend thee, and cling to thy robes. 1420

IPHIGENIA.

Mother, it is not fit. Be ruled by me—
Stay here. . It will be best for both of us.
One of my father's slaves may go with me
To th' plain of Artemis, where I must die.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Wilt thou depart?

IPHIGENIA.

Aye! never to return.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And leave thy mother ?

IPHIGENIA.

In a manner, too,

We ne'er expected.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Stay ! O leave me not.

IPHIGENIA.

I will not have thee weep. Ye maidens, raise
 A hymn to Jove's great daughter Artemis
 Respecting me, and let the strain resound 1430
 Thro' all the camp. Let some one consecrate
 The vessels, and the fire be made to glow
 With offerings thrown in, and let my sire
 Lay his right hand upon the shrine. I come
 To save the Greeks and give them victory.
 Conduct me, now, the conqueror of Troy.
 Bring, give to me, th' encircling coronet,
 And water, let the sad procession move
 Around the fane and altar, where resides
 The great queen Artemis the blest, for I, 1440
 Since it must be, will wash out with my blood
 The writing of the Oracle.

CHORUS.

Mother revered, our tears gush forth for thee.
 At that solemnity we must not weep.

IPHIGENIA.

Ye maidens, sing in praise of Artemis,
 Whose shrine fronts Chalcis, where the warlike spear

Rests idly, on account of me, within
 The narrow strait of Aulis. Oh! farewell,
 Land of my birth, Pelasgia, farewell,—
 Mycenæ, and my maidens.

CHORUS.

'Tis the town 1450
 That Perseus founded, and the Cyclops built.

IPHIGENIA.

I thought to be an honour to the land,
 But yet I do not hesitate to die.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Thy fame can never die.

IPHIGENIA.

Alas! alas!
 Thou beaming day, thou light of Jove himself!
 Another and a diff'rent life and fate
 Must I experience. Bright sun, all hail!* (*departs.*)

CHORUS.

Alas, ye see the vanquisher of Troy
 Going, with flowers on her lovely brow,
 Towards the fountain, and the holy shrine 1460
 Of the presiding Deity, to shed
 Her blood in trickling streamlets, and to feel
 The sword upon her neck. Yon dewy rills

* "Hier schliesst die dramatische Handlung. Was noch folgt ist die Erzählung von Iphigeniens Betragen beim Opfer, etc."—*Schiller's note.*

And waters look for her, and all the host
 Of the Achæans burning to depart.
 Now will we call upon fair Artemis,
 Daughter of Jove, and queen of all the Gods,
 For a successful voy'ge. O Artemis,
 Who hast delight in human sacrifice,
 Conduct our armies to that hostile land, 1470
 And to the towers of deceitful Troy,
 And grant to Agamemnon, with his host,
 That in the name of Greece, he there may win
 A crown of fame that will not pass away.

CLYTEMNESTRA. SERVANT.

SERVANT. (*After some time.*)

O Clytemnestra sprung from Tyndarus,
 Come forth, and listen to the news I bear.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Hearing thy voice, I have appeared at once,
 Wretched and scared, distracted with the fear
 Lest thou shouldst tell me of some further woe
 Besides the present one.

SERVANT.

I do, in truth, 1480
 Bring tidings strange and sad, about thy child.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Delay not, then. Speak out and lose no time.

SERVANT.

No, my dear mistress, thou shalt hear it all.
 From the commencement will I speak, unless
 The agitation of my mind impedes

The current of the tale.—When we arrived
 At great Diana's grove and flow'ry mead,
 Where the Achæan army was drawn up,—
 The Princess with them,—all the multitude
 Condensed itself, and when the King beheld 1490
 His victim daughter entering the shade
 He groaned, and turned aside his head, and wept,
 And pressed the mantle to his streaming eyes.
 She stood before her father and spake thus,—
 “Father, I come to thee, and I give up
 My body for my country, and for Greece,
 Most willingly, to be a sacrifice,
 Upon the altar of the Deity,
 Since fate decrees it thus. And may my death
 Bring you prosperity,—may victory 1500
 Be yours,—may you return, at last,
 To your own country. Let no man lay hands
 On me. In silence, and with all my heart
 I yield my bosom to the sword.” She spake,
 And all who heard, in mute astonishment,
 Bore witness to the magnanimity
 And virtue of the girl. Talthybius,
 Whose task it was, on high amidst the crowd,
 Enjoined strict silence and a fair assent.
 The prophet Chalchas, then, drew from its sheath 1510
 His sword, and placed it on a golden stand,
 And crowned the maiden's head. Achilles ran,
 Meanwhile, around the shrine of Artemis,
 Bearing the water and the implements,
 And cried, “O goddess, lover of the chase,

Whose rolling orb illumes the pensive night,
 Accept this off'ring of the Argive host
 And of their king,—the unpolluted blood
 Poured from a lovely virgin's stainless neck,
 And grant the fleet a safe and happy voy'ge, 1520
 And, to our arms, the fall of Pergamus."
 With downcast eyes th' Atridæ and the host
 Stood still. The priest took up his sword and prayed,
 And looked where he might plant the fatal stroke.
 As for myself, a heavy grief weighed down
 My heart. But soon a miracle took place.
 All clearly heard the blow's appalling sound,—
 None saw the maid, and whither she was gone
 None knew. The priest exclaimed, and shouts of joy
 Rose from the army as they witnessed 1530
 This unhop'd intervention of some God,
 Scarce realising what their eyes beheld,
 For there lay palpitating on the spot, a hind
 Of wondrous size and beauty, in whose gore
 Diana's altar was profusely bathed.
 Thou mayst imagine with what heartfelt joy
 Chalchas spake out, and said,—“Ye leaders all
 Of the confed'rate army of the Greeks,
 Look on this victim, this fair mountain deer,
 Brought hither by great Artemis herself! 1540
 It she prefers before the youthful maid
 And will not stain her shrine with noble blood,
 It she accepts, and grants us fav'ring gales
 And a safe passage to the coast of Troy.”
 At once each man, with confidence renewed,

Hied to his ship, and on this very day
 Shall we abandon Aulis and its straits,
 And tempt th' Ægean sea.—But when the flames
 Of Vulcan had consumed the sacrifice,
 Chalchas put up a prayer for future aid 1550
 And for the army's safe and quick return.
 Now, Agamemnon sends me here to tell
 This news to thee, and what a glad result
 The Gods have given, and what undying fame
 He has achieved throughout the whole of Greece.
 I who was present, and who witnessed all
 That has occurred, describe the scene to thee.
 Thy daughter, without doubt, has winged her flight
 Towards the Gods. Then cast aside thy grief
 And thy displeasure. Unexpectedly 1560
 The Gods deal with mankind, but they protect
 Those whom they greatly love. This day has seen
 Thy daughter dying, and restored to life.

CHORUS.

What news is this! how I rejoice for thee!
 Thy daughter lives, and dwells amongst the Gods.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

O daughter! have the Gods, then, taken thee?
 How shall I speak to thee? What shall I say?—
 Or have ye vainly told this narrative
 But as a means of stopping my complaints?

CHORUS.

Lo! noble Agamemnon comes to us. 1570
 Who will confirm the tale that we have heard.

AGAMEMNON.

Lady! so far as it concerns our child
We may be happy; for amongst the Gods
She has her place, and thou must now retire
With this young boy. The fleet will shortly sail.
Farewell! It may be long ere we converse
On my return. Till then, be prosperous.

CHORUS.

In joy, Atrides, mayst thou plant thy foot
On Trojan ground, in joy mayst thou return,
And bring back ample spoil for all of us.

1580

THE END.

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS.

Characters.

THOAS, King of Tauris.

IPHIGENIA.

ORESTES, her brother.

PYLADES.

HERDSMAN.

MESSENGER.

CHORUS of Greek women.

GUARDS, etc.

MINERVA.

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS.

Scene.—Space in front of Diana's Temple, over the sea.

IPHIGENIA (*Prologue*).

PELOPS, the son of Tantalus, with steeds
Swift as the wind, to Pisa went, and took
The daughter of Œnomäus to wife.
From him sprang Atreus. Menelaus was
His son, and Agamemnon too, to whom
And to the daughter of King Tyndarus
I, named Iphigenia, owe my birth.
Close by the eddies which, oft swept by winds,
Euripus raises on its azure tide,
My father fancied he had offered me
To Artemis, for Helen's sake, beside
The far-famed straits of Aulis, where the king
Mustered his squadron of a thousand ships,
In order that the Greeks might win the crown
Of victory from Troy, and so avenge
The broken vows of Helen, and do grace
To Menelaus. But a long delay
From constant calm made him consult the Gods.

And Chalchas answered—"Agamemnon, chief
 Of this vast armament, no ship shall sail 20
 From hence unless Iphigenia dies
 A victim to Diana. Thou thyself
 Didst promise, in the year that she was born,
 To give the fairest produce of that year
 To the light-bringing Goddess. In thy house,
 Thy consort, Clytemnestra, bore to thee
 A daughter. Her must thou, then, sacrifice."—
 The palm of beauty he assigned to me!—
 So, by Ulysses' art, was I removed
 From home, and with the object, as they said, 30
 Of marrying Achilles. But as soon
 As I, unhappy maid! to Aulis came,
 I was held o'er the altar to be slain.*
 Yet Artemis preserved me from the Greeks,
 And substituted in my place—a hind,
 And then conveyed me thro' the lucid air
 To this dark Tauric land, where Thoas reigns,—
 A barb'rous monarch o'er a barb'rous race;
 Thus called, for so fleet of foot was he,
 That he could run as fast as birds can fly. 40
 She made me Priestess of the temple here,

* "Ich habe vorm Altare selbst gezittert,
 Und feierlich umgab der frühe Tod
 Die Kniende; das Messer zuckte schon
 Den lebenvollen Busen zu durchbohren;
 Mein Innerstes entsetzte wirbelnd sich,
 Mein Auge brach, und—ich fand mich gerettet."

Goethe's Iphigenia in Tauris.

And now these bloody festivals, whose name
Alone is fair, are countenanced by her.—
But reverence forbids my saying more.—
I, in compliance with existing laws,
Must put to death each Greek who ventures here.
The rites I do ; the awful sacrifice
Is made within, but made by other hands.
And now will I relate, before high heaven,
If that can aught avail, what dreams this night 50
Has brought upon me. In my sleep I thought
That I was taken from this land, and dwelt
Again in Argos, where I slept amidst
My maidens, and an earthquake shook the ground.
I fled, and stood without, and looked upon
The palace walls, which fell, and saw the house,
From top to bottom, cast upon the ground.
One pillar only of our residence,
As it appeared to me, was left erect.
Its top put forth a sheaf of golden hair, 60
It had the look and accents of a man.
I, honouring the office which I hold,
Sprinkled fair water, as for one deceased,
Weeping the while. 'Tis thus I read my dream.
Orestes is no more ; for him those rites
Did I go through. The columns of that house
Were its male children ; and all die to whom
My sad lustrations fall. Yet can I not
Fully apply this vision to my friends ;
For Strophius had no descendant when 70
I disappeared ; unborn was Pylades.

Now for my absent brother will I pour
 Libations, for 'tis all that I can do,—
 With my attendants, the Greek women whom
 The king has given me. They are not yet
 Arrived, tho' why I know not. I will go
 To my apartment in the holy fane.

(Retires into the Temple.)

ORESTES AND PYLADES.

ORESTES.

Look out and see if any one is near.

PYLADES.

I do; my eyes I cast on ev'ry side.

ORESTES.

Thinkest thou, Pylades, this temple is
 The one we sail'd from Argos to despoil?

80

PYLADES.

I do, Orestes. Thou wilt think with me.

