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AGAMEMNON,

TRANSLATED FROM

THE GREEK OF ÆSCHYLUS,

BY

T. MEDWIN, Esq.

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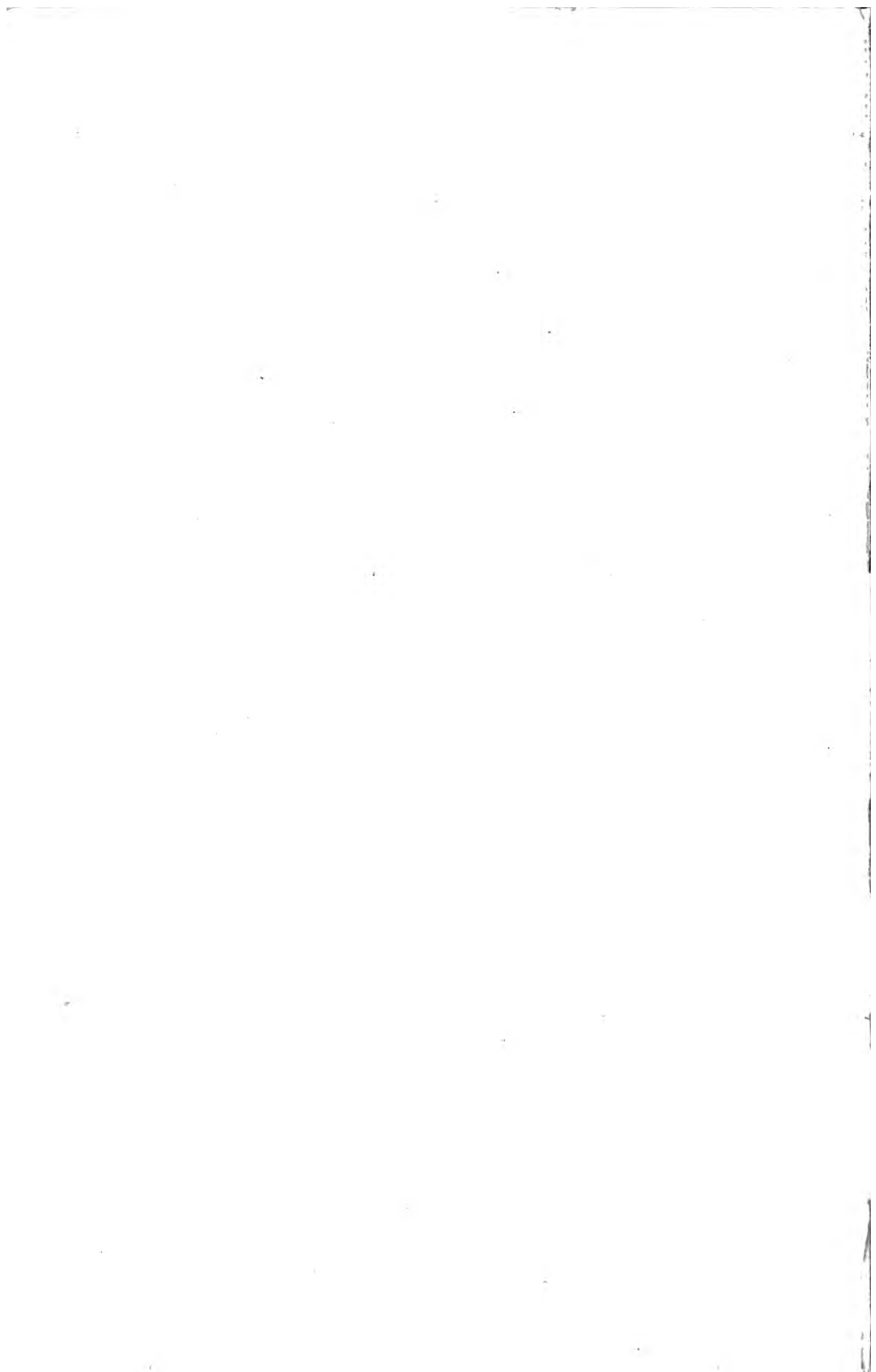
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**AGAMEMNON,**

**A TRAGEDY.**



AGAMEMNON,

A TRAGEDY,

TRANSLATED FROM

THE GREEK OF ÆSCHYLUS,

INTO ENGLISH VERSE

BY THOMAS MEDWIN, Esq.

AUTHOR OF "THE CONVERSATIONS OF LORD BYRON."

LONDON:

WILLIAM PICKERING.

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1832.





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## ARGUMENT.

\*“ IN Agamemnon it was the intention of Æschylus to exhibit to us a sudden fall from the highest pinnacle of prosperity and fame into the abyss of ruin. The prince, the hero, the general of the whole of the Greeks, in the very moment when he has succeeded in concluding the most glorious action, the destruction of Troy, the fame of which is to be re-echoed from the mouths of the greatest poets of all ages, on entering the threshold of his house, after which he had long sighed, is strangled amidst the unsuspected preparations for a festival, according to the expression of Homer, ‘ Like an ox in the stall,’ strangled by his faithless wife; her unworthy seducer takes possession of his throne, and the children are consigned to banishment, or to hopeless servitude.

“ With the view of giving the greater effect to this dreadful alternation of fortune, the poet has previously thrown a splendor over the destruction of Troy. He has done this in the first half of the piece, in a manner peculiar to himself, which, however singular, must be allowed to be impressive in the extreme, and to lay fast hold of the imagination. It is of importance to Clytemnestra not to be surprised by the arrival of her husband; she has therefore arranged an uninterrupted series of signal

\* Schlegel’s Lectures on Dramatic Literature. *Black’s Translation.*

fires from Troy to Mycenæ\* to announce to her that great event. The piece commences with the speech of a watchman, who supplicates the Gods for a release of his toils; as for† ten long years he has been exposed to the cold dews of night, has witnessed the various changes of the stars, and looked in vain for the expected signal; at the same time he sighs in secret over the internal ruin of the royal house. At this moment he sees the blaze of the long wished-for fires, and hastens to announce it to his mistress. A chorus of aged persons appear, and in their songs they trace back the Trojan war through all its eventful changes of fortune from its first origin, and recount all the prophecies relating to it, and the sacrifice of Iphigenia, at the expense of which the voyage of the Greeks was purchased. Clytemnestra declares the joyful cause of the sacrifice which she orders, and the herald, Talthybius, immediately makes his appearance, who, as an eye-witness, announces the drama of the conquered and plundered city, consigned as a prey to the flames, the joy of the victors, and the glory of their leader. He displays with reluctance, as if unwilling to shade the brilliancy of his picture, the subsequent misfortunes of the Greeks, their dispersion, and the shipwreck suffered by many of them—an immediate symptom of the wrath of the Gods. Agamemnon now comes, borne in a sort of triumphal procession, and seated on another car, laden

\* It appears extraordinary that Æschylus should have laid the scene of this play at Argos, where Diomed and Sthenalaus reigned. We know that the seat of the government of the Pelopidæ was at Mycenæ, and that that city contained the tombs of Agamemnon, Orestes, and Electra. This disregard of locality shows what a strange poetical license the Greek poets assumed to themselves. The position of Arachne, and the mention of the sea-shore by Clytemnestra, prove that Argos, not Mycenæ, was meant.

† Schlegel should have said a year.

*Notes of Translator.*

with booty, follows Cassandra, his prisoner of war and mistress, according to the privilege of the heroes of those days. Clytemnestra greets him with hypocritical joy and veneration; she orders her slaves to cover the ground with the most costly embroideries of purple, that it might not be touched by the naked foot of the conqueror. Agamemnon, with sage moderation, refuses to receive an honour due only to the Gods; at last he yields to her invitation, and enters the house. The chorus then begins to utter dark forebodings. Clytemnestra returns to allure Cassandra to her destruction. The latter remains dumb and motionless, but the queen is hardly gone, when, seized with a prophetic rage, she breaks out into the most piercing lamentations, afterwards, unveils the prophecies more distinctly to the chorus; she sees in her mind all the enormities which have been perpetrated in that house; the repast of Thyestes, which the sun refused to look on; the shadows of the delacerated children appear to her on the battlements of the palace: she also sees the death prepared for her master, and although horror-struck at the atrocious spectacle, as if seized with an overpowering frenzy, she rushes into the house to meet inevitable death. We then hear behind the scenes the groans of the dying Agamemnon. The palace opens; Clytemnestra stands behind the body of her king and husband an undaunted criminal, who not only confesses the deed, but boasts of it as a just requital for Agamemnon's ambitious sacrifice of Iphigenia. The jealousy towards Cassandra, and the criminal union with the unworthy Ægisthus, which is first disclosed after the completion of the murder, towards the conclusion of the piece, are motives which she throws entirely into the back ground, and hardly touches on: this was necessary to preserve the dignity of the



subject. But Clytemnestra would have been improperly portrayed as a weak woman seduced from her duty; she appeared with the features of that heroic age so rich in bloody catastrophies, in which all the passions were violent, and in which, both in good and evil, men exceeded the ordinary standard of later and more puny ages. What is so revolting, what affords such a deep proof of the degeneracy of human nature, as the spectacle of horrid crimes conceived in a pusillanimous bosom. The consequence which is thus given to the sacrifice of Iphigenia has this particular advantage: that it keeps within some bounds our discontent at the fall of Agamemnon. He cannot be pronounced wholly innocent: an earlier crime recoils on his own head; and besides, according to the religious idea of the ancients, an old curse hung over his house. Ægisthus, the contriver of his destruction, is a son of that very Thyestes on whom his father Atreus took such an unnatural revenge: and this fatal connexion is conveyed to our minds in the most vivid manner by the chorus, and more especially by the prophecies of Cassandra.”

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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A WARDER.

CHORUS OF ARGIVE ELDERS.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

HERALD.

AGAMEMNON.

CASSANDRA.

EGISTHUS.

*The SCENE is laid in Argos, before the Palace.*



## AGAMEMNON.

---

WARDER. (SOLUS.)

ONCE more I ask the Gods, once and for all,  
To end this heavy duty—'Tis a year,  
Since I've been crouching on this palace-roof,  
Most like a watch-dog; and, for company,  
Have had the stars, been present at their courts,  
Attended every congress of the chiefs  
Of the bright corps spangling the air, whose counsels  
Bring heat and cold, and have beheld them rise,  
And marked their setting. But I long to see  
A different light, the coming of a star,  
To bring from Troy a message, that, I trust,  
Will prove, with hers, the symbol of the fall  
Of one, a man in every thing but form.  
Meantime, my restless pallet's wet with dew,  
Unvisited by sweet dreams; or if I chance  
To doze, Fear comes, and stands by my bed-side,



Instead of Sleep, and will not let him set  
Upon my eyelids a fast seal, and then  
I try to drive my drowsiness away,  
By whistling, or by singing, if such ditties  
Can be called songs, accompanied, as they are,  
By groans, for the changed fortunes of this house,  
No more well managed, as it used to be.  
Then rise, thou messenger, with voice of fire!  
Shew thyself, come at last, divining flame,  
Thou dawn of my relief—Io! Io!  
Joy to thee, Bacchanal of night! who bring'st  
The tidings of a happier morn,—forerunner  
Of many a festive dance in Argos; Joy!  
Let me not lose a moment to convey  
The bright news to the wife of Agamemnon,  
That she may leave her couch, and make the city  
Ring with glad welcomes to the merry beacon,  
A quick sure herald of the fall of Troy:  
I, too, will dance at the head of all the train,  
Rejoicing in my master's joy,—huzza!  
Thrice six! a lucky cast my watch has been.  
And shall I lift this hand to touch the hand  
Of my loved lord—hist! for the rest I'm silent:  
There is a golden key that locks my tongue:  
But all the house might, if it had a voice,  
Speak plain enough—I ope my mouth and ears  
Most willingly to those who're in the secret;  
Those who know nothing—I know nothing too.