ORESTES.

And that the altar, where the blood of Greece
 Is made to flow?

PYLADES.

The stains of blood are there.

ORESTES.

Seest thou not the spoils of murdered men
 Suspended from the cornice?

PYLADES.

Men, no doubt,
Who have come hither, and been put to death.

ORESTES.

A good look out, my friend, ought we to keep.
Phœbus! why hast thou brought me to this strait,
By thy response, after I had avenged 90
My father, and slain her who gave me birth,
And furies, with alternating attacks,
Drove me, a trembling exile, from the land,
In painful flight, long and circuitous?
I came to thee, and asked how I might find
An end to these my frenzied wanderings
And toils, which I encountered here and there,
In ev'ry part of Greece. Thou didst respond
That I must journey to the Tauric land,
Where Artemis, thy sister, has a shrine, 100
And seize her image which, they say, fell down
Before this holy temple, from the sky,
And having seized, by stratagem or chance,
And run all risk, to Athens bear the prize.
Nought more was said, except that when the task
Was done successfully, I should find rest.
Wherefore I come, obeying thy behest,
Into this wild inhospitable land.
And now I ask thee, Pylades,—for thou
Art the dear sharer in these toils of mine,— 110
What shall we do, for the surrounding walls
Are high? Shall we ascend the temple stairs?
And if so, how escape observant eyes?

Or shall we try to force the brazen bolts,
 When we are strangers? But should we be caught
 Opening the doors and trying to get in,
 We die. Ere this, let us regain the ship
 By which we came.

PYLADES.

It is not to be borne
 That we should fly; we are not used to it,
 Nor is the oracle to be despised. 120
 Quitting the temple, then, let us conceal
 Our persons in the caves, which the dark sea
 Laves with its waters, distant from the ship,
 Lest some one, spying it, should tell the chiefs,
 And we be apprehended. When the eye
 Of gloomy night shines forth, we may attempt
 To take the polished statue from its shrine,
 Employing ev'ry artifice we know.
 Now look, and see if thou canst find some point
 By which to enter. Brave men do and dare, 130
 But nowhere can the coward raise his head.
 We have not, surely, sailed so long a way,
 But to go back again just as we came.

ORESTES.

Thou hast said well. I yield; and we must go
 To some safe spot where we may lie in wait.
 'Twill not be owing to the Deity
 If we should fail. We must go on. To youth
 No toil should be alleged as an excuse.

(Retire.)

CHORUS.—IPHIGENIA.

CHORUS OF GRECIAN CAPTIVES.

Be silent, O ye men, who dwell beside
 The two near-lying rocks that guard the mouth 140
 Of the dark Euxine sea!—
 Latona's daughter, mountain Artemis!
 We, servants of the priestess consecrate,
 With virgin, unpolluted feet attend
 Thee at thy shrine, and wondering behold
 Pillar and capital adorned with gold,
 Far from the tow'rs of Greece, for steeds
 Renowned, and from the sylvan meads
 Of bright Eurotas, our paternal home.
 And we are here. What is 't? What purpose high 150
 Dost thou contemplate? O! inform me, why
 We are now summoned,—daughter of the chief
 Who went to Troy with that distinguished fleet,
 A thousand sail, with armed hosts replete!

IPHIGENIA.

O maidens! how I dwell
 On the sad burthen of harsh sounding strains,
 And, joyless, tell
 My tale without the music of the lyre.
 Ah me! ah me!
 It is a tale, heart-rending, pitiful, 160
 Of all the sorrows I have undergone;
 And lastly, of my brother's death, made known
 To me in dreams and visions of the night,
 Ere darkness yielded to fair morning's light.
 I am undone! undone!
 My father's house it is no more,
 The glory of our race is o'er!

Alas! for what poor Argos has endured!
 O fate unbending! thou hast robbed me
 Of my sole brother, whom thou sendest down 170
 To Pluto's realms! For him I go to make
 These sad libations, and to drain,
 In honour of the slain,
 Upon the body of the thirsty ground,
 Whate'er within this fun'ral vase is found,—
 Milk from the mountain kine,
 And streams of gen'rous wine,
 And honey made by yellow bees,
 The shade departed to appease,—
 Give me the cup of solid gold, 180
 And holy mixture as of old.

(Pours the libation.)

O thou, cut down, the budding flower
 Of Agamemnon's house and power,
 As to the dead, I offer thee
 This gift, refuse it not from me.
 I may not place upon thy tomb
 One waving tress of auburn hair,
 Nor shed one gentle tear-drop there.
 I dwell, alas!—it is my doom,—
 Far from thy home and mine, the land 190
 Where, as was deemed, a murd'rous hand
 With sword upraised, before all eyes,
 Made me a wretched sacrifice.

CHORUS.

Respondent strains,—a hymn
 Resembling those of Asiatic use,—
 O mistress! will we chant to thee
 With sad and barb'rous melody,

Such as the dead delight to hear,
 And such as Pluto's self might sing,
 No gladsome chorus echoing. 200

(*Threnos.*)

Alas! the house of Atreus falls,
 No sceptre gleams within the walls
 Of its once proud ancestral halls!—
 What happy monarch now shall reign
 O'er Argos and its fair domain?
 How have we seen, with weeping eyes,
 Sorrow from sorrow still arise!*

And the sun turn his holy orb of light,
 And seated on his car, revert its flight,
 Bending the winged steeds aside; for when 210
 The golden lamb was carried off, again
 The turbid tide of grief began to flow,
 And murder pressed on murder, woe on woe.
 So o'er the race of Tantalus, by blood
 Long stained, has pour'd the all-avenging flood;
 And now its evil genius on thee
 Rushes all armed with fresh calamity.

IPHIGENIA.

From the sad moment when relentless fate

* ——— “Weh dir, unseliges Mycen!
 So haben Tantal's Enkel Fluch und Fluch
 Mit vollen wilden Händen ausgesät!
 Ungleich dem Unkraut, wüste Häupter Schüttelnd
 Und tausend fält'gen Samen um sich streuend,
 Den Kindeskindern nahverwandte Mörder
 Zur ew'gen Wechselwuth erzeugt!”

Goethe's Iphigenia in Tauris.

Consigned my mother to the marriage state,
 My lot was fixed. The Gods assigned to me,
 On that dread day, a bitter infancy,
 Whom Leda's daughter bore, and gently bred, 220
 The earliest blossom of her nuptial bed,
 Doomed for my father's sins, before his eyes
 To fall an unaccepted sacrifice.
 Me the swift chariot, drawn by horses, bore,
 By his device, to Aulis' sandy shore,
 That I might marry, as the traitors said,
 Achilles, Nereus' son, and share his bed.
 Of cheerless Pontus am I now the guest,
 And occupy this dreary home unblest,
 Unwedded, childless, without friend or place, 230
 Tho' courted once by chiefs of proudest race.
 No more at Argos spending happy days,
 And singing odes to mighty Herè's praise ;
 Or representing on the strident loom
 The form of Pallas and the Titan's doom,
 But staining these dark altars by the death
 Of strangers moaning out their latest breath,
 And shedding bitter tears. And now, alas!
 To other deeper sorrows must I pass,
 And for my brother weep, whom, in soft rest, 240
 I left, an infant on his mother's breast,—
 A young and tender shoot,—a noble heir,
 To hold the sceptre, and the crown to wear.

IPHIGENIA. HERDSMAN.

CHORUS.

But now this herdsman comes up from the shore,
 No doubt, to bring thee some intelligence.

HERDSMAN.

Daughter of Agamemnon and his queen,
I pray thee list to what I have to tell.

IPHIGENIA.

And what is there of such great consequence
That thou must interrupt our hymns of woe?

HERDSMAN.

[250

Two youths have landed here, and have passed through
The grey Symplegades by ship. Oh! they will be
A grateful offering and sacrifice
To Artemis. Thou wouldst do well, at once,
To get all things in order, and arrange
The fitting rites.

IPHIGENIA.

Who are they? Of what land
Do these unlucky strangers bear the mark?

HERDSMAN.

Greeks are they. This I know, and nothing more.

IPHIGENIA.

Dost thou not happen to have heard their names?

HERDSMAN.

One called the other Pylades.

IPHIGENIA.

And what

Was his companion called?

HERDSMAN.

We did not hear. 260

IPHIGENIA.

Where did ye spy—where take them prisoners?

HERDSMAN.

Upon the shore, outside this stormy pass.

IPHIGENIA.

What business had ye rustics at the sea?

HERDSMAN.

To wash our cattle in its briny surf.

IPHIGENIA.

Return to this, 'tis what I want to know,
How took ye them? Their coming is well-timed,—
As yet the altar of great Artemis
Has ne'er been crimsoned by Hellenic blood.

HERDSMAN.

Near where we drove our oxen from the woods,
In which they fed, into the tide that flows 270
Through the Symplegades, there is a cave,
Disrupt and hollowed out by storms, wherein
The fishers of the murex seek retreat.
There one of us beheld the two young men,
And stealthily, on tiptoe, came and said,
“Perceive ye this? Two beings, not of earth,
Sit here.” Then one, more pious than the rest,
Looked at the youths, and raised his hand and prayed,
“Son of marine Leucothea! the friend
Of shipmen, and Palæmon, mighty lord! 280
Be kind to us! whether those two, who sit
Upon the shore, be the twin sons of Jove,
Or sprung from Nereus, unto whom we owe
The shining band of fifty ocean nymphs.”—
Another, vain, irreverent, and bold,

Laughed at such prayers, and said that the two youths
Were shipwrecked sailors, who sate there from fear,
Being aware that, by this land's stern law,
Strangers are set apart, and doomed to die.
To most of us it seemed that he was right, 290
And that our duty was to capture them.
In the meantime, one of the two young men,
Leaving the cavern, stood, and tossed his head,
And groaned and trembled to his very nails,
With frenzy raging, and exclaimed aloud,
As hunters call their dogs:—"O Pylades!
Dost see her? that fierce dragoness of hell
Who seeks to slay me, and, with vipers armed,
Comes on me open-mouthed? Lo! from her robe,
Exhaling flames and death, she wings her way, 300
Holding my mother in her arms, to cast
Upon me, like a rock. Ah! I must die!"
We could not see these forms; and he mistook
The lowing of the calves and bark of dogs
For voices from the fell Erynnides.
Shrinking, and almost paralysed with fear,
We sat in silence. He then drew a sword,
And, like a lion, rushed upon the drove,
And in their vitals plunged his fatal blade,
As if to rout the avenging deities, 310
So that the salt sea bloomed with gory stains.
On this, indeed, each man, when he beheld
His cattle slain or scattered, armed himself,
And blew his conch to raise the neighbourhood;
For we, as herdsmen, were scarce competent

To fight with two well-trained and active men.
In a short time we were well reinforced.
At last, his fit of madness being o'er,
The stranger, foaming at the mouth, sank down.
Seeing him fallen, and that not too soon, 320
We all bestirred ourselves, and struck, and hurled ;
The other stranger wiped away the foam
From his friend's pallid lips, and tended him,
And, with the folds of his well-woven cloak,
Screened him from harm, as each successive blow
Required warding off. That timely aid
Served in good stead the comrade whom he loved.
Once more himself, he rose up from the ground,
And saw the storm of foemen rushing on,
And the catastrophe now imminent. 330
This he was conscious of, and sighed, whilst we
Threw stones unceasingly, each after each.
And then we heard this terrible appeal :—
“ O Pylades, we die ! That we may die
The noblest death, on with me, sword in hand ! ”
But when we saw the two blades raised aloft,
We fled into the overhanging woods.
Yct, whilst some turned, the others, pressing on,
Aimed at the foe. When these were driven back,
The first again assailed. 'Twas passing strange, 340
That, of so many hands, not one as yet
Had hit those victims of the Deity.
At length, but not by daring, we contrived
To take them. In a circle we came round,
And struck the glitt'ring weapons from their hands ;

So, on their knees, upon the ground they fell
 Exhausted. To the king we brought these men,
 Who, having viewed them, without loss of time,
 Sent them to thee to be prepared,—and die.
 Pray for such victims, O thou holy maid! 350
 If thou mayst capture strangers like to them,
 Greece will repay the evil done to thee,
 And all thy wrongs at Aulis expiate.