## CHORUS.

Lo! the tenth year is circling, since that hour,  
When for redress of wrongs, a matchless pair,  
Priam's antagonists, by Jove endued  
With equal honour, equal fortitude,  
The sceptred sons of Atreus, from this shore  
Led out a thousand ships, an allied host; of war,  
Loud-clanging from their inmost souls, the sound,  
Like vultures, when they oar on wings of might,  
With rapid-rowing pinions round and round  
Their rifled nests, and desolate habitations,  
Wild-screaming for their lost unfledged delight.  
Yet lists to their shrill cries and lamentations  
A Providence that sits above—  
Some Pan, some Phœbus, or some Jove,  
And sends the plundered an avenging power,  
A late, yet sure Erynnis—to destroy.  
The mighty sons of Atreus such to be,  
Arms the great God of hospitality,  
And such sends forth the Greeks 'gainst him of Troy.  
Alas! for an oft-wedded wife,  
Too much of bloodshed and of strife,  
And lingering toil, and limb-unnerving pain,  
Have been to both the dower;  
Too many broken spears; too many a bended knee  
Has struck upon the hard ground, and still in vain.  
As such things are, so must they be,  
Till done the will of destiny.  
For what avail or purifying streams,  
Or fervent prayers, or heart-wrung tears,  
Or sacrifice, where no lamp sheds its beams,  
To soothe a pitiless wrath that knows no end.

But we who stay at home ; heavy with years  
Who to the earth inglorious bend,  
Our sole support is a stout staff, to rest  
    On which our out-worn frame,  
Weak as some child's, for on the tender breast,  
    As in the old, the sap's the same,  
    No martial spirit flows ;  
For poor weak miserable man,  
When on his vital trunk grow sere  
The leaves, is little better here  
    Than a second infant, and he goes  
Crawling and tottering underneath his load,  
Upon three feet along a weary road,  
    And roams about, about, and seems  
As spectral, marrowless and wan,  
    As day-appearing ghosts in dreams.

But what is this ? what do I see ?  
    Daughter of Tindarus ! our queen !  
    What apparition hast thou seen ?  
What glad event has reached your ear,  
    And counselled thee, with winning power,  
    To sacrifice at this strange hour ?  
The shrines of all our country's deities—  
    And those of heaven, and earth, and earth below,  
    With her pure offerings glow ;  
Look ! from the regal bower's recess  
    They come, and from their censers rise,  
    On every side up-spiring to the skies  
Rich incense with the costliest perfumes fed.  
    Friends ! from these libations say  
    What your thoughts conjecture may,  
Speak ! I conjure you, speak ! and yet I dread

To learn what visions fancy brings  
From these her hallowed offerings :  
    Now through the gloom ; divinely fair,  
Hope sheds a cheering ray,  
    And drives of ever-craving care  
The lowering clouds away,  
    That palled my spirit with despair ;  
And now 'tis racked as with an eating fire.  
    Then may the powers of song our strains  
With solace-breathing notes inspire,  
    Together let our voices swell,  
    As we the auspicious portent tell,  
    And let it thaw the ice within your aged veins.

Swells high the tide of song—I feel the power,  
To hail, as due, that unforgotten hour,  
    When all the sea with ships, the strand  
Was filled with armed thousands to subdue  
    For a bold bird, the Trojan land—  
With vengeance armed, to lead of Greece that flower,  
Here, sat our throned monarchs full in view,  
There, on each side two royal eagles flew ;  
    One shone with sable plumage bright,  
    The other's back was streaked with white,  
    And he that was of dusky hue,  
From the spear-hand with swooping flight  
    Up to the palace-roof did bear  
    Heavy with many young a hare,  
Who in a lengthened chase had flagged that day,  
Both cowered, and flapped their wings mangling their  
    prey.  
    Chaunt the hymn, the presage hail !  
    Chaunt it, may the good prevail !

That omen was divine, that augury clear,  
 Our kings those winged monarchs emblemed well,  
 Their warlike force, and ire; and thus the seer,  
 His eye wild-flashing, told the oracle.

“Time, the hunter, shall destroy  
 Priam, and the state of Troy.  
 Destiny, with eagle-hand,  
 Sack the town, and tear the land.  
 Towers be by a tower subdued,  
 Pregnant with a mightier brood.  
 Should no fate-sent storm arise,  
 To o’ercloud our enterprize;  
 Tarnish the bright bits of steel,  
 Break the curb our foe should feel.  
 Dian hates the hounds of Jove,  
 Mother-hares are Dian’s love;  
 Dian with resentful breast  
 Loathes the eagle’s cruel feast;  
 Dian chaste with pitying eyes  
 Views that embryo sacrifice.”

Chaunt the hymn, the presage hail!  
 Chaunt it, may the good prevail.

“Virgin goddess! chaste, and fair!  
 Huntress! whose maternal care  
 All in field and forest are,  
 Tender leverets, gamesome fawns,  
 All that range the groves or lawns,  
 And each cub and whelp that dwell  
 On the mountain, in the dell,  
 Let this omen cease to be  
 Of ambiguous augury;  
 For yon eagles’ hapless prey  
 Bears an aspect of dismay.

Hear my Pœan, hear it now,  
 Send the Greeks no tempests, thou;  
 Grant that winds and waters may  
 Cost our fleet no long delay,  
 Lest from that delay should rise  
 An unhallowed sacrifice,  
 Spring of unconvivial joys,  
 Cup whose bitter draught destroys,  
 Taste from which the lip recoils,  
 Source of evils, worse than broils;  
 Kindred blood may hence arise,  
 Asking vengeance of the skies,  
 Gender consanguineous strife,  
 Break the holiest ties of life,  
 Custom, and domestic awe,  
 Law divine, and nature's law;  
 And, to end the work of fate,  
 Woman's wiles, a mother's hate."

From the rapt seer as thus his spirit spoke,  
 These ominous words of doubtful augury broke.

Chant the hymn, the presage hail!  
 Chant it, may the good prevail!

## STROPHE.

Great power! in every land adored  
 By many a name, almighty Lord!  
 Jove! if that name be dear to thee,  
 By that I offer-up my vow,  
 None but heaven's sovereign Deity  
 Can aid or save us, when we bow  
 Under our sorrow's load, and see  
 No refuge from despair,  
 And thus to whom should I but thee  
 Address myself in prayer.

## ANTISTROPHE I.

The highest in his noon of power,  
 Boast as he might, has had his hour,  
 Awhile in Titan-pride elate  
 He blazed in dazzling glory great,  
 A second came, and passed away,  
 A brighter star eclipsed his day.  
     Jove, victor Jove, alone is king,  
     None else deserve my lays;  
 Will he not listen, as I sing  
     By such a name, his praise.

## STROPHE II.

Jove in a school of evil tries  
 Mankind, and makes the unwilling wise,  
 Sends memory, who in sleep's mute hour  
     Drops grief upon the stubborn heart,  
 That dew, which pains, yet has the power  
     A healing balsam to impart;  
 When conscience to the sinner's ear  
 Brings sounds that wake remorse and fear,  
 Those gifts of Gods, who, throned in light,  
 Rule all things with unshaken might.

## ANTISTROPHE II.

But he who holds this sovereign power,  
 Our mighty chief, in night's still hour  
     The voice of conscience did not hear,  
 Nor came she whispering in his sleep,  
     Nor chided he, nor blamed the seer,  
 What time the fleet in slumber deep,  
 Wind-bound at Aulis rocking lay,  
 When idlesse, all in that array,

And famine and rebellious floods  
Declared the vengeance of the Gods.

## STROPHE III.

For when unseasonable and tempestuous blew  
The winds of Thrace, and locked them in that bay,  
When on its shores dispersed each spectral crew,  
And all was wild misrule; when day by day  
Fast faded all the flower of Greece away,  
And hope was none to lull the merciless deep:  
Must Calchas Dian tax with that delay,  
And urge a cure for ills more dread than they,  
Our kings be lashed with storms that wilder sweep?  
They strike the sceptres on the ground, and can but weep.

## ANTISTROPHE III.

Thus spake the elder chief. "To disobey  
" Is hard—and hard is the divine command—  
" But harder for a sire his child to slay  
" Before the shrine—for me to stain my hand  
" With virgin-blood of her, pride of my land,  
" The idol of my house, joy of my eyes:  
" Dire fate! but shall I fail my trust—this band,  
" And see them perish on this iron strand—  
" Stern justice thirsts for the dread sacrifice—  
" Quell then the tempest's ire—strike ye and gain the  
prize."

Then bowed the king too easily to the hard yoke  
Of stern necessity, at whose control,  
By guilty conscience swayed, his veering soul  
Breathed purpose foul and impious—with some cloak



Thinking his shame and madness to disguise,  
 Man all things dares, and hardened grown by time,  
 In his delirium steps from crime to crime.

And could he for a woman sacrifice  
 His daughter—to unmoor a fleet wind-bound.  
 Vain is her tender age,—all nature's ties  
 To him are nought, vainly she sobbing cries,  
 With piteous accents, 'Father,' even that sound,  
 Which comprehends all human charities,  
 Moves not his heart, nor soothes the savage princes  
 round.

The dreadful prayer is done—the dire command  
 A father, yet no father, gives the attendant band.  
 She wakens from her swoon profound—  
 As with a chain,  
 Her lips of love's own light,  
 And beauty's impress, to restrain  
 All plaints, or accents of affright,  
 Or imprecations that might breathe a spell  
 Upon his house, or break the solemn rite,  
 By hands of cruel priests were bound :  
 There, like a victim-kid for slaughter,  
 Enfolded in her robes of purest white,  
 They lift on high his daughter—  
 But see! oh see, along the ground  
 The deep folds of her croceate veil  
 In wild disorder float, and trail,  
 And from her pleading eyes,  
 With tenderest beams to thrill and melt,  
 A shaft of pity flies ;  
 E'en the stern sacrificers round,  
 That look which pierced all bosoms, felt,

And wept ; while visioned in the light  
 Of her own loveliness, more bright  
 Than pictured breathing form that is *but* mute,  
 She looked as though she wished, with that pure voice,  
 That oft her father's halls along,  
 Had made full many a chieftain there rejoice,  
 To speak to that assembled throng.

## STROPHE IV.

Yes! at those feasts that maiden chaste and fair,  
 In modulations soft and sweet,  
 Had warbled many a joyous air  
 To her glad sire, and told how great  
 Would be his fame, how blest his state.  
 The rest I saw not—nor to sing could dare :  
 Justice confirms the laws of fate,  
 Too well that augur's words recorded were,  
 The past already may relate,  
 What future ills for us the Gods prepare.

## ANTISTROPHE IV.

A mystic dark impenetrable veil  
 Hangs o'er the fortunes of the great,  
 To pierce that barrier all must fail,  
 The secret hour of time and fate  
 All those who dare anticipate,  
 Reap that they sow, a crop of tears : we see  
 That omens, ever, soon or late  
 Come true. Oh! prosperous may the future be!  
 Sole guardians of this Apian state  
 Thus pray ye all, and bless the augury.

## CHORUS. CLYTEMNESTRA.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Queen Clytemnestra, we are come to offer  
 Such homage as befits a royal consort,  
 For justice bids, those honours of the throne,  
 Where our king sate, be paid you in his absence.  
 If you have heard of gladdening import aught,  
 Or hearing not, make sacrifice with hopes  
 The messengers of good, we willingly  
 Would know; nor thou disdain through envious pride  
 To answer this our wish.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Morn, as men say,  
 Come forth in gladness from the womb of night.  
 You shall hear joyous tidings, news beyond  
 Your utmost expectation good; the Greeks  
 Are lords of Priam's city.

CHORUS.

What dost mean?  
 Your words, through disbelief, have 'scaped my ears.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Troy, I repeat, has Grecian lords: is not  
 My meaning clear and plain?

CHORUS.

Such floods of joy  
 Swell in my heart, that it o'erflows in tears.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

They rise to tax your heart with tenderness.

CHORUS.

Are the proofs certain?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

If no God deceive.

CHORUS.

Perhaps you put your confidence in dreams,  
A vision of the night....

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I take no counsel  
From the false phantoms of the torpid sense.

CHORUS.

A flying vague report, perhaps....

CLYTEMNESTRA.

You mock,  
And deem me credulous as some simple girl.

CHORUS.

When was the city sacked?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

This very night—  
The night, I say, from which this day was born.

CHORUS.

What herald could so quickly bring the news?

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

Vulcan, who lifted high a glittering torch  
On Ida ; whence succeeded fire to fire,  
Faro to Faro spake—Made first reply  
Lemnos, who caught the spark, and sent it on  
From its Hermæan cliff; the Athoan mount,  
Sacred to Jove, received it straight; and next,  
That air-enkindling meteor, like a sun  
Crossing the breast of ocean with a speed  
Plumed by its joy, diffused a golden beam  
On high Macistus; there, no careless guard,  
Nor conquered by untimely slumber, stood  
To propagate the flame, whose brilliance glanced  
Along the current of the Euripus,  
And warned the watchmen of Messapio.  
They lighting their dry pyramid of heather,  
Gave answer to the summons, carrying soon  
The tidings; O'er Asopus' plains, that broad  
And vigorous lustre, like the unclouded moon,  
Piercing the night, upon Cithæron's peak,  
Raised a progressive signal-fire, that, with  
A volume even mightier than the rest,  
Returned the flash, that winged its rapid flight  
Far over the Gorgopean pool, nor staid  
Till it reached Eglipanthon; there supplied  
With a fresh impulse to exchange its gleams,  
It proudly eminent raised its crimson crest  
Above the cope of the Saronic strait,  
And struck Arachne's crags, whose station-points  
O'erhang our city, whence that beacon lit  
The palace of the Atridæ. Every torch  
Was born of that gendered on Ida's top;  
And as amid the race of torches one

Succeeds another Lampadist in the course,  
Thus these alternate signals, save that they,  
The first and last, gained equally the prize.  
And hence a certain argument I draw,  
That they are the clear heralds of my lord,  
Announcing his return to me from Troy.

## CHORUS.

Thanks, lady! will I render to the Gods.  
But now so much I wonder at your words,  
That I could wish to hear them once again.

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

Yes! Troy this day is theirs: within its walls  
I seem to hear a hubbub of strange sounds,  
And dissonant tongues prevail. As in a vase,  
Together poured, discordant elements  
Unite not, but contend one with the other,  
Thus mix together there with shouts and shrieks  
The victors and the vanquished, as their fates  
Distinct there differing voices. Prostrate these  
Upon the lifeless bodies of their husbands,  
Their brothers, and their aged sires, and now  
Bending the neck no longer free, set up  
A wail for those most dear; whilst hungry Rapine,  
By war's fatigues engendered, wanders up  
And down by night, and points out to the plunderer  
What best the city has. Order is none—  
Each takes his share of spoil that fortune sends,  
And now they quarter in the captive foe's  
Deserted palaces; where, no more exposed  
To falling dews, or the hoar frost of morn,  
Without a watch they sleep the night away,  
Soundly as mariners when the danger's past.

And if the slayer should respect the Gods,  
 And sacred temples of the conquered land,  
 Himself may 'scape a like return. May not  
 The cursed thirst and lust of things forbidden  
 Fall on the Greeks; but let them well reflect,  
 Tho' turned the point, that half the race course yet  
 Is left to run before they reach the goal;  
 Charged with the wrath of the offended Gods,  
 For should they reach their homes, certain it is,  
 That even there blood will have blood, and rise,  
 Demanding vengeance, should not other ills  
 O'ertake them first—you have a woman's thoughts.  
 May what is best prevail, nor fortune hold  
 The balance long suspended: this the hope,  
 My heart delights in more than all beside.

## CHORUS.

There is a masculine wisdom in your words,  
 That more confirms their truth: I now prepare  
 To pay due honors to the Gods of Greece.  
 The prize obtained, repays the labourer's toil.

## CHORUS.—MONOSTROPHE.

Jove! sovereign power! thou friendly night!  
 Creatress of our glories bright!  
 Who at thine hour of slumber deep  
 For us o'er Troy a watch didst keep,  
 Enclose her round as in a cloud,  
 Enwrap her in a funeral shroud,  
 A net of slavery,  
 A net impalpable, whose height  
 And meshes none should flee,  
 Her young men, nor her men of might,  
 Nor age, nor infancy,—

We offer up our vows to thee,  
 Great God of hospitality!  
 Who hast in thine own fitting time  
 Avenged on all, of one the crime:  
 We thank thee, Jove! and bless thee in that name,  
 That keeping ever bent thy bow,  
 Its shaft has laid the spoiler low,  
 Nor glanced above the stars with idle aim.

## STROPHE I.

The vengeful bolt has fallen—what God, what power  
 Decreed the inevitable hour,  
 Troy well attests, and impious he who says  
 That Jove cares not for mortals, or delights  
 To see them trample on each other's rights,  
 Or touch forbidden things.—That race  
 Who, drunk with wrath, and insolently bold,  
 Breathe war and carnage, and withhold  
 Treasures ill-got, shall pay for their offence  
 To the third generation. Blest and wise  
 Is he who covets not, but learns to prize  
 Those gifts he has: a righteous Providence  
 Pursues the wretch who in his power defies  
 Justice on earth; nor shall his wealth, power save  
 That hate of Gods, and men, from an unhonored grave.

## ANTISTROPHE I.

Child of calamity, when grown strong by time,  
 First and worst counsellor, Pitho, leads from crime  
 To crime man on, all cures are vainly tried:  
 Sin sheds no more a counterfeit faint ray,  
 But glares in all its baseness to the day,  
 As brass no more seems gold, truth's test applied:



Thus Paris—and so dazzled every eye,  
 That bird, when boy-like thro' the summer sky  
     He followed the swift flight, on wings of love,  
 Of a false mate, and to his country brought  
 Trials and woes that passed the power of thought,  
     And cureless by all prayers to Fate or Jove ;  
 Soon Paris learnt his joys were dearly bought,  
 And cursed that wily fiend, when, in his pride,  
 He spurned all fears, all rights, and stole another's bride.

## EPODE.

Leaving her citizens the din of spears,  
     And shields, and arming ships, and as a dower  
 To end in Troy's destruction, carrying tears,  
     Through the tall portal at night's shrouding hour,  
     Daring intolerable things, in haste,  
     With steps that left no sound, so soft their tread,  
 That woman went: whilst sobbing on the blast,  
 Prophetic voices echoed, as she passed,  
     These words : "O palace! palace towers!  
     " Deserted, silent, nuptial bowers!  
     " Abandoned, and adulterous bed,  
     " Where still the print of her who fled!  
     " Prince! O for thee! now lorn, and lone,  
     " Thou body of a soul that's gone.  
     " Bitter, alas! the memory  
     " Of former joys, but most to thee,  
     " Whose loss is harder to be borne,  
     " Imbittered as it is by scorn,  
     " That hides, yet cannot stifle grief,  
     " Nor finds in words or tears relief.  
     " I see him tortured by the fire  
     " Of shame, and inextinct desire  
     " Of her now far beyond the seas.

" He comes! how squalid, pale, and wan,  
 " More like a spectre than a man,  
   " Pacing his marble galleries,  
   " And when her statue there he sees,  
   " Feigns that its beauty all is fled,  
 " And turns as if he loathed the spot,  
 " Saying, ' Where woman's eyes shine not,  
   " ' There every spark of love lies dead.'  
 " To him shall airy shapes appear by night,  
   " To cheat his dreaming fancy, and to trace  
 " Those features gazed on with a fond delight,  
   " That worshipped form of more than mortal grace;  
   " And when to clasp her to his breast he tries,  
 " And stretches forth his arms, from his embrace  
   " Along the paths of sleep the winged vision flies."  
   Such woes, and heavier might I tell,  
   Our royal Laris that befell.  
   Nor wanting themes—but none of joy  
   To those whose sons went forth to Troy.  
   Since first they parted from this strand,  
   All has been mourning in the land.  
   Each parent left, with bitterest tears  
   Thinks on the past, counts back the years,  
   Dreams of their future wealth and fame,  
   And dwells on each beloved name.  
 For there their glorious bodies may return  
 But burnt remains, for treasures but an urn:  
 Whilst for their voices, hung the walls around,  
 Hauberks and shields send back a hollow sound.

## STROPHE II.

Mars in his scale the fate of battles weighs,  
   And to the living makes a poor return,  
 Inanimate for animate bodies pays,  
   And for a hero, ashes and an urn.

Memory o'er these sad trophies of the grave  
 Thus scatters unavailing praise and tears.  
 " *He* died the death that well becomes the brave,  
 " Falling 'mid fallen foes." " *Mine* knew no fears,  
 " Yet died."... " But did they for their country die?  
 " Their wives, their sons?" " They for a woman fell!"  
 Such murmurs rise against our kings, and tell  
 The rancour of all hearts; for many lie  
 In fosse or field; the flower of all the band,  
 The noblest, best, have left their treasures in that land.

## ANTISTROPHE II.

Dread is the rage of citizens, when rise  
 Their murmurs like the mutinous clouds, and swells  
 The tumult to a gale: Athwart the skies  
 I see a flash of lightning, that foretells  
 The coming storm, and hear a voice of might  
 Exclaiming in that hour of fate, and night,  
 "Blood will have blood." There is a sovereign throne  
 Above all thrones, and he who mounts to power  
 By steps of crime, the furies hurl him down  
 To an ignoble lot to rise no more.  
 Man aims at all things, but we prize a state  
 That moves not envy, to be proud or great  
 Makes not a part of our ambition; we  
 Enslaving no one, would ourselves be free.