CHORUS.

'Tis a strange tale thou tellest of the men
 Who have arrived from Greece, whate'er they be.

IPHIGENIA.

Well, go and bring the strangers. For the rest,
 I will decide what more is to be done.

(Herdsman retires.)

O bursting heart! up to the present time
 Thou hast been kind and merciful to all,—
 The tear still prompt when any of our race 360
 Were in distress. But I am scared by dreams,
 And rendered cruel; for, as I believe,
 Orestes views no more the blessed light;
 And for these men I feel small sympathy.
 'Tis said, and I have found it true, my friends!
 That the unhappy mark, with no good will,
 Those who rejoice whilst they are in distress.

As yet, no wind has e'er been sent by Jove,
 Or vessel, tho' the rude Symplegades,

Bringing false Helena, who ruined me, 370
 And Menelaus, that I might avenge
 My wrongs, and make another Aulis here
 For those stern Greeks who took me, like a beast,
 And thought to slay, my father ruling all.
 Ah me! these ills are rooted in my mind!
 How with my hands I touched that parent's beard,
 And hung upon his knees, and cried aloud,
 "O father! I am made a bride, indeed,
 And sad and fearful are the nuptial rites!
 For whilst my mother and the maids of Greece 380
 Sing hymeneal strains, and all the tents
 Echo with music, art thou slaying me.—
 Pluto was my Achilles,—not the son
 Of Peleus, whom ye named as my spouse.
 And for this bloody marriage am I brought
 In the gay chariot, and by stratagem."
 Glancing, all shyly, thro' the fine wrought veil,
 I neither took my brother in my arms,—
 Who is now lost to me,—nor stayed to kiss
 My sister's lips, for shame,—as I supposed 390
 That I was going to my husband's home;
 And many a kindly greeting I put off,
 Expecting that ere long I should return.
 Unfortunate Orestes! if, indeed,
 Thy life is o'er, from what a noble state
 And rich inheritance hast thou sunk down!
 Stern seem the judgments of high Artemis,
 Who, if a man has one red murder spot,—
 Or meddled with a birth, or touched the dead,

Excludes him from her altar as impure, 400
 And yet delights in human sacrifice.
 The wife of Jove, Latona, ne'er devised
 Follies like these. The feast of Tantalus
 I hold incredible; and that the Gods
 Regaled on human flesh, and were content.
 The people here, I deem,—the homicides,—
 Impute their own crimes to the Deity.
 I think no evil of the pow'rs supreme.

CHORUS.

STR. 1.

Thou congress of two seas, of azure hue
 O'er which, 'tis said, tormented Io flew, 410
 By vengeance driven, having left the land
 Of Argos, and sought refuge on our strand,
 Here by the Euxine,—what can these men be,
 Who, on the ocean, have passed o'er to thee,—
 Leaving the green Eurotas' sedgy side,
 And the bright vale where Dircé's waters glide,
 For this inhospitable lonely shore,
 On which the noble maiden in her fane
 Pillared around, bedews with human gore
 Its altars, and rejoices in the slain? 420

ANT. 1.

With straining oars of fir at either side
 Have they sped hither on the ocean tide;
 Their bark exulting as each fav'ring gale
 Arose, and filled the wide distended sail,
 To join, for love of gold, the sordid strife
 That wealth engenders? Dear as very life,

Insatiable, is the wish for more,
 Within the soul of mortals rich before.
 And yet how baneful! Tossed upon the sea
 To regions wild and barbarous they flee,
 Led by vain hopes,—vain e'en if they succeed,
 And riches crown the toil of urgent greed.

430

STR. 2.

How passed they these concurring rocks?
 How bore their bark the stormy shocks
 Off Thrace's never tranquil shore,
 Where sleepless billows break and roar,
 The realm of Phineus,—coasting wide
 O'er Amphitrite's foaming tide?
 In troops, the fifty daughters fair
 Of Nereus, dance in circles there;
 And whilst each well-filled sail
 Bends to the eddying gale,
 Around the stern the rippling waters swirl,
 And as the helm revolves, in wavelets curl;
 Still from the south some fav'ring air
 Impels the ship, or zephyr fair,
 Wafting it on to Lenké's isle,
 In the far Euxine sea, the place of rest
 For countless sea-birds,—island of the blest.

440

ANT. 2.

I would that, for my mistress dear,
 The child of Leda might come here,
 Fair Helen, from the Trojan land,
 To die by the avenger's hand!
 Her golden tresses all bedewed
 With lustral water,—that the feud
 By which all Hellas has been rent
 Might end in equal punishment.

450

Most sweet to us th' event would be,
 If from that country we might see
 Some mariner arrive, or friend, 460
 Our sad captivity to end.
 E'en in my dreams I love to roam
 Amidst the well-known scenes of home,
 And taste the joys of grateful song
 Which but to happy men belong.
 See now, the prisoners come, with hands
 Together tied in circling bands!
 Be silent, friends! a gift divine
 Will now be offered at the shrine,
 For the first-fruits of Greece draw near 470
 This temple, which all men revere.
 Yon rude protector of the herd
 Has uttered no untruthful word.
 O Artemis revered! if this poor state
 Presents thee off'rings which thou dost not hate,
 Accept the sacrifice our laws proclaim,
 Howe'er indignant Greece those laws may blame.

IPHIGENIA. ORESTES. PYLADES.

IPHIGENIA.

Well! that the rites be properly performed
 Is my first care. Unbind the strangers' hands!
 They are not captives now, but consecrate; 480
 And go into the temple and prepare
 What present circumstance and usage claim.
 And as to you, — what mother gave you birth?
 Who was your father? and your sister, who, —

If sister you possess? I pity her;
 Bereaved of two such youths, she is bereaved.
 Who knows to whom such accidents may come?
 With slow but secret force the tide of fate
 Creeps on. What ills await him none can tell,—
 All is involved in dark uncertainty. 490
 Whence come ye, hapless strangers? Ah! how long
 Has been your passage to this distant land,—
 And how much longer must your absence be!

ORESTES.

Lady! who'er thou art, why dost thou grieve
 At our misfortunes? I deem him unwise
 Who, when about to die, expects to soothe
 His fears by lamentation; also him
 Who mourns approaching death when ev'ry hope
 Is past. Two evils out of one he makes,
 Seems like a fool, and, notwithstanding,—dies. 500
 Let Fortune take her course,—lament me not!
 We know the custom, and we bow to it.

IPHIGENIA.

In the first place,—which is called Pylades?

ORESTES.

This one, if 'tis thy wish to know his name.

IPHIGENIA.

And to what state of Greece does he belong?

ORESTES.

After all this, what further wouldst thou learn?

IPHIGENIA.

If of one mother ye are both the sons?

ORESTES.

Lady! we are not brothers, only friends.

IPHIGENIA.

And what name did thy father give to thee?

ORESTES.

“Unhappy” would have been the fittest name. 510

IPHIGENIA.

I ask not that,—that was an accident.

ORESTES.

Dying unknown, we die unridiculed.

IPHIGENIA.

Why dost thou hide thy name? Is it from pride?

ORESTES.

Me thou mayst slay; that shalt thou not impair.

IPHIGENIA.

Then wilt thou not inform me whence thou art?

ORESTES.

It matters not, since I am doomed to fall.

IPHIGENIA.

What hinders thee from granting this request?

ORESTES.

I boast that far-famed Argos is my home.

IPHIGENIA.

O say, by heaven! art thou sprung from thence?

ORESTES.

Aye! from Mycenæ, formerly the blest. 520

IPHIGENIA.

Why didst thou leave it? Wert thou banished?

ORESTES.

'Tis chance. I wished it not, and yet I fled.

IPHIGENIA.

In truth, thou art a welcome guest to me.

ORESTES.

I am no willing guest. 'Tis thy affair.

IPHIGENIA.

But wilt thou tell me what I want to learn?

ORESTES.

Well, as things stand, 'tis all the same to me.

IPHIGENIA.

Perchance thou know'st of Troy, so widely famed?

ORESTES.

Would I did not,—not even by a dream.

IPHIGENIA.

They say 'tis taken, and exists no more.

ORESTES.

And so it is. Thou hast been told the truth. 530

IPHIGENIA.

And Helen to her husband is restored?

ORESTES.

She is restored,—the worse for some of us!

IPHIGENIA.

And for myself: she hath brought ill to me.

ORESTES.

At Sparta dwells she, in her husband's house.

IPHIGENIA.

Hated by Greece, and not by me alone.

ORESTES.

I too have suffered from that flight of hers.

IPHIGENIA.

And have the Greeks returned, as fame reports ?

ORESTES.

How dost thou question me of ev'rything !

IPHIGENIA.

Before thou goest hence, I would know all.

ORESTES.

Proceed, then,—'tis thy wish, and I will speak. 540

IPHIGENIA.

Calchas, the prophet, came he back from Troy ?

ORESTES.

He perished, as the Mycenæans say.

IPHIGENIA.

Goddess, I thank thee ! And Laertes' son ?

ORESTES.

He has not yet come home, but is alive.

IPHIGENIA.

Then may he perish, and return no more !

ORESTES.

Spare imprecation ! all goes ill with him.

IPHIGENIA.

And does the son of sea-born Thetis live ?

ORESTES.

No : what occurred at Aulis was in vain.

IPHIGENIA.

That marriage was a feint, as some well know.

ORESTES.

Who art thou ? With what skill thou questionest ! 550

IPHIGENIA.

I am of Greece, and sorrow fell on me
Whilst yet a girl.

ORESTES.

'Tis right, then, thou shouldst know what passes there.

IPHIGENIA.

What of the leader, whose success they vaunt?

ORESTES.

Which leader? for I know no happy one.

IPHIGENIA.

He was called Agamemnon, Atreus' son.

ORESTES.

I know not, lady!—Ah, no more of this!

IPHIGENIA.

Yes, stranger. I entreat thee, by the Gods.

ORESTES.

Th' unfortunate is dead, and not alone.

IPHIGENIA.

Dead! by what accident? Alas for me! 560

ORESTES.

Why groanest thou? Is 't an affair of thine?

IPHIGENIA.

It is his former greatness I regret.

ORESTES.

He perished sadly by a woman's hand.

IPHIGENIA.

Unhappy woman, and unhappy king!

ORESTES.

Cease, now! ask me no more; it is enough!

IPHIGENIA.

But one thing yet. Is his wife living still ?

ORESTES.

She is not ; her own son put her to death.

IPHIGENIA.

O hapless house ! what could his motive be ?

ORESTES.

It was to vindicate a father's name.

IPHIGENIA.

Alas ! the awful vengeance was too just.

570

ORESTES.

However just, the Gods approved it not.

IPHIGENIA.

Had Agamemnon any other child ?

ORESTES.

He left one girl, Electra.

IPHIGENIA.

Is aught said of the daughter that was slain ?

ORESTES.

Only that she no longer sees the light.

IPHIGENIA.

Unhappy maid ! unhappy father, too !

ORESTES.

For a base woman was she sacrificed.

IPHIGENIA.

Is the late monarch's son at Argos still ?

ORESTES.

Wretched is he,—nowhere and ev'rywhere.