## EPODE II.

Hear ye those sounds? ah! who can say  
 If truly spake the torch's ray:  
 If, like a vision, seen in dreams,  
 That signal-fire—to us it seems

The mark of a weak foolish mind,  
 To be enflamed with sudden joys,  
 At what, the breath that made, destroys,  
 And trust in messengers so blind.  
 'Tis woman's nature to rejoice  
 Too suddenly, and woman's voice  
 Swells rumours, that on wings of air  
 Expand to heaven their eager flight,  
 And sink as suddenly to night,  
 To plunge us deeper in despair.

CLYTEMNESTRA. CHORUS.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Soon shall we know if they spake truth those lamps  
 Of night—those torch-engendered messengers;  
 Or whether in the guise of dreams, a false  
 And flattering vision cozened but my mind.  
 For lo! a herald hastens from the shore,  
 His temples olive-leaved, a cloud of dust,  
 Born of the summer-parched wind, precedes him.  
 He brings no message mute, no voice of flame  
 Circling in smoke above the mountain-woods,  
 But clearest words will soon develope all,  
 And give us certain joy. Or—no! I shrink  
 From different tidings: to propitious signs  
 May he add news propitious.

CHORUS.

One who dares  
 To make aught other than such vows, the fruit  
 Of his iniquity may he reap alone.

HERALD. CLYTEMNESTRA. CHORUS.

HERALD.

Io! my country! ho! my natal soil!  
After ten years, and many a frustrate hope,  
One still survives, once more do I behold thee:  
I little thought to die in mine own land,  
To have my wished-for sepulchre in Argos.  
Hail, earth beloved! and thou, that shinest here,  
Light of the sun! Hail, Jove! our sovereign lord!  
Hail to thee, Pythian king! thy pitiless bow  
Deals death no longer thro' our lines,—there fell  
More than enough upon Scamander's banks;  
Then henceforth be propitious, come to us  
Our saviour, and the patron of our games:  
And with thee come our Agonal deities all,  
And my dear guide, and herald, first of heralds,  
Mercury! and ye! departed Demi-gods,  
Who sent us forth to battle, kindly greet  
Our Argive host the remnant of the war,  
The gleaning of the harvest of the spears.  
O palace! towers beloved! O glorious seat  
Of empire! ye images of our Gods! that stand  
Before this eastern gate, if ever ye  
Received with honours due a conqueror,  
Now look with your bright eyes on Agamemnon,  
A father so long absent from his people.  
He comes, at last, comes, bringing light to you,  
And all who sate in darkness; then salute  
With friendly welcome, as most due, our king,  
Who with Jove's vengeful share, has made of Troy  
A dusty nothing—Her temples and her shrines  
Have disappeared, and with them all the seed

And promise of the land. Such yoke imposed  
 On Ilium,—he returns—our mighty lord,  
 The great, the fortunate, the first of men,  
 Worthiest in every age and clime of honour.  
 Paris, no more, and his accomplice city  
 Will make an idle vaunt that their offence  
 Was greater than it's punishment: he paid  
 The price of his iniquities, of his theft,  
 And rapine—lost the spoil—unransomed—in  
 One sweeping ruin, her he loved, his country,  
 His native roof has levelled, as the corn  
 Is trodden under foot. Old Priam's sons  
 Have on these crimes called down a twofold vengeance.

CHORUS.

Hail, envoy of the Greeks!

HERALD.

All hail! I die  
 Content, when it shall please the Gods.

CHORUS.

Didst thou  
 Then love thy native land?

HERALD.

So that my eyes  
 O'erflow with tears, but they are pleasant tears.

CHORUS.

You suffered then, as it would seem, from that  
 Sweet sickness of the soul.

HERALD.

What wouldst thou say?

CHORUS.

You felt, I say, a passion for your country  
As strong as that she felt for you.

HERALD.

The Greeks  
Then longed to see their countrymen, as much  
As we longed ardently for them.

CHORUS.

In truth  
My heart has never ceased to sigh in secret  
For the blest hour of your return.

HERALD.

And why  
In secret?

CHORUS.

It is long since I have learnt  
That silence is the only cure for ills.

HERALD.

Whom could'st thou fear in the king's absence?

CHORUS.

What  
Soe'er it was—no matter—for to us  
Death would have been as sweet, as now to you.

## HERALD.

And yet since fortune smiles at last, who knows  
But she has many happy days in store.  
He who sees many seasons in this world,  
Has strange vicissitudes of good and ill  
To undergo, and who besides the Gods  
Can boast immunity all his life from cares.  
Need I repeat the hardships, fastings, toils  
Endured at sea; the brief and broken rest  
On the hard deck—what day, what hour of the day,  
Did we not mourn our destiny: on shore  
'Twas even worse,—beneath the enemy's walls  
Our sleep was still more insecure, and there  
The dews of heaven, and fogs from the damp ground,  
That was our only bed, rotted our garments,  
And tangled, like the mane of some wild beast,  
Our shagged and matted locks. And who can tell  
The savage cold that Ida's snow sent down,  
When died the birds, or the fierce summer-heat,  
When on his noontide couch, in heavy sleep  
Outstretched, the interminable ocean lay,  
Waveless and windless. Little now avail  
Such lamentations. All our griefs are past:  
Past even to the dead, the wish to rise  
To new existence: should we care for them,  
Or quarrel with their fate; once then for all  
I wish to bid a long farewell to sorrow:  
We who survive, and in the balance weigh  
Our gains and losses, find the good prevail;  
This day, at least, is ours, nor vain the boast,  
That in the sunbeam, with undazzled gaze,  
We stretch our eagle-flight o'er earth and sea.  
Troy is no more. Soon shall her glorious spoils,



The trophies of our victory, be hung  
 In honour of the Gods on all our fanes.  
 Greeks! this is left, to offer to our land,  
 And to our mighty chiefs congratulations,  
 And thank great Jove, to whom all praise belongs.

## CHORUS.

There is a virtue in your words, the power  
 And force of truth, which none can better weigh  
 Than those whom time instructs; for wisdom has  
 No winter, but blooms on in spite of Eld.  
 Your news are of high import to this people,  
 And, more than all, should gladden Clytemnestra,  
 And in her joy and theirs we take a part.

## CLYTEMNESTRA. (WHO HAD BEEN APART.)

I shrieked for joy, when the first station-torch  
 Came heralding the victory; yet some  
 There were who laughed at my belief, and said,  
 " Do you put confidence in fire-messengers,  
 " And trust that Troy has fallen? 'Tis woman's nature  
 " To be transported suddenly with great joy,  
 " And yield her spirit up to idle hopes."  
 What answer could I give to taunts like these?  
 Yet not the less did I make sacrifice,  
 And others also followed my example;  
 Women they were, and foolish too as I,  
 Who went round Argos, uttering joyful cries,  
 And making incense smoulder on the altars.  
 And now what need of further speech. Enough!  
 I soon shall from the king himself know all.  
 But how shall I make ready to receive  
 With fitting honours my illustrious lord?

Oh happy day! fairest, and best, and dearest!  
 What rapture equals hers who opes the gates  
 To him she loves, by bounty of the Gods  
 Returning home in safety from the field.  
 Back to your prince, and bid him haste to Argos:  
 Tell him of its impatience to behold him—  
 Assure him of the love of all within it.  
 Tell him, that he will find me, when he comes,  
 The faithful wife he left me; of his house  
 The vigilant mastiff, friend to him, and foe  
 To all who are his foes: in short, the same,  
 Unchanged by his long absence, with no seal  
 Of his unbroken: since my lord's departure  
 I never once have known what pleasure is;  
 Nor have for other man contracted aught  
 May dim the brightness of true virtue's ore,  
 Or cast a stain on my good name or his.

## HERALD. CHORUS.

## HERALD.

Such boast, when sanctioned by the truth, becomes  
 A noble lady's lips.

## CHORUS.

Convenient words,  
 And used to one who can interpret them  
 Becomingly. But herald! I desire  
 To hear, if Menelaus, our loved prince,  
 Is safe-returned with you.

## HERALD.

It may not be  
 That I should offer to my friends the fruit

Of falsehoods, pleasing to the taste, but full  
Of after-bitterness.

CHORUS.

Your news thus far  
Are good and true—what's separate from truth  
Cannot be hidden long—and this I see,  
Alas! thou wouldst conceal.

HERALD.

He disappeared,  
Himself and vessel from the fleet, if I  
Must tell the fact.

CHORUS.

Sailed he the first from Troy,  
Or was the storm that bore him out of sight  
Common to all the Greeks?

HERALD.

You strike the mark,  
A dexterous shot—that little question hits  
A great misfortune.

CHORUS.

Tell me if the crews  
Deem him alive or dead?

HERALD.

None know, beside  
The divine sun, whose eye pervades all nature.

CHORUS.

What tempest by the anger of the heavens  
Arose against the naval host of Greece?  
How did it end?

## HERALD.

The honor of the Gods  
Forbids that I should cloud a festive day  
With mournful tidings. When with haggard face,  
Recounting great disasters, comes a man,  
And talks of troops discomfited, and armies  
Goaded to death by the sharp thongs of Mars,  
And Ate, his fell bride, sateless of blood,  
Inflicting on his country a deep wound,  
And piercing every heart with agony;  
Such messengers of evil should be greeted  
With hymns addressed in thunder to the Furies.  
But one who comes, like me, announcing joy  
And prosperous days to a glad nation, why  
Must he mix bitters in the cup of pleasure,  
And tell of storms, not without wrath divine,  
That fell upon the Greeks: how, fire and water,  
Irreconcilable enemies till then,  
Swore a strict league, outpouring all their malice  
On our devoted heads—fatal alliance!  
The cause of woes more infinite to us  
Than are the chafed billows of the main.  
And thus it happ'd: that in the night rushed down  
A horrible hurricane from Thrace—it came,  
Driving vast mountainous seas like flocks before it,  
And battering vessel against vessel, they  
Split by the violence of the shock, and torn  
By the fierce buffeting of the winds and waves,  
In eddying whirlpools sucked, or shepherded  
By that misleading pilot, the Typhoon,  
Vanished away. And when the sun rode high,  
We saw the Egean, as with flowery weeds,  
White with the floating corpses of our friends,

And overstrewn with spars and masts of wrecks;  
We too should not have 'scaped, but that some God,  
When human aid was nigh, and how, I know not,  
Looked to our hull, and saved our bark and us,  
Upon the rudder keeping fast his hand,  
Whilst favoring fortune plyed our sails, that surfs  
Might not surround, or the sharp jagged rocks  
Of the steep coast devour us. And when dawned  
The morn's white light, upon the craggy beach,  
At length delivered from that ocean-hell;  
And knowing scarce if we were saved or no,  
We saté, and all that day spoke not, but mused  
O'er our late perils much—more on the fate  
Of our lost comrades, miserably lost,  
Cruelly murdered; and if any breathe  
The breath of being, they will say of us  
What we believe of them—that none survive.  
But may the best betide: meantime, my friends,  
Our dearest hopes are fixed on Menelaus,  
And soon prepare to witness his return,  
For if one beam of the life-giving sun  
Shine on him yet alive, the love of Jove  
Wills not his race should be destroyed, and thus  
May send him to his home. And now remember,  
All you have heard from me is but the truth.

## CHORUS.

## STROPHE I.

Prophetically gifted he,  
In more than mortal language wise,  
Who diving to eternity,  
Dragged from its depths man's destinies,

And gave our universal foe  
     A name, denoting endless strife,  
 And inextinguishable woe,  
     And loss of ships, and towns, and life,  
 And loss of thrones to mightiest kings;  
     She, like hell's fury to destroy,  
 Sailed on the giant Zephyr's wings  
     At midnight's mantling hour to Troy,  
 Whom followed to the leafy shores  
     Of Simois, with no equal race,  
 But heavier vanned, ten thousand oars,  
 That part the waves, but leave no trace,  
 And mailed hunters proud fierce-panting in the chase.

## ANTISTROPHE I.

Murderous the strife—styled rightly, too—  
     That nuptial hour shall cost him dear,  
 And Priam and his sons shall rue,  
     With hearts presaging many a fear,  
 That guilty flight; aye, soon shall they,  
     Who sung defiance to the foe,  
     Drown in a note of bitterest woe  
 Their joyous hymeneal lay:  
     A deeper and a brinier tide  
 Must deluge yet that land for thee,  
     Paris, and thine adulterous bride!  
 The God of hospitality  
     Shall pour a dark and crimson flood  
 Of human life, to ebb no more,  
     Wash out the crime, in seas of blood,  
 Of the false guest and paramour,  
 And in its torrent sweep all in that vengeful hour.

## STROPHE II.

As one who nurtures with ungrateful care  
 Some lioness's cub, in whom no trace  
 Is visible of his mother or the lair,  
 The young and old admire his gentle ways,  
 He with the children like an infant plays,  
 Now stretches forth his paws in sportive mood  
 To be caressed, and now his shining face,  
 He presses each by turns in his embrace,  
 Makes all his wants and wishes understood,  
 And fondly licks the hand that brings him food.

## ANTISTROPHE II.

But older grown, his father and the lair,  
 And all his savage nature rise confest,  
 And in repayment of his fosterer's care,  
 He robs his board an uninvited guest,  
 Of lambs and kids he makes his daily feast;  
 And gorged with slaughter, is insatiate still.  
 Adieu to peace by day, or nightly rest!  
 The house is stained with gore, in every breast  
 Deep anguish reigns, and he resembles well  
 Some fate-commissioned fiend let slip from hell.

## STROPHE III.

A thought of breathless calm, and silent joy,  
 Image of all that nature boasts, or art  
 Of beauty, there came also one to Troy,  
 Who vibrated a sweet and delicate dart  
 From her mild eyes, that wounded every heart,  
 And oped in every breast the flower of love.  
 But soon the thorns remain, the sweets depart:  
 Detested bride, a fatal guest thou wert—

Around their bed a fury howls, to prove  
That there's a God, nor sleeps the avenging bolt of Jove.

## ANTISTROPHE III.

'Twas said of old, that those whom riches bless  
Produce a stock that differs from the tree,  
And proved on earth that human happiness  
Is but the graft of endless misery.  
I say, that from one impious deed we see  
Begot a plenteous crop of crimes: but Right  
And Justice ever breed prosperity,  
Their goodly line extinct shall never be—  
Their flowers shall suffer neither change nor blight,  
But yield a kindred fruit of beauty and delight.

## STROPHE IV.

There is a fatal Dæmon here below,  
Who soon or late piles one crime on another—  
Hybris, herself the cause of blackest woe,  
Leagued with Audacity, dire unconquered foe,  
She genders woes too well resembling each their mother.

## ANTISTROPHE IV.

Justice brings joy to smoky roofs, she prizes  
A well-spent life, but turns with scornful gaze  
From sinners and their gilded roofs, her praise  
Win holiness and virtue; she despises  
Ill-gotten wealth and power, and as man earns, repays.

CHORUS. AGAMEMNON AND CASSANDRA  
IN TRIUMPHAL CARS. ATTENDANTS.

## CHORUS.

King! leader! sire! annihilator of Troy!  
Offspring of Atreus! how shall I address,



Salute you by which title, nor transcend,  
Nor yet detract from honours justly yours.  
We are no hypocrites, as some men are,  
Who love to seem, and not to be: for all  
Are ready with a tear for the distressed,  
Grief's semblance, whilst the hardness of their hearts  
Defies the shaft of pity; for the fortunate  
They have a show of gladness too, and force  
Their stubborn features to a smile. Such sycophants,  
For a good shepherd well knows all his flock,  
A wise observer may detect, and from  
The countenance of one who flatters most  
With friendly blandishments discern that all  
Within is false and hollow. Even you,  
Shall I disguise the truth, when first you led  
The fleets of Greece to Troy for Helen's sake,  
Were painted in no favorable light,  
And many said you did not pilot well  
The vessel of your counsels, breathing force  
Against their better reason in the breasts  
Of men to death devoted: now that crowned  
Your glorious toils, and reached the port of safety,  
All name it as a mighty expedition,  
And join in hearty praises; you, in time,  
Will learn who governed in your absence well  
The helm of state, or ill maintained your power.

## AGAMEMNON.

First Argos, as is meet, my own dear land  
Do I salute, and all my country's Gods,  
That closed my toils, and granted my return,  
And in their justice by my arm avenged  
The crime of Troy: nor do I thank them less,  
That they were justly deaf to all her prayers,

When in the bloody urn they threw the votes,  
That sealed her final doom, when Hope, to save,  
Stretched forth her hand in vain. Ilium yet smokes,  
Yet do misfortune's tempests o'er her rage,  
And with her ashes, but to die with them,  
Does a rich stream of her burnt wealth arise.

Such tribute am I bound to pay the Gods  
In grateful memory of their kindnesses,  
And that by snares inevitably spread  
For an adulterous woman's sake, we took,  
Crumbling to dust the city, by the birth  
Of that disaster-bearing horse, that beast  
Of Argos fed with an armed multitude,  
That at the setting of the Pleiades,  
Cleared at a mighty leap the citadel;  
And furious as a famished lion, lapped  
More than enough of royal blood.

And now—

This prelude made, I bear in mind your words:  
I feel with you, and think him fortunate  
Whose fate it is to have one real friend  
To honor, without envying him: But hearts  
Are poisoned by malevolence, and he  
Infected thus, suffers a double torture,  
Grieves for his own misfortunes, and repines  
To see his fellows happy. I who learnt  
To hold the mirror up to crowds of friends,  
Can say, that those who seemed to love me most,  
Were a vain shadow: One, and only one,  
Ulysses, an unwilling forced ally,  
Was, from the first, ready to share my toils,  
And ease their heavy yoke. Living or dead,  
I speak this to his praise: would I could tell—  
Alas! if yet he breathes. Respecting all

That may concern the state, or the state's laws,  
 We will, in full assembly of the people,  
 Consult like wise physicians ; what is sound  
 Shall be maintained in health ; and where need is  
 For aid medicinal, or fire, or steel,  
 We will with skilful hand adopt such means  
 And remedies as may cure or chase disorder.  
 But first within the palace, at the shrine,  
 I wish to thank my household Gods, my guides  
 To war, and saviours and conductors home.  
 Such as it came, may victory stay with us !

THE SAME.

CLYTEMNESTRA WITH ATTENDANT WOMEN.

FROM THE PALACE—CLYTEMNESTRA.

Men of this city ! elders of the Argives !  
 Time wears away the blush of bashfulness,  
 Nor longer feel I shame, as I confess  
 A woman's ardent passion for her lord.  
 By sad experience taught, I know, what life  
 Of misery, inconceivable else, I led,  
 Each day appearing longer than the last,  
 Whilst he remained before the walls of Troy.  
 Ah ! who can tell, when far from her loved lord,  
 What solitary hours a wife must lead  
 In her lone chamber, brooding o'er past pleasures,  
 Now turned to pain : of moving accidents  
 One brings the tale, another comes to speak  
 Of a calamity more grievous still,  
 More sweepingly-destructive to our land :  
 And if that man received as many wounds  
 As fame averred, one might suppose that he

Was like the meshes of a net, and had  
He died as often as report averred,  
He well might boast himself a second Geryon,  
(Far above Geryon, happily you live,)  
A triple being, and count for every death  
A separate life. Such rumours were the cause,  
That many times, others, against my will,  
Loosed from my neck the noose; and hence it is,  
That our dear pledge of mutual faith and love,  
Orestes, (as he ought,) is not in Argos;  
Nor marvel at his absence,—our sworn host,  
Stropeus the Phocian, took him to his care,  
And nurses him beneath his friendly roof.  
For his just reasoning set before my eyes  
A double danger, first, thy daily risques,  
Next, what might happen if the frantic rage  
Of popular anarchy should conspire against me  
In impious counsels. 'Tis man's nature ever  
To trample on the fallen: what I say  
Bears not a shadow of deceit, believe.  
The fountains of my profuse tears are dried:  
Within their channels not a drop remains.  
There is a burning fever in these lids  
From my late vigils, when with scalding tears  
I waited for the promised beacon-fires,  
Ever in vain expected: then from sleep,  
Waked by the sharp sting of the buzzing gnat,  
I suddenly leapt, and saw you in my dreams  
Indure more miseries than in night's brief hour  
Could come to pass: Having so much indured  
With patience and a courage unsubdued,  
My soul must pour forth all its rapture thus.  
He is to me the watch-dog of the fold.  
The cable that preserves a ship from wreck.

The firm-set column of a noble house.  
 An only son—a father's all on earth.  
 Land to the weather-beaten mariner  
 Appearing, when all chance of land is fled.  
 A day that dawns serenely beautiful  
 After a night of tempest and of horror.  
 A clear rill to the thirsty traveller's lip.  
 Sweet are all these—but sweeter far to be  
 Restored from death to life when hope was gone.  
 Well do I deem him worthy of these greetings.  
 Envy, avaunt! we have borne ills enough.  
 Dear love! all that I love! come quit your car.  
 But with bare foot that trod the dust of Troy  
 Touch not the ground. Maids! do your office. Why  
 Thus dally you in spreading on the earth  
 Soft coverings; let the path under his feet  
 Be quickly strewn with purple. Thus shall Dicè  
 Lead him in honor back to his lost home.  
 The rest, as right requires, my wakeful care,  
 By heaven's consent, shall bring to a good end.

## AGAMEMNON.

Offspring of Leda! dear and faithful friend!  
 And guardian of my house! your many words  
 And tender greetings well become your heart,  
 And my long absence: but such praise as thine  
 Should flow from other's lips: and do not thou  
 Receive me with effeminate luxuries,  
 Nor bending to the ground in lowly reverence,  
 Greet me with high and sounding titles, like  
 Some eastern lord; nor spread the way with tapestry.  
 Such barbarous pomp would make me but the theme  
 For envious tongues: the Deities alone

Should thus be glorified : but that a mortal  
 Should tread on works of costliness and beauty,  
 Fills me with fear. Respect me as becomes  
 A man, but do not worship me as a God.  
 The fame of noble deeds will go abroad,  
 And cannot be enhanced by figured arras  
 Strewn under foot. Humility of mind,  
 And a clear soul void of offence and guile,  
 Are the best gifts of heaven ; and he alone  
 Can be called happy, who ends his days amid  
 The dear delights of home. I trust in heaven,  
 That without pride I may attain such end.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ah ! do not thus unsay my counsels.