IPHIGENIA.

Delusive dreams, farewell ! for ye were nought. 580

ORESTES.

Ah! as for that, the spirits deemed most wise
 Are not more truthful than those lying dreams.
 There is confusion e'en in things divine
 As in things human. Understanding men,
 Subservient to the dictates from above,
 May ne'ertheless be ruined.

CHORUS.

Alas! what are we, and what are we not,
 We and our fathers? Who can see his way?

IPHIGENIA.

Attend to me. I have contrived a plan
 Which may help you and may be good for me; 590
 That is, if what I now propose to you
 Should chance to prove acceptable to both.
 Wilt thou, if I deliver thee, convey
 Somewhat for me, at Argos, to my friends,
 And bear this letter, which a captive wrote
 Who pitied me, believing that my hand
 Was clear of blood, and that the victims fell
 Under our law, the Goddess willing it?
 I have found none as yet who, being spared,
 To Argos might return with a dispatch. 600
 Thou, therefore, if, as it would seem, thy mind
 Is well affected, and thou knowest those
 I speak of, and Mycenæ, save thyself.
 Thy freedom is no trifling recompence
 For carrying a light epistle. He,

Because the state demands it, must remain
To be a sacrifice and die apart.

ORESTES.

Lady! thou hast said all things well but one.
His death would weigh too heavily on me.

I am the pilot in calamity,

610

And he sails with me but to share my toil;

Therefore it is not just that by his death

I should serve thee and extricate myself.

This I suggest. The letter give to him;

'Twill be delivered, and thy ends attained,

Slay me who will. It would, indeed, be base

To bring a friend to grief, and save oneself.

Let him escape. He is a trusty friend,

Whose life I value as I do mine own.

IPHIGENIA.

O noble feeling! friendship sound and firm!

620

To what a gen'rous stock must thou belong!

My only brother I could wish like thee;

For, O ye strangers, tho' I see him not,

I have a brother. So, as 'tis thy wish,

I will send him to Argos in thy stead,

And thou shalt die. A wond'rous promptitude

Hast thou evinced in forwarding my scheme.

ORESTES.

And who will dare the guilt of slaying me?

IPHIGENIA.

Myself. I am commissioned from above.

ORESTES.

Then, maid! thou hast no enviable charge.

630

IPHIGENIA.

'Tis of necessity. I must submit.

ORESTES.

Dost thou, a female, slay men with the sword?

IPHIGENIA.

I shall but pour libations on thy hair.

ORESTES.

Who is the executioner, I pray?

IPHIGENIA.

Within this fane are executioners.

ORESTES.

And how shall I be buried when I die?

IPHIGENIA.

Fire is there, and a rocky chasm below.

ORESTES.

Would that my sister's hand might minister!

IPHIGENIA.

A bootless wish, unhappy youth! hast thou
 Expressed. Afar from this wild savage land 640
 Thy sister dwells. Yet, since thou art a Greek,
 Myself will do for thee what can be done.
 I will put ornaments within thy grave,
 And pour on thy remains the golden oil,
 And cast for thee, upon the blazing pyre,
 The flow'ry sweetness of the mountain bee.
 And now I go to fetch out from the shrine
 My letter. Think no ill of me. Ye guards!
 Take them in custody, but bind them not.

(Orestes and Pylades retire guarded.)

It may be that to some one of my friends, 650

Whom I most love, I shall send happy news,
 And unexpected ; and these lines which tell
 How friends, long mourned as dead, are still alive,
 May give a certain joy.

CHORUS.

How, midst our rites, do I deplore thy lot,
 And that a bloody death awaits thee here.

ORESTES.

Mourn not for this, 'twere fitter to rejoice.

CHORUS.

But thee, young stranger, we congratulate,
 Thou wilt again behold thy native land.

PYLADES.

We must not envy those who lose their friends. 660

CHORUS.

O hard release ! alas, thou needs must die !
 Alas, alas ! which destiny is worst ?
 Two ways my hesitating mind is drawn,
 Whether to mourn for thy poor friend or thee.

ORESTES AND PYLADES.

ORESTES.

Art thou affected by all this like me,
 Dear Pylades ?

PYLADES.

I cannot see my way.

ORESTES.

Who is this girl? How like a maid of Greece
 She asked about the toils of Ilium!
 And the return, and Calchas deeply versed
 In mysteries, and Agamemnon, too, 670
 Whom she lamented, and required to hear
 News of his wife and children. She must be
 Some Argive wanderer; for she would ne'er
 Have sent a letter, and found out all this,
 Like one concerned, had Argos been at rest.

PYLADES.

Ah! thou anticipatest me, and sayst,
 With some omission, what I would have said.
 The sufferings of kings are known to all
 Who are received in men's society;—
 But she went on to speak of something more. 680

ORESTES.

And what was that? Communicate, that so
 I may the better make thee understand.

PYLADES.

'Twould be a baseness that thou shouldst be slain
 Whilst I survive. I have embarked with thee,
 And ought with thee to die. The character
 Of mean timidity shall I obtain
 In Argos, and the undulating land
 Of the Phocæans, and I shall appear
 To many—for the many are severe—
 To have betrayed thee, and escaped alone,— 690

Nay, even to have slain thee, and amidst
 The losses of thine house, to have planned out
 Thy death, that I might gain the sovereignty
 By marrying thy sister, who succeeds.
 All this I dread, and am ashamed to meet.
 Nothing remains but to expire with thee,
 And with thee to be slain, and then be burnt,
 As one who was thy friend, and feared disgrace.

ORESTES.

Speak reason. I must bear my own distress ;—
 I can sustain one sorrow, but not two. 700
 For what thou callest sad and scandalous,
 Will fall on me, if I should cause the death
 Of my associate. There is nought amiss
 In my affairs ; for if I lose my life,
 I do so, acting as the Gods ordain.
 But thou art happy ; thy house is unstain'd,
 And mine accursed and in calamity.
 Shouldst thou be spared, and have a family
 By my dear sister, whom I give to thee,
 My name will flourish, and my father's race 710
 Will ne'er become extinct for lack of heirs.
 Go, then, and live to occupy thine home.
 And when thou com'st to Greece, and Argos, famed
 For noble steeds, by this right hand, I pray,
 That thou wilt raise a mound, and on it place
 A monument for me. My sister there,
 Perchance, will weep, and dedicate one tress
 Of her bright locks. Tell her how I was slain
 By a Greek woman, being purified

For slaughter at the shrine. Betray thou not 720
 My sister, but regard the fallen state
 Of this our family. And now, farewell !
 Ever wert thou the dearest of my friends,
 Associate of my sports, together reared.—
 O how much grief have I occasioned thee !
 Apollo has deceived us,—a God
 Altho' he be,—and has found out a way
 Of taking me from Greece, for very shame
 Of his first oracles. To him I gave
 Myself without reserve, and him obeyed, 730
 And slew my mother ;—and, alas ! am lost.

PYLADES.

Due rites shall be performed. Thy sister's bed,
 Unhappy friend, shall ne'er be wronged by me.
 Dead—I shall love thee as I love thee now.
 But still the oracle divine has not
 As yet destroyed, however near thou art
 To danger. And it often comes to pass,—
 Aye often,—that a great calamity
 Brings some great change.

ORESTES.

No more ! the oracles
 Of Phœbus aid me not. This woman comes 740
 Forth from the temple.

IPHIGENIA. ORESTES. PYLADES.

IPHIGENIA.

Depart, ye guards, and go and render aid

To those within who do the sacrifice. (*They go.*)
Here, strangers, is the letter ; it is long.
But now attend to what I wish to say.
No man in trouble is the same as when
His fear has given way to confidence ;
I therefore dread lest he who is to bear
My brief to Argos, as he quits the shore,
Should lose all interest in my concerns. 750

ORESTES.

What more wouldst thou, and why art thou disturbed?

IPHIGENIA.

Let him take oath that he will do my will,
And carry this to Argos to my friends.

ORESTES.

Wilt thou, for thy part, pledge thyself to him ?

IPHIGENIA.

What wouldst thou have performed or let alone ?

ORESTES.

That thou wilt send him safe from this rough land ?

IPHIGENIA.

Thou sayest well ! How could he otherwise
Do my behest ?

ORESTES.

And will the king consent ?

IPHIGENIA.

Doubtless ; and I will see him placed on board.

ORESTES.

Swear, then, and thou prescribe a binding vow. 760

IPHIGENIA.

Thou must engage to give this to my friends.

PYLADES.

The letter I here bind myself to give.

IPHIGENIA.

And I will forward thee beyond the rocks.

PYLADES.

Then which of all the Gods dost thou invoke ?

IPHIGENIA.

Diana, in whose temple I preside.

PYLADES.

And I the King of Heaven,—great Jupiter.

IPHIGENIA.

What if thou failest to perform thine oath ?

PYLADES.

May I no more return ! And what if thou ?

IPHIGENIA.

May I no more behold my native land !

PYLADES.

Let me say something we have overlooked.

770

IPHIGENIA.

Nothing is out of place if it be right.

PYLADES.

Concede me this reserve. In case the ship
Should suffer, and the stormy sea ingulph
Thy letter and my property, and I
Alone escape, then quit me of mine oath.

IPHIGENIA.

If one plan fails, another may succeed.

Canst thou not guess what I intend to do ?
All that I have inscribed upon these leaves
I will communicate to thee in words,

That thou mayst tell it to my friends at home ;— 780
 'Tis some security. The document,
 If it be saved, will silently give up
 What it contains ; but if within the depths
 Of ocean it should disappear,
 Thou, being saved, wilt save those words of mine.

PYLADES.

Thou hast well said as to the Gods and me.
 Inform me, then, to whom I must convey
 Thy brief at Argos, and what I must tell.

IPHIGENIA.

Say to Orestes, Agamemnon's son,
 "Iphigenia sends thee this, supposed 790
 To have been slain at Aulis, but alive,
 Though dead, alas ! to all her former friends."

ORESTES.

O where is she ? Is she restored to life ?

IPHIGENIA.

Here ! it is I ! But interrupt me not.
 "Bring me to Argos, brother, ere I die,
 Far from this savage land, with its dread rites,
 Whose bloody honours I am forced to wear."

ORESTES.

Where are we, Pylades ? What do I hear ? (*Aside.*)

IPHIGENIA.

"Or I will prove a curse to thee and thine."
 I say again, "Orestes !—recollect !" 800

ORESTES.

Ye Gods !

IPHIGENIA.

Why dost thou thus invoke the Gods
In what concerns but me ?

ORESTES.

Regard it not.

Go on ! my mind was wandering elsewhere.

IPHIGENIA.

Tell him, the Goddess Artemis preserved
My life by substituting a fair hind,
Which mine own father killed, in the belief
That his sharp sword had fallen upon me,
And here established me. * Take this dispatch,
In which each circumstance is plainly told.

PYLADES.

Oh ! on what easy terms am I engaged ! 810
How fairly hast thou sworn. I tarry not,
But now at once redeem the pledge I gave.—

Behold, Orestes, I present to thee
This letter from thy sister.

(Gives the letter to Orestes.)

ORESTES.

I accept.

But, in the first place, must I cast aside
The closed epistle, and by more than words
Express my joy. O sister best beloved,*

* "Ihr Götter, die mit flammender Gewalt
Ihr schwere Wolken aufzuzehren wandelt,
* * * * *
Doch bald der Menschen grausendes Erwarten
In Segen auflös't."

In wild surprise, almost in unbelief,
 I take thee to my arms. With what delight
 Hear I this marvellous intelligence! 820
(Embraces his sister, who shrinks back.)

CHORUS.

Stranger! 'tis wrong so to forget thyself,
 And touch her sacred robe with hands profane.