AGAMEMNON.

Mine,

I cannot change.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Have you then made some vow,  
 And fear to break it ?

AGAMEMNON.

My resolve is made.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What think you Priam would have done, had he  
 Been conqueror.

AGAMEMNON.

He would have proudly trod, I think,  
 Upon the variegated carpets.

## AGAMEMNON.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Fearing  
The blame of none alive.

AGAMEMNON.

Truly the people,  
Too apt to censure, might with reason blame....

CLYTEMNESTRA.

He whom none envy, has but little cause  
To thank his stars.

AGAMEMNON.

An obstinate contention  
But ill becomes a woman.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And to own  
That he is vanquished may become a hero.

AGAMEMNON.

Think you by such a conquest to gain honour?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Yes! yield, I pray, the victory with good grace.

AGAMEMNON.

Then be it so, since 'tis your pleasure. Come!  
Loose from my legs the sandals, that no God  
May see me walk upon the figured purple,  
And cast his envious glances at my feet.  
It shames me much to soil with idle state

Such household wealth, and silver-woven tissues.  
Something too much of this. Queen ! may it please you  
With gracious courtesy to welcome in  
This stranger ; he who reigns above looks down  
With friendly eye on those who rule with mildness.  
None bear with a good will the servile yoke.  
And so this maid—she follows in my train  
Of all my spoil the choicest flower, and gift  
From the whole army : Let us on, and since  
You have persuaded me to grant your prayer,  
Behold, I pass the vestibule of the palace,  
Treading upon the purple as I go.

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

The sea, and who shall dry the ocean, bears  
And nourishes an inexhaustive store  
Of shells, that glitter on the silver sands,  
Rich with the dye for tinging many a robe.—  
Thanks to the Gods, our house abounds with such.  
And many a gorgeous vesture did I vow  
To the great Gods, through votaries to the shrines  
Oracular sent, praying for this dear soul's  
Safe conduct to his home. If sound the root,  
The stem will shew its leaves, and spreading wide,  
Make a close roof, against the dogstar's rage,  
Of sweet refreshing shade ; thou too hast made  
A summer of our winter by your coming,  
And brought the vintage ere its time. Great Jove  
Reddens for us the wine in the crude grapes—  
The very air is redolent of joy :  
Our lord is here, his presence gives it balm.  
Thou God of bridals ! consummate my vows,  
And perfect those things that thou hast to do.



## CHORUS.

## STROPHE I.

Why does some unknown force, presaging ill,  
 Govern my thoughts against their will,  
 And forms of terror flit before mine eyes ?  
 Why from my lips do words and accents flow  
 Of unpremeditated woe,  
 And visions worse than those in dreams arise,  
 That leave in their illusions no retreat,  
 And hurl my reason from her seat ?  
 Well might my soul have bowed to their dread power,  
 When Troy stood leaguered round—our fleet  
 At anchor lying on her sandy shore.

## ANTISTROPHE I.

I too have seen return our mighty king,  
 And yet, like you, am forced to sing,  
 Accompanied by no lyre or notes of joy,  
 A strain some fury thunders in my ears,  
 And find no hope to still my fears  
 In apparitions, that day's beams destroy.  
 No passing illusory sound that strain,  
 No false imaginary pain  
 In dizzying vortex whirls my tortured heart ;  
 Oh ! take this weight from off my brain !  
 And ease these agonies—at least in part.

## STROPHE II.

Our joys are kin to griefs—in time shall cease  
 The term of soundest health ; disease  
 Dwells in our house, and opes to death a door.  
 Oft amid favouring gales, and summer skies,  
 Destruction's breakers madly rise,  
 And wreck our hopes upon the rocky shore :

And he who would his crew and vessel save,  
 Nor see his all go down into the grave,  
     Must cast at once his cargo o'er the board :  
 For when comes famine with its evil train,  
 Kind Jove may send a tenfold crop of grain,  
     From his o'erflowing hand a rich abundance poured.

## ANTISTROPHE II.

But who by incantation's magic art  
 Can make reflow into the heart  
     The blood once scattered in the dust? No more  
 Shall mortal, with mortality at strife,  
 Return to earth, and bring the dead to life—  
     He fell by Jove's just bolt who thus usurped his power.  
 Nor would I counteract the laws of heaven.  
 My heart would chain my tongue, e'en were it given  
     To drag the secrets of the fates to day.  
 My spirit, alas! can but in secret groan :  
 It fails—it droops—desponding and alone,  
     And, like a dying taper, fades in night away.

CLYTEMNESTRA, (WHO, FINDING CASSANDRA DID NOT  
 ENTER, RETURNS). CHORUS. CASSANDRA.

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

Come in, too.—I address myself, Cassandra,  
 To thee—thy service is, and not a hard one,  
 With many such as thee, in the lavations,  
 To bear thy part, and take thy post beside  
 Our household altar's steps. What! Are you deaf?  
 Dost thou not hear me? Quit, I say, the car,  
 And lay aside that haughtiness of spirit—  
 You know, perhaps, Alcmena's son was sold,  
 And had to bend his neck under the yoke—

When once necessity has made men slaves,  
 'Tis well they meet with masters who are born  
 To opulence, for such know how to rule:  
 But those whom some unhop'd caprice of fortune  
 Has suddenly exalted to high station,  
 Are, beyond measure, harsh in all—but we—  
 You understand the nature of our sway.

## CHORUS.

The queen addresses you in clearest words,  
 As you are taken in the fatal toils,  
 Yield to your fate, with or against your will  
 You must obey her.

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

If unknown and strange

The sound of foreign tongues, as to some bird  
 Of passage, sure her reason might at least  
 Persuade her, if my speech should not.

## CHORUS.

Comply !

And quit the wain, and follow her, she says  
 What in your present state is best for you.

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

I cannot dally longer at these gates.  
 Already at the central altar stand  
 The victims waiting for the sacrifice.  
 It was a dream of joy my fondest wish  
 Had scarcely hop'd to realize. If inclined  
 To do as I command, you'll do it straight ;  
 Should you not comprehend my words—at least

With signs, and by a motion of your hand,  
Barbarian, as you are, make answer ! speak !

CHORUS.

This stranger-maid has need, as it would seem,  
Of some more plain interpreter than words ;  
Her looks, her attitudes, her gestures, mark  
Some wild beast newly fallen into the toils.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Sorrow has crazed her mind—she madly raves  
For her lost country, listening to her wild  
Imaginations, that in visions bring  
The horrors of her city's recent sack.  
Nor will she bear the bit and curb, till taught  
To spend her fury in a foam of blood :  
Meanwhile I lose my time, and shame myself.

CHORUS. CASSANDRA.

CHORUS.

So deeply do I feel for her, that anger  
Can find no place in me—poor thing ! go ! go !  
Yield to necessity, and quit your car :  
And without force put on thee a new yoke.

CASSANDRA.

Woe ! woe ! for ever. Apollo, oh ! Apollo.

CHORUS.

What mean such exclamations ? Why invoke  
Apollo ? He is not a God who loves  
To hear the voice of wailing and despair.

CASSANDRA.

Woe ! infinite woe ! Apollo ! oh, Apollo !

CHORUS.

With inauspicious shrieks she calls again  
Upon the God, who will not come to save,  
Or listen to such notes as those.

CASSANDRA.

Apollo !

My guide, and my destroyer ! twice thou hast  
Undone me utterly.

CHORUS.

Hark ! it would seem she means  
To prophecy her fate : in a slave's breast  
Still breathes the oracular spirit.

CASSANDRA.

Oh, Apollo !

My guide and my destroyer ! Where, oh where,  
Beneath what roof hast thou decoyed me ?

CHORUS.

I

Will tell you, if you know not—to the palace  
Of Atreus' sons. You scarcely will deny it.

CASSANDRA.

Abomination of the Gods ! a roof  
Conscious of many parricides, fatal snares,  
The slaughter house, and charnel made for man—  
A floor dyed deep in blood.

CHORUS.

She seems to track  
With a hound's sense sagacious the hot taint  
Of that she'll shortly find.

CASSANDRA.

Ah! I believe it!  
Behold the witnesses—those children butchered  
Inhumanly—who cry out, "Murder! Murder!"  
And weep with tears of blood for their drained lives,  
And their roast flesh devoured by their own father.

CHORUS.

The fame of your divining power has reached us,  
But none such prophetesses want we here.

CASSANDRA.

Ye Gods! what vision's this? what is she plotting—  
What new and horrible conspiracy  
Is hatching in this house!—foul pest to friends,  
An irremediable calamity,  
And succour is afar.

CHORUS.

What she means now  
Is dark as Erebus; not so of the rest,  
That still is voiced in Argos.

CASSANDRA.

Wretched woman,  
And is it come to this---what---your own husband---  
What---in the bath whilst tending him---that robe---

E

How shall I tell it—Yet I see it all.—  
 Look! Look! her arm is stretched to grasp the knife—  
 One instant—it is raised—once—twice—

CHORUS.

The sense  
 Of her dark oracle is still hid from us—  
 Her words bewilder me.

CASSANDRA.

Ai! ai! alas,  
 What's that?—a snare, a net!—has hell such nets?  
 Copartner of his bed to take a hell-trap  
 For her accomplice—Howl! ye furies! howl!  
 Set up a shout over the accursed race,  
 A long loud shriek of joy—'tis done—the foul,  
 The impious sacrifice.

CHORUS.

What fury thus  
 Dost thou invoke to howl about our doors?  
 Thine accents do not make me glad: and round  
 My heart the blood courses as rapidly  
 As that of one struck by a mortal wound,  
 Within whose eyes the purple tide dims fast  
 The fading rays of light, Fate's harbingers.

CASSANDRA.

What do I see!—there—there. Ah! keep apart  
 The heifer and the bull—with her black horn  
 She butts him—What is that wrapped round his head?  
 I know not—but it blinds him. See! once more  
 She gores him—it strikes home—he falls—he sinks  
 Into the bath—a treacherous deadly caldron



Of horrible and devilish form and hue ;  
No common bath is this—a hellish caldron.

CHORUS.

I boast no divination to expound  
Oracles: yet what presage can be drawn  
From this of hers but evil—which of the prophecies  
Has ever given to man one happy augury.  
The gift prophetic brings upon itself  
Mischief—to others dread.

CASSANDRA.

Alas! Alas!

All-evil is my destiny—I mourn  
For him and for myself—both—both—where am  
I dragged? to what reserved? what end? and must—  
Ah! must I die? I also?

CHORUS.

You are seized  
With some oracular spell, and in your ravings  
Sing your own funeral dirge; as the dark bird  
Of night, who never ceases to complain,  
And all her life weeps bitterly, and calls  
From her deep bower of woes on “Itys, Itys.”

CASSANDRA.

Ah! the shrill bird—O, fortunate Nightingale!  
The Gods have blessed you with a winged form,  
And a sweet life, devoid of tears and sorrows;  
But I—an axe hangs by a single thread  
Suspended o'er my neck, about to fall,  
E'en now it falls, that double griding edge.



## CHORUS.

Ah, whence are these keen transports? this inspired  
 And maddening vision? these shrill piercing notes?  
 This ominous incantation of your fate?  
 Why dost thou augur such a fearful end  
 To your prophetic life?