ORESTES.

O sister! from one common father sprung,
 Great Agamemnon, turn not from me thus,
 I am the brother whom thou thoughtest dead.

IPHIGENIA.

Thou my lost brother? why persist in this?
 He is at Argos or at Nauplia.

ORESTES.

Unfortunate! thy brother is not there.

IPHIGENIA.

Art thou son of Lacænian Tyndaris?

ORESTES.

Aye; and great grandson of stern Pelops, too. 830

Wenn in der Tropfen frischerquickter Blätter,
 Die neue Sonne tausendfach sich spiegelt,
 Und Iris freundlich bunt mit leichter Hand,
 Den grauen Flor der letzten Wolken trennt!
 O lasst mich auch an meinen Schwester Armen,
 Und meines Freundes Brust, was ihr mir gönnt
 Mit vollem Dank geniessen und behalten!

Goethe's Iphigenia in Tauris.

IPHIGENIA.

What sayst thou? hast thou any proof to show?

ORESTES.

I have. Ask what thou wilt respecting us.

IPHIGENIA.

Then, 'tis for thee to speak and me to hear.

ORESTES.

And first, of something which Electra told,—
That Atreus and Thyestes had a strife.
Art thou aware?

IPHIGENIA.

I heard of it;

'Twas for the golden lamb.

ORESTES.

Dost bear in mind

That thou didst work this in fair tapestry?

IPHIGENIA.

Dear stranger! how thy words go to my heart!

ORESTES.

Was not the turning sun depicted there? 840

IPHIGENIA.

That, too, in delicate embroidery
I wrought.

ORESTES.

And from thy mother didst receive
The lustral vase at Aulis?

IPHIGENIA.

Certainly;

Though 'twas unneeded for a match like mine.

ORESTES.

And then?—didst thou not send a lock of hair
To Clytemnestra?

IPHIGENIA.

A memorial
To place upon my tomb,—instead me.

ORESTES.

What I have seen, I state in further proof:—
The ancient spear of Pelops, in the house
Of Agamemnon, last employed to slay 850
Ænomaüs and win the Pisan maid,
The fair Hippodamia,—'tis laid up
In thine own chamber.—

IPHIGENIA.

Brother most dear, for nothing less thou art,*
Orestes! I possess thee now, from home
And Argos far.

ORESTES.

And thou again art mine,
As risen from the dead, and tears of joy,
Pleasure and pain commingled, fill the eyes
Of both of us.

IPHIGENIA.

I left thee but a child,

* "O lass mich! lass mich! den es quillet heller,
Nicht vom Parnass die ew'ge Quelle sprudelnd
Von Fels zu Fels in's goldne Thal hinab,
Wie Freude mir vom Herzen wallend fließt,
Und wie ein selig Meer mich rings umfängt.
Orest! Orest! mein Bruder!

Goethe's Iphigenia in Tauris.

A tender babe, within thy nurse's arms. 860
 O fortune happier than words can tell!
 What can I say? Beyond all miracle,
 Beyond the pow'r of words, is this event.

ORESTES.

Henceforward may we be together blest.

IPHIGENIA.

My joy, O friends! exceeds all bounds, and yet
 I almost fear lest he escape my hands,
 And vanish, like a shadow, into air.
 Land of the Cyclops, mine own native land!
 Beloved Mycenæ! I give thanks to thee
 For my existence and my bringing up, 870
 And for my brother, destined to become
 His country's light.

ORESTES.

My sister! altho' favoured as to birth,
 Yet stern distress has marked us for its own.

IPHIGENIA.

I, wretched, found this out when to my neck
 My still more wretched father held the sword.

ORESTES.

Ah me! I almost think I see thee there.

IPHIGENIA.

O brother! I was brought by treachery,
 As if to wed Achilles, to the camp,
 And round the altar there were sighs and tears. 880
 Alas! what lustral water found I there!

ORESTES.

How I deplored our father's reckless act!

IPHIGENIA.

What I endured was all unnatural,
And from misfortune new misfortunes spring.

ORESTES.

As if, for instance, thou hadst put to death
Thy brother, for some Deity's caprice.

IPHIGENIA.

Sunk by a dire necessity, have I
Ventured on awful deeds. Alas! alas!
My brother, narrowly hast thou escaped
An impious death in consequence of me. 890
And now what is there to look forward to?
What turn of fortune can avail for me,
Or what contrivance can I hit upon
To rescue thee from death, and send thee hence,
And forward thee to Argos, ere the sword
Can taste thy blood? All this, unhappy soul!
Is thine affair; and to decide at once
Whether by land in preference to sea,
And by the aid of thine own limbs, thou must
Face death in wandering thro' barb'rous tribes, 900
And by a trackless road. Beyond the rocks
That guard our strait, a ship has far to sail.
O hapless that I am! what God above,—
What mortal, or what unexpected chance
Will show to us, the last of Atreus' race,
A prospect of escape in our distress?

CHORUS.

Of all these marvels, past the pow'r of words,
I am a witness, and a silent one.

PYLADES.

'Tis fit, Orestes, that when friends meet friends,
 As we have done, both hand and heart should join. 910
 But now must we, our sorrows set aside,
 Come back to this,—in what way, having gained
 Such great deliv'rance, we may best escape
 From lands so barbarous; for 'tis the part
 Of prudent men not to desert the track
 Of fortune, or give way to impulses.

ORESTES.

It is well said; both fortune and ourselves
 Must work in this. If only man be prompt,
 I think the Gods will help him all the more.

IPHIGENIA.

Nought hinders me, and nothing shall prevent 920
 From asking how Electra fares in life;
 I long to hear intelligence of her.

ORESTES.

She lives with him, and she lives happily.

IPHIGENIA.

And who is he? of whom is he the son?

ORESTES.

Of Strophius, at Phocis.

IPHIGENIA.

Then is he
 My relative. His mother was the child
 Of Atreus.

ORESTES.

Thy cousin is he, and my only friend.

IPHIGENIA.

He was not born when I was sacrificed.

ORESTES.

No; Strophius was long without a son.

930

IPHIGENIA.

Welcome, my sister's husband! hail to thee!

ORESTES.

Not only is he bound to us by blood,
But he is my preserver.

IPHIGENIA.

How couldst thou
Find heart to do the savage deed by which
Thy mother fell?

ORESTES.

Hush!—to avenge my sire.

IPHIGENIA.

And for what cause
Did she, then, murder him?

ORESTES.

Ask not her history!* it is not fit
That thou shouldst hear it.

* ——— “Stille führt
Sie ihn zum Orte, wo sein Vater fiel,
Wo eine alte leichte Spur des frech,
Vergossnen Blutes oft gewaschnen Boden,
Mit blassen ahnungsvollen Streifen färbte,
Mit ihrer Feuerzunge schilderte
Sie jeden Umstand der verruchten That,

* * * * *
Hier drang sie jenen alten Dolch ihm auf,
Der schon in Tantal's Hause grimmig wüthete!
Und Clytämnestra fiel durch Sohnes Hand.”

Goethe's Iphigenia in Tauris.

IPHIGENIA.

I ask no more. Doth Argos honour thee ?

ORESTES.

I am an exile. Menelaus reigns.

940

IPHIGENIA.

And does he wrong th' afflicted family ?

ORESTES.

No ; the stern Furies drove me from my home.

IPHIGENIA.

So, on this shore art thou believed insane.

ORESTES.

'Tis not the first time that I have been seen
In my affliction.

IPHIGENIA.

Ah ! I understand,—

'Twas for thy mother's sake the Furies rose.

ORESTES.

And hunted me with serpents' gaping mouths.

IPHIGENIA.

What made thee set thy foot upon this land ?

ORESTES.

Commanded by Apollo have I come.

IPHIGENIA.

With what intent ? canst thou explain or not ? 950

ORESTES.

I can. Thus did my many toils commence.
Having avenged my mother's crimes, o'er which
We cast the veil of silence, I was driven
Forth as an exile by th' Erynnides,
To Athens. Then Apollo guided me,

To satisfy those nameless Deities,
At the tribunal which great Jupiter
Established there for Mars, to purify
The hands of men defiled with human blood.
On my arrival, no inhabitant 960
Was willing to receive a man with whom
The Gods were angry. Yet some friends of mine
Spread for my use a solitary board ;
For tho' we occupied one common roof,
They, by their silence, checked all intercourse,
And made me take my food and drink apart,
And pouring out for each a cup of wine,
Such as was given to me, enjoyed themselves.
I did not venture to find fault with them,
But fretted inwardly, and did not seem 970
To mark their coldness, groaning all the while,
Because I was my mother's murderer.
Th' Athenians, I hear, have made my woes
Occasion for a feast, and keep it still,
And pass the wine-cup in Minerva's praise.
Then, when I came upon the hill of Mars
To take my trial, I sat on one seat,
And on another seat the eldest born
Of the dread Furies. And when he had heard
The circumstances of my mother's death, 980
Apollo saved me by his evidence,
And Pallas numbered for me equal votes,
So that I won my cause, and was reprieved.
Such of the Furies there as were content,
Remaining in the place, determined on

A temple of their own beneath the court.
 But some of them, who did not acquiesce
 In its decision, always harassed me
 With stern pursuit, until I came again
 Unto Apollo's shrine, and lying there 990
 Faint from the want of food, declared that I
 Would live no longer, unless he would save
 Who had destroyed me. Upon this the God,
 Forth from the golden tripod sent his voice,
 And bad me journey hither, to remove
 The statue which had fallen from the sky,
 And set it up upon Athenian ground.—
 Work out with us, then, this concerted plan.
 If we can get the prize into our hands,
 I shall be freed from my dread malady, 1000
 And will replace thee, with my well-oared bark,
 Once more in thy Mycenæ. Sister dear!
 Save our paternal house, and O save me!
 For ev'rything of mine and of our race
 Is lost for us, unless we carry off
 That heaven-sent image of Divinity.

CHORUS.

Surely the hottest anger of the Gods
 Falls on and scathes the race of Tantalus.

IPHIGENIA.

I had the wish, before thou camest here,
 To visit Argos, and to look on thee. 1010
 I wish the same as thou,—to set thee free,
 And raise again our long afflicted house,

Without ill-will towards my murderer ;
 And from thy slaughter will I stay my hand,
 And give to all deliv'rance. But how
 Can I elude the Goddess,—and the king,
 When he perceives the marble pedestal,
 On which the image stood, untenanted ?
 How 'scape from death, and what excuse allege ?
 And yet, if both deeds could be done at once,— 1020
 If thou couldst bear away the prize and me
 Upon thy vessel, with its graceful prow,
 The venture would be glorious. Should I fail,
 Then am I lost, but thou, with management,
 Mightest return. I quail not at the risk
 Of life itself, if I can save but thee.
 When men die out, the loss is great indeed ;
 But of less value is a woman's life.

ORESTES.

I would not be the murderer of thee
 And of my mother. One death is enough. 1030
 I wish to live with thee or share thy fate.
 I will remove thee, unless I should fall,
 Or stay with thee, and die in company.—
 Hear my opinion ! Had this been against
 The will of Artemis, how could the voice
 Of Phœbus have commanded me to bear
 Pallas' statue to her own abode,
 And look again on thee ? Considering
 These matters in connexion, I have hope
 That our attempt will meet with due success. 1040

IPHIGENIA.

Yet how can I escape? or how can we
Do what we contemplate? On ev'ry side
Dangers beset us, tho' the will be there.

ORESTES.

Might we not slay the king?

IPHIGENIA.

O! what thou sayst
Is cruel. Should a stranger slay his host?

ORESTES.

To save thee and myself it might be done.

IPHIGENIA.

No! no! But yet I praise thy readiness.