## CASSANDRA.

O Paris! Paris!

Oh, marriage! fatal marriage! fatal to me  
 And all our race! O! thou, my native stream!  
 Upon thy banks, Scamander! was I born,  
 And grew in misery, now must I exchange  
 Your living waters for the sluggish pools  
 Of Acheron and Cocytus, wandering round  
 And round, and singing my prophetic strains  
 Upon your gloomy shores.

## CHORUS.

So sadly clear  
 Your presage now, a child might read its sense,  
 And as I listen to that voice of woe  
 Chanting your hapless fate, each broken note  
 Transfixes with a deadly barb my heart.

## CASSANDRA.

My country! O my country! was I doomed  
 To see thy pangs—thy throes of agony—  
 And were they vain a father's tears and prayers,  
 And offerings, and libations in that hour:  
 Could they not aid his father's country, save  
 My native land from suffering such a fate?

And even I shall not survive thee long,  
Sprinkling the ground with the dear tide of life.

## CHORUS.

Her words flow on in the same dismal stream.  
—You are possessed by some malicious dæmon,  
Who forces you to prophesy these horrors,  
And what the end, I know not.

## CASSANDRA.

Wrapt no more

As in a bridal veil, my prophecy  
Shall be disclosed—it shall come freshly forth  
As does the breath of morning from the springs  
Of sunrise, when the night draws back its mists;  
But not like it in gentleness, for the gale  
In the clear light will seem more dread to view,  
The winds will louder blow, and wilder beat,  
And, like the stormy ocean's, the big waves  
Of sorrow heave, and roar more fearfully.  
I cease to clothe my meaning in enigmas.  
You are the witnesses that I could find,  
And follow with unerring sense the trace  
Of former ills. Nor is this palace-roof  
Backward to join in chorus with sad strains.  
No concert there of harmony: for within  
Dwell guests not easily driven out, and drunk  
With human blood, that makes them bold, they sit  
About the house, and hold high banquet there,  
The sister Diræ—Hear you not their chant—  
Hark! the first theme of their infernal song,  
The curse that let the elder sister in,  
Ate.—And now they howl in chorus, each

Taking her part in the foul dirge of death—  
Its burthen incest and adultery—  
A bed alike disastrous to two brothers.  
Miss I my aim, or do I strike the mark ?  
Or haply you may deem me vile as some  
False fortune-teller of the streets, who goes  
Knocking from door to door. Yet you may swear  
That of this impious house I know full well  
The old atrocities.

CHORUS.

And what remedy  
Would oaths apply to evils rooted here ?  
Yet marvel I, that born beyond the sea,  
And with a native tongue differing from ours,  
You thus should talk of us and them, as though  
You had been ever present in this city.

CASSANDRA.

For such a purpose was I set apart  
By the prophetic deity, shame till now  
Prevented my confessing it.

CHORUS.

What shame ?  
Perhaps Apollo loved you, granted you  
This gift in some soft moment when the heart  
Yields to the sweet delights of a blest lot.

CASSANDRA.

In truth he loved me much, and breathed on me  
All gentleness, all grace, all flattery.

CHORUS.

Did you return his love ?

CASSANDRA.

I promised, but  
The moment came not.

CHORUS.

Were you *then* inspired ?

CASSANDRA.

I had predicted to our countrymen  
All coming ill.

CHORUS.

And how did you escape  
The anger of the God ?

CASSANDRA.

My punishment  
Was like the fault, to be beloved in nothing,  
By no one.

CHORUS.

Yet it seems you prophesy  
To us things credible.

CASSANDRA.

Ahi ! ahi ! My brain spins wildly.  
The frenzy seizes me anew—it comes,  
To shake my soul with its divining terrors.  
Look ! Look ! see on the palace where they sit,  
Those sons, like ghosts in visions of the night,  
Sons murdered by their dearest kindred. Oh !

How ghastly they are, and wan! behold! they stretch  
 Their hands towards me filled with their own flesh,  
 (Horrible food)—of their own hearts, of which  
 Their father banquetted. And there—I see  
 In vengeance of this foul unnatural feast,  
 A tame and dastard tygress, crouching round  
 The new-made lair, and laying wait to spring  
 Upon her lord—mine—said I mine—alas!  
 I needs must bear the chain of slavery.  
 And he, the leader of a thousand ships,  
 The exterminator of Troy, perceived he not  
 With what a tongue of witching flatteries  
 And honied words, yon detestable whelp,  
 Like some invidious fury, glozed that dark,  
 That devilish scheme: and dared she—could she dare—  
 A female kill a male—a wife her husband—  
 By what name shall I call her? not a woman—  
 No! an amphibious monster, Amphisbœna,  
 Or Scylla, lurking in her wave-worn caves  
 To lure the mariner on to his perdition;  
 Or that fell queen of Orcus breathing war,  
 Irreconcilable war, against her children.  
 Did you not mark, the battle scarcely won,  
 How shrieked for joy that treacherous, lecherous fiend;  
 And seemed transported with delight to view  
 Her lord return in safety from the field?  
 Ah, what avails it, if you doubt my words:  
 Yet when all come to pass, as soon it must,  
 With a heart torn by pity you will say,  
 Alas! she was too true a prophetess.

## CHORUS.

I heard the banquet of Thyestes drawn  
 With colouring of such dread reality,

Cold shiverings seized me ; but the rest distracts  
Beyond all horror, driving from the course  
The chariot of my reason.

CASSANDRA.

I would say,  
That you shall see the death of Agamemnon.

CHORUS.

Wretch ! tell it not—hush that ill-boding croak.

CASSANDRA.

All pœans would be vain, of mine—none comes  
To shield—no one to arm in his defence.

CHORUS.

If it must be—be it so—but forbid !  
Forbid it, heaven !

CASSANDRA.

You pray—they murder him.

CHORUS.

What human power could guard him ?

CASSANDRA.

You see not,  
Or will not see whither my words would lead you.

CHORUS.

But how accomplish it ?

CASSANDRA.

And yet I speak  
The language of your land.

CHORUS.

We cannot, will not  
Believe your words. Apollo's oracles  
Are difficult to read.

CASSANDRA.

Woe! woe for ever!  
What robe of fire wraps me? Lycean king!  
Alas! alas! must that ferocious beast,  
That biped lioness in human shape,  
That in the absence of the noble lion  
Lay with the wolf, must she too murder me?  
And is her thirst of blood unsated yet,  
That I must prove a philtre to her wrath?  
Now, as she whets the knife against her husband,  
She gloats upon the savage thought, that he  
Shall pay with me, for me, the price of death.  
Why do I keep these objects of my scorn,  
This rod of divination, and this wreath  
About my neck? before I die, I wish  
To throw them far away—To earth! To dust!  
Such the reward I give you—such you merit.  
Go! and enrich some other with your pomp  
Of misery, instead of me. Behold! behold!  
Apollo drags himself from off my shoulders  
The robe of prophecy: too long I wore  
These ornaments of shame: enough have they  
Made me alike the scoff of friends and foes,

Calling me mad woman, juggling sorceress.  
These names and more I've borne, like one who roams  
From street to street, and begs her bread and dies  
Of want. Thus he, the God of prophecy,  
Brings to a still more miserable end  
His prophetess. Might I have fallen at the same altar  
Where slain my father, I had then been spared  
This ignominious lot, nor had the scaffold  
And the keen axe drank of my heart's warm blood.  
But we shall fall not unavenged: for us,  
And for his sire, a matricidal son  
Shall take full vengeance. From his native land  
A fugitive and exile he will roam,  
But shall return, and crown so many woes,  
His sire's atrocious death shall bring him here.  
Thus the great Gods have sworn with mighty oath—  
Why grieve then for myself? I, who have seen  
Troy suffer what she suffered, it is fit  
That those who triumphed over Troy should pay,  
By the just judgment of the Gods, the price  
Of their iniquities. Now behold! I go,  
Since thus 'tis fated, to endure my death,  
To bear it as I ought. You I salute,  
Ye gates of Hades! May the mortal stroke  
Be balanced well, and pang not, and life's stream  
Flow rapidly away, so that these eyes  
May gently close in their last sleep of death.

## CHORUS.

Woman of many griefs, and wise beyond  
Mortality, thou hast said enough; but if  
You see the certainty of death within,  
How dare you, like a victim God-impelled,  
Rush to the sacrifice?



CASSANDRA.

There is no retreat,  
No profit in delay, my friends!

CHORUS.

Yet who  
Puts back the evil hour, has something gained.

CASSANDRA.

Flight would avail not—this is my last day.

CHORUS.

O, most unfortunate! to possess a heart  
Of so much nobleness.

CASSANDRA.

And yet to die  
Nobly is all the praise worth having here.

CHORUS.

The fortunate little care for such eulogiums.

CASSANDRA.

O, noble father! Noble wretched children!

CHORUS.

What spectre haunts thee now? What mean those tones,  
That start of horror?

CASSANDRA.

Uh! uh! uh!

CHORUS.

You utter  
Loud guttural shrieks, as though you saw some sight  
From which your spirit shrinks with loathing.

CASSANDRA.

Uh!  
That stream of blood—it rises from the palace,  
Tainting the air.

CHORUS.

You breathe the savoury smell  
Of victims from the sacrifice within.

CASSANDRA.

No! it exhales a pestilential vapour,  
As foul as from some newly-opened charnel.

CHORUS.

You speak of fragrance not Assyrian.

CASSANDRA.

There,  
Within, I go to weep for my own death  
And Agamemnon's—thus must end my days.  
What have they been, few and evil, yet too many.  
I tremble, friends! but not with fear, as flaps  
The bird its limed wings. Do me this justice,  
When I am under ground, as soon I must be,  
That for a woman for a woman dies,  
A man falls murdered for the man he murdered,  
Your hospitable record may embalm,

And keep alive my memory, and prove  
The dearest gift I can receive in dying.

CHORUS.

Unfortunate prophetess ! how I pity thee !

CASSANDRA.

Once more I will lament my fate, and shed  
Yet once again a tear. I now behold thee  
For the last time, O sun ! to thee I have  
One prayer, one vow to make,—that you will see  
My impious persecutors receive that death,  
Which they bestow on me, from my avengers :  
Do them the justice of an easy blow,  
As they reward the slave. O world ! O life,  
Whose brightest hours a shadow can destroy,  
And where all trace of human woe is lost,  
Like figures that a wetted sponge effaces :  
Of adverse fortune, or a prosperous lot  
Sad as mine is, the first I pity most.

CHORUS.

A lot of bliss is man's insatiable wish ;  
And he whom fortune points her finger at,  
Is welcome at all hours in every house :  
But the great Gods in envy, it would seem,  
Of the brave hero who has conquered Troy,  
Exclaim, ' Here enter not.' Yet has he come  
To his paternal lares crowned with honor :  
And if he must be punished for the sins  
Of those who went before him, if his life  
Must fall a sacrifice for others' lives,  
Who, when they hear the story of his fate,  
Shall say, that there is happiness on earth ?

AGAMEMNON (WITHIN).

O! I am stabbed—to the death.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Hush—Listen—Hark—  
Methought I heard the words stabbed! death! whose was  
The voice?