ORESTES.

What, if thou wert to hide me in the fane?

IPHIGENIA.

That when night comes, we might get off unseen?

ORESTES.

Aye! for the night is best for stratagem, 1050
The day for truth.

IPHIGENIA.

But there are guards within
Whom we could not evade.

ORESTES.

Then must we die.—

IPHIGENIA.

Methinks I have found out another plan.

ORESTES.

What kind of plan? I pray thee let me know.

IPHIGENIA.

I will make use of thy calamity
For subtle purposes, and so escape.

ORESTES.

Certainly, women are most fitted for
Such subtleties.

IPHIGENIA.

I will declare that thou
Hast fled from Argos as a matricide.—

ORESTES.

Well! do so, if 'tis for thy benefit.

1060

IPHIGENIA.

And say thou art not fit for sacrifice.

ORESTES.

On what account?—And yet I guess thine aim.

IPHIGENIA.

Because thou art defiled. The pure alone
Have I to offer up for sacrifice.

ORESTES.

E'en then, how can the statue be removed?

IPHIGENIA.

I will propose to wash thee in the sea.

ORESTES.

But, yet, the statue, on account of which
We have sailed hither, in the temple rests.

IPHIGENIA.

I will pretend that it too must be laved
Since thou hast touched it.

ORESTES.

Where, may I ask?— 1070
Within the humid creek that lies below?

IPHIGENIA.

No! further off, where thy stout ship is moored.

ORESTES.

Who will bear down the image to the shore?

IPHIGENIA.

I.—None may handle it except myself.

ORESTES.

And Pylades!—what shall we do with him?

IPHIGENIA.

Assert that his hands are impure like thine.

ORESTES.

Wilt thou act secretly, or tell the king?

IPHIGENIA.

I will persuade. Concealment is in vain.

ORESTES.

My well oar'd bark lies there, all fit for sea. 1080
But how all else may turn must be thy care.
One thing is needful, that these maidens veil
Our enterprise. Entreat them, and employ
Persuasive language. Woman has the art.—
I think in other things we may succeed.

IPHIGENIA.

Maidens beloved, to you I now must look,
My fate is in your hands. It rests with you
To let me prosper, or to sink me down,
And so deprive me of my native land,

My brother, and my sister still more dear.
 Let these things preface what I have to say. 1090
 We are all women, of a sex inclined
 To mutual love,—to be relied upon
 In what affects our common interest.
 Preserve our secret, expedite our cause.
 The faithful tongue is ever to be prized.
 See now how fate involves three friends at once,
 If they escape not hence they must be slain.
 I, being saved, will share my lot with you,
 And take you on to Greece. By thy right hand
 I pray both thee, and thee, and thee, besides,— 1100
 By those fair cheeks, and limbs, and everything
 That ye most love at home, whate'er it be,
 Mother or father, or some tender babe.—
 What will ye? who assents, and who says nay?
 Speak out. If ye approve not of my words,
 I and my wretched brother are undone.

CHORUS.

Be of good cheer, dear mistress, save thyself,
 For that all this shall be conceal'd by us,
 Bear witness, mighty Jove, on whom I call.

IPHIGENIA.

May ye be ever blest for these kind words!— 1110
 And as to you, remain no longer here.
 The ruler of this land will soon appear
 To find out if the sacrifice is o'er.

(Orestes and Pylades go in.)

Goddess revered! who once protectedst me

At Aulis, from the cruel murd'rous hand,
 Which mine own father raised against my life,
 Save me again, and these! Apollo, else,
 Thro' thee, will be no more believed by men.
 But go, propitious, from this rugged land,
 To Athens, for it is not fit that thou 1120
 Shouldst sojourn here when it is in thy pow'r
 To make thy dwelling in that happy state.

CHORUS.

STR. 1.

O Halcyon! sweet ocean bird,
 Whose plaintive voice is often heard
 Upon the rock-encumbered sea,
 Singing those elegies of woe
 Which understanding men well know,
 For from the wounded heart they flow,—
 In sorrow for a husband lost to thee.
 With thine I mingle my lament, 1130
 Thou wingless bird! on hope intent
 Of seeing feasts of Argive men,
 And rites of Artemis again,—
 The delicate and full-tressed palm,
 The verdant laurel's deeper calm,
 The shooting olive light and fine,
 Latona's fav'rite anodyne,
 And the bright water circling on
 To music of the vocal swan.

ANT. 1.

Alas! how oft the crystal tears 1140
 Ran down my face when I beheld
 My city razed, and full of fears,
 Entered that war-ship of the foe,

With bright spears glittering, and impelled
 By flashing oars, above, below.
 And then a captive dearly sold
 For many a piece of yellow gold.
 I came to this accursed land
 To serve a priestess, heart and hand,
 Of Agamemnon's noble race, 1150
 And gory altars, when they place
 Victims for her, the Goddess of the chase.
 And with this office must I seem content,
 Maintained, indeed, altho' by sorrows bent.
 I envy life-long want ; for years
 And use dry up the fount of tears.
 But men, once blest, on sad reverse
 Alone can feel life's direst curse.

STR. 2.

Thee, honoured mistress! will yon bark
 Of fifty oars, to thine own land convey ; 1160
 And the melodious pipe of sylvan Pan
 Cheer ev'ry sailor on his toilsome way ;
 And the prophetic God inspire
 With music of the seven-stringed lyre,
 And to the rich Athenian land
 With song conduct the joyous band.
 Then, in sad exile, leaving me,
 Thou wilt be rowed across the sea,
 Whilst the tense cordage holds each swelling sail,
 And thy ship wings her course before the gale. 1170

ANT. 2.

To the gay circus I aspire,
 Where the sun darts his glance of fire,—
 To rest in those dear halls at home,
 With fluttering wing no more to roam,

In the gay dance resume my place,
 To noblest suitor no disgrace,
 And rouse, in my dear mother's eye,
 Each virgin heart to rivalry,
 Decked, as to my luxuriant hair,
 With veil, and wreath, and ornament,
 Which mark my cheek with shadows fair,—
 On conquest and on pleasure bent.

1180

 THOAS.—IPHIGENIA.

THOAS.

Where is the Grecian lady who presides
 Over this temple? Has the sacrifice
 Of the two strangers been performed, and are
 Their bodies burning in the holy fane?

CHORUS.

Behold the priestess, who will tell thee all.

(Iphigenia enters, carrying the image.)

THOAS.

Ah! why from its firm pedestal take off
 The statue of the Goddess in thine arms?

IPHIGENIA.

O King! refrain from entering the shrine. 1190

THOAS.

Iphigenia! what new thing is there?

IPHIGENIA.

I shudder, and for our religion's sake.

THOAS.

What hast thou got to tell? Declare the truth.

IPHIGENIA.

Polluted are the victims thou hast seized.

THOAS.

How know'st thou this? It may be but surmise.

IPHIGENIA.

The statue of the Goddess was turned round.

THOAS.

Spontaneously? or by some earthquake's force?

IPHIGENIA.

It turned spontaneously. Its eyes were closed.

THOAS.

What was the cause? Was it the strangers' fault?

IPHIGENIA.

[1200

That and nought else. They have done awful deeds.

THOAS.

Have they killed any natives on the shore?

IPHIGENIA.

Not so. Domestic murder stains their hands.*

* "Der ält'ste diesen Männer trägt die Schuld
Des nahverwandten Bluts, das er vergoss.
Die Furien verfolgen seinen Pfad,
Ja! in dem innern Tempel fasste selbst
Das uebel ihn, und seine Gegenwart
Entheiligte die reine Stätte. Nun
Eil ich mit meinen Jungfrau'n an dem Meere,
Der Göttin Bild mit frischer Welle Nessend,
Geheimnissvolle Weihe zu begeh'n.
Es störe niemand unsern stillen Zug!"

Goethe's Iphigenia in Tauris.

THOAS.

What was 't they did? I burn to hear the rest.

IPHIGENIA.

To kill a wretched mother they combined.

THOAS.

Great Phœbus! No barbarian would have dared
A crime like this.

IPHIGENIA.

From Greece, then, are they driven.

THOAS.

Is it on this account thou dost remove
The image?

IPHIGENIA.

Aye, into the open air,
That I may clear it from the stain of blood.

THOAS.

But how didst thou find out they were not pure? 1210

IPHIGENIA.

I knew it from the image turning round.

THOAS.

Greece has well taught thee, to observe so quick.

IPHIGENIA.

Much pleasure have these men afforded me.

THOAS.

From Argos have they brought thee some good news?

IPHIGENIA.

Yes; that my only brother is alive.

THOAS.

They told thee, doubtless, that for the delight
Of tidings such as this they might be spared.

IPHIGENIA.

And that my father was alive and well.

THOAS.

But to thy duty thou remainest true ?

IPHIGENIA.

And to my hate for Greece, which ruined me. 1220

THOAS.

Say, now, what shall we do with these two youths ?

IPHIGENIA.

We must, perforce, obey th' existing law.

THOAS.

Then for the lustral water and the sword !

IPHIGENIA.

It is not time. They must be purified.

THOAS.

From the clear fountain or the ocean-wave ?

IPHIGENIA.

The sea alone can wash away such stains.

THOAS.

So, truly, will they die more holily.

IPHIGENIA.

And so mine office will be best fulfilled.

THOAS.

Does not the sea flow to this very place ?

IPHIGENIA.

We need a solitude, for other work

1230

Have I to do besides.—

THOAS.

Go at thy pleasure. I will not intrude.

IPHIGENIA.

The image also must I purify.

THOAS.

With reason, if the stain of matricide
Affects it.

IPHIGENIA.

Else it would not have been here.

THOAS.

Great are thy piety and diligence,
And justly all the state admires thee :

IPHIGENIA.

But canst thou guess what more I would have done ?

THOAS.

No ; tell me.

IPHIGENIA.

Then put fetters on these men.

THOAS.

How can they 'scape from thee ?

IPHIGENIA.

Greece knows no faith. 1240

THOAS.

Go for the fetters, guards !

IPHIGENIA.

And let them bring

The strangers forth.

THOAS.

It shall be done.

IPHIGENIA.

And veil

Their heads with clothing.

THOAS.

To ward off, no doubt,
The sun's hot rays.

IPHIGENIA.

Give me an escort, too.

THOAS.

An escort thou shalt have.

IPHIGENIA.

And send at once
Into the town to tell th' inhabitants
To stay within their houses.

THOAS.

I suppose
Lest the procession should be met.

IPHIGENIA.

'Twould be
Unfitting.

THOAS.

Go and give thine own commands.

IPHIGENIA.

Let no man come in sight.

THOAS.

Thou carest well 1250
For the good citizens.

IPHIGENIA.

Especially,—
I need no friends.

THOAS.

Thou sayest this for me !

IPHIGENIA.

Stay here before the temple.

THOAS.

And for what?

IPHIGENIA.

To shed the incense of a smoking torch.
 And when the strangers issue forth, hold up
 Thy robe before thine eyes, and wonder not
 Should I seem long away.

THOAS.

Take thine own time.

IPHIGENIA.

And may this expiation have success
 As I could wish!

THOAS.

My prayers are ever thine.

(Thoas retires.)

IPHIGENIA.

I now behold these strangers coming forth 1260
 Out of the temple with fit ornaments,
 And with young lambs, to wash out blood by blood,
 And glittering lights, and all the other things
 Which I have here arranged, to purify
 The image of the Goddess and the men.
 And I proclaim unto the citizens
 To keep apart from these most holy rites.—

“ All ye who serve the temple with clean hands,—
 Ye who would marry,—ye who are with child,—
 Fly hence,—retreat,—lest this pollution fall 1270
 On you.”—

Daughter of Jupiter and of Latona ! queen,
 And virgin queen ! if I may expiate
 The guilt of these poor men, and sacrifice
 As it beseems,—thy temple will be pure,
 Thy servants happy ; and tho' I refrain
 From saying more, yet with the Gods and thee,
 Who know all things, I need feel no reserve.

CHORUS.

STR.

Latona's progeny was fair,—
 Apollo, with the golden hair, 1280
 God of the lyre whom—in some glen
 Of Delos, far from mortal ken,—
 She bore, with her whose sounding bow
 Th' unswerving arrow well can throw.
 Him took she from the ocean's side,
 Whose waters ever swiftly glide
 To where Parnassus soars on high,
 And Bacchus holds his revelry.—
 With speckled back and eye of fire,
 And brazen scales and aspect dire,— 1290
 There, couched a dragon, rudely laid
 Beneath a spreading laurel's shade,
 Whose office 't was, with watch and ward,
 The subterranean shrine to guard.
 One might well think the teeming earth
 To no worse monster e'er gave birth.
 Whilst a mere infant, loving still to play
 In thy dear mother's arms, 't was thine to slay
 The dreaded monster, and to penetrate
 The sacred cavern, and to sit in state 1300

Upon the golden tripod, that bright throne
 Where all resembling falsehood is unknown.
 Oracular responses thence
 To mortal men thou didst dispense
 From earth's mysterious opening,
 Near where Castalia's waters spring,
 The central point of earth,—the shrine
 Where nations seek response divine.

ANT.

But after earth-born Themis fled,
 By young Apollo vanquished,
 Far from her fane, old Earth, by night,
 Sent dreary spectres to affright

1310

Mankind, and tell them of the past,
 The present, and the future, on the bed
 Of sleeping darkness, wearily outspread,
 And leave them all uncertain and aghast.—

On this, with speed, the God went forth
 And climbed Olympus, and stood by
 The throne of Jove, and there adjured,
 With youthful hand upraised on high,
 The mistress of the earth to leave

1320

Her Pythian home, and rage no more,
 Or, by nocturnal oracles,

His hard-earned privilege ignore.
 Jove smiled to see the boy come there,
 So rich an office to maintain,
 And waved his locks in mild assent,
 And rendered nightly dreaming vain.

Thus did the God relieve mankind
 From visions casual and blind ;
 Restore Apollo's honoured name
 Give back to him his pristine fame,

1330

And to that much-frequented throne
An influence the world might own.

MESSENGER. THOAS. MINERVA.

MESSENGER.

Ye guardians of the temple, and ye, too,
Who serve the altar, where is Thoas gone?
Open the solid doors, and then call out
From his abode the monarch of this land.

CHORUS.

What is the matter? if it be allowed
For me, who am uncalled for, to inquire? 1340

MESSENGER.

Two young men have departed from the coast,
By Agamemnon's daughter counselled,
And taken with them, in a ship of Greece,
The sacred image.

CHORUS.

Oh, it cannot be!
As for the king, by this time he has left
The temple.

MESSENGER.

Where is he? It is most fit
That he should know of what has taken place.

CHORUS.

We cannot tell ;—depart, and follow him,
And, having found, communicate thy news.

MESSENGER.

See how deceitful is the female sex ! 1350
(*To Chorus.*)

Ye, too, no doubt, have played your parts in this.

CHORUS.

Art thou insane? What have we got to do
With this strange flight? Wilt thou not hurry off,
As fast as may be, to the palace gate?

MESSENGER.

Not before some one has declared to me
Whether the sovereign be within or no.
Ho, there! unbar the doors, ye men inside!
And tell the king that I am standing here,
The bearer of a load of evil news.

THOAS. (*Coming out.*)

Who makes this uproar by the temple wall, 1360
Beating the doors, and causing fear within?

MESSENGER.

These lying women urged me to depart,
Asserting broadly that thou wert not here.

THOAS.

What benefit could they expect or seek?

MESSENGER.

Of this anon. The things before thee now
Attend to. She who used to minister,

Iphigenia, from the land is fled
 With the two strangers, and she bears with her
 The image of the Goddess we revere.
 The expiation was a mere pretence. 1370

THOAS.

How say'st thou? wherefore? by what gale impelled?

MESSENGER.

To save Orestes. Thou wilt be surprised.

THOAS.

Whom? Not the son whom Clytemnestra bore?

MESSENGER.

The same, whom Artemis has set apart
 For this her altar.

THOAS.

Marvellous event!

Most marvellous!—I know no better word.

MESSENGER.

Fix not thy mind on this, but list to me,
 Ponder my statements well, and then decide
 How thou mayst best pursue the fugitives.

THOAS.

Speak, thy advice is good. No easy task 1380
 Must they achieve if they escape from me.

MESSENGER.

When we came down upon the shore off which
 The vessel of Orestes lay concealed,
 The priestess, by a nod, directed us,
 Whom thou hadst sent to hold the cords that bound
 These strangers, to depart, as if she meant
 To light the sacred fire, and to perform

The purifying rites she had in view.
 So she went on, behind the prisoners,
 Holding their fetters firmly in her hands. 1390
 This was, indeed, suspicious, but thy guards,
 O king ! were fain to acquiesce ; and then,
 Under pretence of doing something more,
 She uttered cries, and chanted a wild hymn,
 As if to expiate some murder done.
 But having sate apart no little time,
 It struck us that the two men getting loose
 Might kill her, and effect their own escape.
 Fearing, however, lest we should behold
 What we ought not, we still sat silently.— 1400
 At last it seemed we all were of one mind
 To seek them out, altho' unauthorised.
 Reaching the place, we saw a ship of Greece
 Prepared for flight, like some winged agency,
 And fifty sailors, ready with the oars
 Upon their rests, and the young men, unbound,
 Standing behind the vessel on the shore.
 Some held the ship with boat-hooks, others hung
 The anchor in its place ; others applied
 The ladders, and began to handle ropes 1410
 And throw them to the strangers, and let go.
 Regardless of ourselves, when we beheld
 These cunning arts, we seized the maid, and held
 The stern-ropes firm, and thro' the ports drew forth
 The rudder-sweeps of that well-fitted bark.
 Then words ran high :—" Wherefore do ye steal off
 With priestess and with image from the land ?

Who art thou, and from whence, to dare all this ?”
“ Know ye I am her brother ?” he replied,
“ And Agamemnon’s son, and take away 1420
This my lost sister to her native home.”
Yet, notwithstanding, we retained our hold
Upon the lady, and we tried by force
To make her follow us, and come to thee.
To this we owe the bruises on our cheeks.
For neither did they carry swords with them,
Nor had we swords, but heavy fists there were ;
And with his feet each of the youths struck out
Against the sides and throat, so that our breath
Came short, and weariness oppressed each limb. 1430
With many a mark of sore discomfiture
We fled towards an eminence ; and some
Had bloody wounds upon the head, and some
Eyes all contused. Then, standing on the hill,
We fought more cautiously, and only hurled
Stones on the foe below. But archers placed
Upon the deck, and armed, checked our attempt,
And drove us back. It chanced that one huge wave
Washed the ship nearer land. The sailors feared
For their fair passenger. Orestes, then 1440
Snatched up his sister,—rushed into the sea,—
Went up the steps, and placed her in the hold
Of his well-fitted bark, together with
The sacred image, fallen from the sky,
Of Jove’s own daughter. From the midst there came
A voice, which said, “ O mariners of Greece,
Take to your oars, and make the water foam ;

We have won all for which we sailed into
 The Euxine sea, thro' the Symplegades."
 They, with a low-toned murmur of delight, 1450
 Pulled thro' the waves, and the good ship, so long
 As she was in the harbour, held her course.
 But on the outside, a tempestuous sea
 Soon checked her way, and then a sudden squall
 Struck her athwart. The sailors bore the shock,
 And struggled still. Again, towards the land,
 A coming wave rolled on. The daughter, then,
 Of Agamemnon stood and prayed aloud :—
 "O daughter of Latona, hear and save!
 Thy servant am I, take me back to Greece 1460
 From this dark land, and pardon my deceit.
 Thou lovest thine own brother; O believe
 That I love mine." The sailors gave assent
 In sounding pæans, and with naked arms
 Tore at their work, obedient to command.
 Yet more and more they drifted to the rocks;
 Some leapt into the sea with coils of rope;
 Others stood prompt and firm.—Without delay
 I came to thee, to tell thee these events.—
 But go, O king! and carry in thy hands 1470
 Fetters and cords. Unless the sea goes down
 There is no hope of safety for the crew.
 The ocean-king, great Neptune, careth for
 The Trojan race, but the Pelopidæ
 Are his aversion; and he will betray
 The son of Agamemnon, I suppose,
 To thee and thine, and give into thy hands

His sister, also, whom we here detect
 In thankless opposition to the power
 That saved her life at Aulis.

CHORUS.

Hapless maid, 1480

Iphigenia! thou must die at last
 With thy poor brother, having fallen again
 Into the tyrant's grasp.

THOAS.

Ho! all ye citizens of this stern land,
 Will ye not throw the rein upon the necks
 Of your fleet horses, gallop to the shore,
 And take possession of the stranded ship
 Of Greece, and then, the Goddess aiding you,
 Hunt down, without delay, these impious men?
 Let some of you draw down into the sea 1490
 Fast vessels, that by water or by land
 We may secure them,—from the steepest rock
 To hurl their bodies, or impale alive.—
 And as for you, ye girls, accomplices
 In these designs, I mean to punish you
 Hereafter, as time serves. The work in hand
 Demands our present care, and we must on.

MINERVA.

For what, King Thoas, dost thou set on foot
 This persecution? Hear Minerva's words!
 No more pursue, nor urge thy soldiers on.— 1500
 Led by Apollo's fate-bound oracles,
 Orestes hither came, escaping from

Th' indignant Furies, to bring back to Greece
 His sister, and convey mine image home.
 Thus only may these ills be remedied.—
 So far I speak to thee.—Orestes, whom
 Thou purposest to kill, and whom the storm
 Has intercepted, on the tranquil main
 Is now embarked, for Neptune calmed it down
 To favour me.— 1510

And thou, Orestes, conscious of my will,
 Aye, and my voice, altho' thou art not here,
 Go with my image, and thy sister too ;
 And when thou com'st to Athens, by the Gods
 First founded, thou wilt find a sacred spot
 In the extremest part of Attica,
 Near the Carystian shore. My people call
 That district Halæ. Build a temple there,
 And place the statue,—a memorial
 Both of the Tauric land and of the grief 1520
 Thou hast encountered in thy wanderings [men
 Through Greece, by Furies urged. Henceforth shall
 Name Artemis the Tauric Deity.
 Hear this condition. When the people meet
 To make return for thy escape from death,
 Let the sword fall on some devoted neck,
 And blood be shed, that Artemis may have
 The honour due.—Iphigenia! thou
 Upon the heights of Brauron must preside
 Over her shrine,—and at thy burial 1530
 Rich votive robes shall be cast over thee,
 Of finest texture, by the women left

Who died in childbed. I command that thou
 Shouldst bear away these captive maids of Greece
 From hence with thee, for their good deeds, as I
 Once saved Orestes, on the hill of Mars,
 By equal votes, deciding, from that time,
 That all so judged should be preserved like him.
 Therefore, O son of Agamemnon, take
 Thy sister from the land; and, Thoas! see 1540
 That no resentment rankles in thy heart.

THOAS.

Royal Athênē! he who hears the words
 Of the great Gods, and who will not obey,
 Errs fatally. I am not angry with
 Orestes, though he take the image hence,
 Nor with his sister. What can it avail
 With the all-potent Deities to strive?
 Let them depart into that land of thine,
 The statue in their hands, and fix it there.
 The women will I send to happy Greece, 1550
 As thou hast ordered, and keep back the troops
 I meant to lead against the stranger youths
 And their good ship, since it so pleaseth thee.

MINERVA.

Thou hast my praise. Fate rules both Gods and men.
 Breathe soft, ye winds, that Agamemnon's son
 May reach fair Athens. I will go with them,
 To guard my sister's image from all ill.

THE END.



APPENDIX.

OVID'S CENONE PARIDI.

WILT read? or will that other wife withstand?
O read! 'tis from no Mycenæan hand.
The fountain nymph, CEnone, she whose fame
Has made the woodlands echo to her name,
Injured, of thee complains, of thee her own,
If thou wilt have it so. What God unknown
Has crossed our hopes? That I must not remain
With thee, what have I done? Deserved pain
May be endured, but the heart is rent
By all unjust and cruel punishment. 10

Thou wert not then so great when I with thee,
A nymph of mighty streams, content could be.
A servant wert thou, tho' King Priam's son,
A servant, me the river Goddess won.
Oft midst the flocks we rested in the shade,
On couch of grasses and of foliage made;
Oft sought we refuge, in some lowly shed,
From sharp hoar frost, the hay our only bed.—
Who pointed out to thee the groves most meet
For sport, and rocks to which the cubs retreat, 20

Led by their dams, for safety? Have I not
 Laid out thy nets distinct with many a spot,
 Just as a comrade, and the rapid hound
 Urged on for thee along the mountain ground?
 The beeches carved by thee preserve my name,
 Thy love for me the very trees proclaim.
 The letters lengthen as the trees increase,—
 Like my proud name, may they grow on in peace!
 There is a poplar by the river side,
 As I remember, where the waters glide, 30
 Thus marked,—for ever flourish lovely tree,
 On thy rough rind this tender verse I see,—
 “When Paris lives, from his CEnone fled,
 Let Zanthus turn towards its fountain head.”
 Zanthus turn back, retreat, ye waters fair,
 To live without CEnone thou canst bear.
 One day proclaimed my doom, and led to this,
 The long sad winter of departed bliss.

When Venus, and when Juno, and in arms
 Minerva, else unclad, revealed their charms 40
 To thee as arbiter, a sudden thrill
 Shook my perturbed heart, and tremors chill
 Ran thro' my bones. It was no common fear;
 I sought advice of ev'ry aged seer,
 Woman or man, and found it but too plain
 That guilt and falsehood were to be my bane.
 Pines were cut down and vessels built for thee,
 And launched, at length, upon the azure sea.
 Thou didst depart in tears,—deny it not,—
 This love is diff'rent from the love forgot. 50

Yes! thou didst weep on parting, and didst see
 Mine own eyes streaming as they turned to thee.
 Our tears we mingled. Closer than the vine
 Upon some neighbouring elm is seen to twine,—
 Closer than this, I say, thine arms were wound
 In strict embrace, my glowing neck around.
 And ah! how often when thou didst declare
 The wind detained thee, tho' the wind was fair,
 Thy shipmates laughed! How oft didst thou dismiss
 Thy wife, and yet repeat the parting kiss! 60
 How oft thou murmuredst a last farewell,
 As on each mast the breeze began to swell
 The pendant canvass, and the water torn
 By straining oars, in foamy waves was borne.
 Far as I may, thy parting sails I view,
 And with my tears the moistened sand bedew,
 And all the sea-green Nereïds implore
 To bring thee back to thine own native shore,—
 To my destruction. Aye! thou hast returned,
 And for another partner I am spurned. 70
 Alas! alas! the Gods have heard my vow,
 All for that woman who enchains thee now.

A rocky cliff o'erlooks the boundless main,
 'Gainst whose firm base the waters rage in vain,
 From thence was I the first to see and mark
 The distant sails that winged thy coming bark.
 An impulse came o'er me at once to leap
 Forward to meet thee on the briny deep,
 And, as I lingered, on the prow there shone
 A purple vesture, which was not thine own. 80

'Twas then I trembled. As ye neared the shore
 With fainting heart I gazed, and saw still more.
 A female form was there. I was possessed
 By sudden frenzy! On thy very breast
 The shameless woman hung. I tore my clothes,
 Wounded my bosom with repeated blows,
 And my pale humid cheeks, on vengeance bent,
 Filled sacred Ida with my sad lament,
 And then, worn out by these successive shocks,
 Retired mourning to my own wild rocks. 90
 E'en so may Helen mourn, and left in turn,
 With fires like those she kindles may she burn.—
 Those suit thee now who on the open sea,
 Laving their husbands, care to follow thee.

When thou wert poor, and led'st a herdsman's life,
 Cenone only was the poor man's wife.—
 Thy wealth, thy palace, move me not, and I
 Care not for ent'ring Priam's family.
 A nymph not even Priam could disdain,
 Nor of such daughter Hecuba complain! 100
 I am entitled to, and fain would be
 The bride of one more eminent than he.
 Yes; I have hands that might a sceptre grace,—
 Despise me not that once I sought a place
 Beneath the beechen shade, with thee to rest,
 When regal purple might beseem me best.
 My love thou know'st is safe; no hostile steel
 Hast thou to fear, and no avenging keel,
 But Tyndaris is claimed by outraged power,
 And proudly brings thee this her fatal dower. 110

Hector, Deiphobus, Polydamas,
 Consult if she should not be made to pass
 To Greece again. The great Antenor seek,
 Or Priam's self, and let these sages speak
 Whom years have taught. In thee it was most base
 Thus to set forth in life, and for that face
 Betray the country. Shameful is thy cause ;
 The husband arms, subservient to the laws.

Hope not, if thou art wise, when all is done,
 For constancy in her so quickly won. 120

As Atreus' younger son, by vengeance led,
 Exclaims against his violated bed,
 And mourns the issue of this foreign flame,
 So wilt thou mourn, and so wilt thou exclaim.—
 When virtue has been struck, and wounded lies,
 No art can raise it, and at once it dies.

Burns she for love of thee? So did she burn
 For Menelaus, whom she learnt to spurn,
 And now, too credulous, the king is left
 In his deserted home, of peace bereft. 130

Happy Andromache! to one allied
 Who rests in love and honour at her side!
 A like regard to me was also due,
 Thou, like thy brother Hector, shouldst be true.
 But as the withered foliage art thou light,
 Which the wind chases in uncertain flight.
 Thou art less firm than are the ears of wheat
 Burnt up, and loosened by the summer's heat.
 These were the words which, with her hair diffused,
 I well remember thine own sister used.— 140

"What art thou doing, O CEnone? Why
 Sow seed upon the sterile sand to die?
 Thou art but ploughing on the fruitless shore,
 With steers whose labours profit thee no more;—
 A heifer comes from Greece who will destroy
 Thee and thy country, and domestic joy.
 Io! that heifer comes! obstruct her course;
 Ye Gods, whilst yet 'tis time, exert your force.
 Sink her foul bark beneath the ocean tide;
 And quench the fount of gore its timbers hide!" 150
 So spake Cassandra, and in madness fled,
 Till by her maidens caught and homeward led.
 As for myself, up rose each golden tress,
 Ah! she was but too true a prophetess.
 Behold! the heifer occupies my place,
 Altho' so fair, yet treacherous and base.
 Theseus—one Theseus, if I catch the name,—
 First won the prize. CEnone, still the same,
 Thou thou art false, is yet to be believed,
 Had she been like thee, thou hadst been deceived. 160
 Me the swift Satyrs, a wild lawless band,
 As in the copse I lurked, all sought my hand:
 And horned Faunus, with his wreath of pine,
 Where Ida swells with many a crest divine.
 Apollo, too, of musical renown,
 Who built the ramparts of yon haughty town,
 Loved me no less, and failed not to impart
 The inmost secrets of his godlike art.

Yes! every herb and root which, here below,
 Can mitigate the ills of man, I know.— 170

Unhappy me! Love yields to none of these ;
Vain is my skill, confirmed is my disease.
Even the great inventor who, 'tis said,
Once o'er Pheræa's hills his herds had led,
Was fired by me. The aid which neither earth,
Fertile in blooming plants of sov'reign worth,
Nor God can give, thou canst. It is my due :
Pity a hapless maid, be just, be true,
I come not with the Greeks in war's array ;
But thine I am, as in that happy day 180
When we were younger ; and would fain be thine
In truth and constancy till life's decline.

INDEX.

MEDEA.

MUSIC superfluous at Feasts, page 21.—Hard Fate of Women, 22.—Penalties of Eminence, 25.—“*Medea ferox*,” 29.—Connubial Quarrel, 32.—Misogyny, 36.—Parallel from *Paradise Lost*.—“Key of the Heart.”—Chorus, 39.—Persuasion, 40.—“*Furens quid fœmina possit*,” 46.—Athens; Union of Philosophy and Beauty; Chorus, 48.—Greek Duplicity, 49.—Revenge, and Maternal tenderness, 56-7.—Awful death of Creon and his Daughter, 61.—Murder of the Children, 66.—Chariot of the Sun, 68.—Reproaches.

IPHIGENIA IN AULIS.

DAWN of day, 77-8.—Agamemnon’s Narrative; Paris and Helen; the Armament; Calchas, etc., 79-80.—Chorus, 84-5.—Account of the Camp and Fleet.—Quarrel between the Brothers, 87-8.—The ambitious and incompetent Leader; Unjust Demands, 89-92.—Agamemnon’s Difficulties, 95.—Reconciliation, 96.—Chorus, 99-101.—Cupid’s two Bows (or arrows); Moderation and Virtue, 99-100.—Arrival of the Princess, 101.—Interview between Iphigenia and her Father, 102.—Agamemnon and Clytemnestra; Rupture, 105.—French Courtliness, *note*, 109.—Chorus.—Approach of the Fleet to Troy; the Trojan Ladies; Specimen of Schiller’s translation, 110-11.—Noble Conduct of Achilles; Chivalrous Feeling, 112-124.—Beautiful Chorus.—Marriage Feast of the Gods; the Centaurs; the Victim,

124-5.—Iphigenia's Touching Appeal, 131-2.—Monody ; Schiller and Tennyson, 134-5.—Iphigenia's Self-devotion and Patriotism, 140-1. — Farewell, 147. — The Sacrifice, 150.

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS.

IPHIGENIA'S Dream, p. 157.—Orestes and Pylades arrive and reconnoitre, 158.—Firmness of Pylades, 160.—Choral Lament.—Wonder of the Captive Grecian Women at the Splendour of the Temple ; Iphigenia mourns, and pours a Libation ; Lines from Goethe's *Iphigenia*, 161-2-3.—Story of the Herdsman ; "Furiis agitatus Orestes ;" Capture of the Friends, 166-7-8.—Chorus—The Strangers ; Eagerness for Wealth ; the Voyage ; Revenge, 171-2-3.—Truth and Friendship of Pylades and Orestes, 181 and 185.—Recognition of Brother and Sister ; Lines from Goethe, 191-3.—Delicate mention of Clytemnestra's Death ; Goethe's treatment of the subject, 197. — Orestes' Tale, 199.—Chorus — The "Halcyon ;" Regrets ; Joyful Return ; Home ; the Circus ; the Dance, 206-8.—Iphigenia and Thoas ; Greek Duplicity, 208.—Chorus—The Oracle ; Young Apollo kills the Dragon ; Displaces Themis ; Appeals to Jupiter, 215.—Flight ; Interruption ; Cast on Shore ; Rage of Thoas, 221-2-3. Intervention of Minerva, "Deus ex machinâ."—Iphigenia to remain a priestess "all her life," and to be buried with the honours.