AGAMEMNON.

O, I am stabbed again! O! O!

SEMI-CHORUS.

The deed is done, those dying groans declare it.

SEMI-CHORUS.

They were our king's—let us concert some plan:  
Name that which you deem best.

SEMI-CHORUS.

What if we spread  
The alarm, by calling 'Murder' at the gates,  
That will bring down the people to the palace.

SEMI-CHORUS.

No! let us fall at once upon the murderer,  
And prove his crime by witness of the sword  
Dropping with blood.

SEMI-CHORUS.

I am of your advice,  
And say we ought—what's done, were best done quickly.

SEMI-CHORUS.

True! and those groans were but to us the preludes  
To a new tyranny.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Whilst we dally here,  
The hand sleeps not that works its way to power.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Myself I hardly know what part to take.

SEMI-CHORUS.

To act is better than all counsel.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Grant  
'Tis done, we cannot bring the dead to life.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Shall we submit to crouch under the yoke  
Of masters infamous as these?

SEMI-CHORUS.

No! never!  
Let us die all—die, rather than endure it.  
Slavery is worse than death.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Beside the groans,  
What proof have we? Who knows they were our king's?

SEMI-CHORUS.

Ay! it behoves us to clear up the fact,

To know for certainty, and to conjecture,  
Are widely different things.

## SEMI-CHORUS.

True! true! before we act,  
Let us be sure the groans were Agamemnon's.

## CLYTEMNESTRA. CHORUS.

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

It shames me not to hold a different language,  
And put another meaning on my words  
Than what the occasion and my need required:  
How is an enemy to cheat an enemy,  
But by returning hate for hate, and taking  
A garb of friendship, thus to compass him  
In a high net that is beyond his leap.  
I have been wrestling with myself in thought  
For years upon this conflict, my old wrongs  
Rankling within me—and at last, the morrow  
Too long delayed, has come for vengeance: what  
He did, that did I—I deny it not—I slew him,  
Just price for his offences—with such art  
Contrived the stratagem, that to escape,  
Or ward the blow, was vain. A circling cast-net,  
Without a flaw in't, as they spread for fishes,  
A precious robe involved him in its folds:  
I struck him twice, and twice he groaned aloud:  
And as he groaned a second time, his limbs  
Were loosened, and he fell—one more, a third  
And last libation poured I forth, to please  
That subterranean Jove, who saves the dead,  
As he above the living—then escaped

His spirit with a sigh...and on its breath  
 Came rushing forth a mighty shower of blood,  
 That sprinkled him all o'er with its black dew,  
 Making me glad as a field newly sown,  
 When falls the divine rain, and wakes to life  
 The flowers.

Illustrious Argives! may it please you  
 To hail with joy this act, that is my glory;  
 And were it a decorous thing to make  
 Libations o'er his corse, my hands were best.  
 Suffice it, he at last has rightly drained  
 That execrable chalice, which he filled  
 To overflowing with a sea of evils.

## CHORUS.

I marvel at your words, audacious woman!  
 Wonder, that thus with raven throat you dare  
 Croak o'er your fallen husband.

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

You would try me  
 As though I had a woman's weakness: say you  
 Audacious. I, with fearless soul, confess  
 To those who know it well, (and praise or blame  
 From you affect me not,) that there he lies,  
 My husband. Agamemnon, there, a corpse—  
 By this right hand—its work was just. Enough!

## CHORUS.

Woman! what poisonous thing that earth engenders,  
 Or impious potion that the salt ooze breeds,  
 Hast thou been nourished with, that thou hadst strength  
 To consummate that most foul sacrifice!

You struck him, cut him off before his time,  
Drove him from earth and joy : and you shall go,  
With the full curses of your citizens, go  
To banishment.

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

You threaten me with exile,  
And civic hate, and public execration ;  
Hast thou no charge to make against that man  
Who was not slow to shed the innocent blood  
Of his own child, deeming her but a lamb  
In a full flock ; to sacrifice *his* daughter,  
*My* daughter, youngest, dearest of my children,  
To disenchant and lull the Thracian winds.  
Did he not merit exile from his land,  
Too light an expiation for his sacrilege :  
And now, forsooth, it pleases you to judge  
My acts with harsh severity : but I tell you,  
Say, once for all, (and I am ever prompt  
To execute what I say,) that if you gain  
The victory, you shall lord it over me,  
But if the Gods have ruled it otherwise,  
Then—mark my words—too late, and at your cost,  
You will have wished that you had learnt more prudence.

## CHORUS.

Proud thoughts, and prouder words ; in truth your mind,  
Inebriate with the fiery wine of blood,  
Is all-delirious. On thy brow remains,  
And shall remain, indelible, the stain  
Of gore : abandoned, held in abomination  
By all your kindred, you shall, with death, atone  
Another's death.



## CLYTEMNESTRA.

Listen to what I swear :

In vengeance for my poor lost murdered child,  
I swear it by Erynnis, and by Ate,  
To whom I sacrificed Atrides, that  
I ne'er will put my foot on pale Fear's threshold  
Whilst that Egisthus, ever dear to me,  
And loving, lights upon my hearth the flame.  
With such a shield of strength, what can I fear  
That you can do. There lies that false one,  
The love of the Cryseises : and there  
Lies that oracular divining slave,  
His concubine, companion of his bed,  
Who, on the very ship in which he sailed,  
Pressed the same deck with him—there lie they both.  
They had a just reward ; he fell, and she,  
His mistress, tuning, like a dying swan,  
Her funeral incantation, mixed with groans,  
Fell by his side, and added to my feast  
A more delicious condiment, to my bed  
The promise of most exquisite delight.

## CHORUS.

Come ! quickly, some commissioned fiend ! not such  
As wears out life by lingering agony,  
Or death-bed's slow decay, but come, to end  
At once our sorrows, bring eternal night  
In terminable sleep, for we have lost  
Our friend and our protector. Countless woes  
He suffered for a woman, and has now  
Lost by a woman's hand his life. O Helen !  
Abomination of thy sex ! who sent  
So many and so many souls from Troy

To people hell; hast thou let loose at last  
The dormant furies lurking in this palace,  
To spend their utmost rage upon our house,  
And shed uncancellable blood ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And thou,  
That in thy boundlessness of grief invok'st  
Against thyself fate's extreme hour, be not  
Too rancorous against Helen, as if she  
Were the sole murderess of the human race,  
Alone the Fury of the sons of Argos,  
The sole occasion of the loss of lives  
Too infinite to count, of tears whose source  
Can never be dried up.

CHORUS.

Offspring of hell !  
Dæmon ! disastrous to this house, and both  
The sons of Tantalus ; didst thou impart  
To women equal power of working evil  
And torturing human hearts ? how like a foul  
Ill-boding bird who gloats on carcasses,  
O'er this poor remnant of mortality  
Thou standest, and dost thunder out thine hymns  
Of victory.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Well dost thou change thy note, accuse  
The omnipotent dæmon of this impious house  
Of its iniquities ; she within her vitals  
Has such a sateless love of blood, that ere  
She washes from her hands one stain of gore,  
She dyes them with another.

## SEMI-CHORUS.

Well dost thou  
 Remind me of that fierce and mighty fiend,  
 The vampire of this race.—Ah, bitter memory  
 Of a calamity, that knows no end,  
 No consolation. Jove! all powerful Jove!  
 Author of all, sole author of our woes!  
 Who governest all below, and without whom  
 Nothing is done that is done, which of these things  
 Happened against thy will? O day of gloom!—

## CHORUS.

O sire! O king! how shall I mourn for you?  
 What words of anguish wrung from my racked heart,  
 This faithful heart, shall paint its sorrows? there  
 You lie enwrapt in an insidious web,  
 Breathing your life away beneath the stroke  
 Of an iniquitous hand, (unworthy death)  
 Murdered by treachery, murdered by a hand  
 Armed with a double-edged sword.

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

You rave  
 Against this act of mine; true it was mine;  
 But say not that the wife of Agamemnon  
 Was guilty.—No! before me stood the fiend,  
 The ancient genius of the house of Atreus,  
 The dread avenger of the feast of Atreus,  
 And struck him—then the sacrifice was complete,  
 A victim worthy of those innocent babes  
 Fell in that hour of just atonement.

## SEMI-CHORUS.

Who

Will trust your words, absolve you from the crime,  
Or say that you were guiltless of his murder?  
But soon the dæmon of a sire shall rise  
To vengeance: and black Mars shall shed such streams  
Of kindred blood, and add such crimes to crimes,  
That he who ate the flesh of his own son  
Shall loathe the sight, and shrink away in horror.

## CHORUS.

O king, O sire! how shall I mourn for you?  
What words of anguish wrung from my racked heart,  
This faithful heart, shall tell my sorrows? there  
You lie, enwrap in an insidious web,  
Breathing your life away beneath the stroke  
Of an atrocious hand, (unworthy death)  
Murdered by treachery, murdered by a hand  
Armed with a double edged sword.

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

No! no! his death  
Was not unworthy of his life; perhaps  
You will affirm, that he was not the first  
Who practised in this house a cruel fraud—  
Who led the way to treachery. He it was,  
Who sacrificed *my* daughter, and *his* daughter,  
The ever-mourned Iphigenia: he  
Died justly by that sword by which she died,  
And now shall make no boast in Erebus,  
That his misdeed was unavenged.

## SEMI-CHORUS.

In doubt,  
 Cruel uncertainty lost, I know not where  
 To look for consolation ; where to find  
 A prop or buttress for the falling house  
 Of the Atridæ.—Oh, I fear ! I fear !  
 A ruinous torrent of the rain of blood,  
 Not drop by drop, but an o'erwhelming deluge,  
 Must sap its walls, and level its foundations.  
 E'en now the fiend on other grindstones whets  
 The dagger of revenge for other murders,  
 Nor of less fatal dye.

## CHORUS.

O Earth ! O earth !  
 Wouldst thou hadst taken me to thy cold bosom,  
 Ere I beheld my lord laid low, and weltering  
 In a bath silver-walled ; and who shall now  
 Entomb him ? who weep over his remains ?  
 Perhaps his murderess, you will venture, *you*  
 To honour with unrighteous tears his corse,  
 Offering the tribute of no grateful piety  
 To his all-glorious deeds, and with true sense  
 Of the divine perfections of that hero,  
 Chant his funereal praises drowned in tears.

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

Let not that thought afflict you : he is fallen,  
 Fallen by me—for mine a sacrifice—  
 He is no more to us than dust, and we  
 Will place him in his sepulchre : 'tis true,  
 He will not have the honors of the tomb,  
 My lamentations ; but Iphigenia,  
 His loving daughter, blithely as she ought

On the dark shore of grief's swift-gliding river,  
Will meet her father as he disembarks,  
And throw her arms about his neck and kiss him.

## CHORUS.

Outrage on outrage; there is not a difference  
Easy to settle. He who injures others  
Brings injury on himself, and she who murders  
Pays life for life. Such is the law of Jove,  
And so shall be whilst Jove retains his power.  
Who gives, receives,—and one who shuts her door  
Against her true and lawful son, goes not  
Unpunished. There is a tenacious power  
That glues together all things.

## CLYTEMNESTRA.

Well hast thou  
Experienced of those laws supreme the force;  
Meantime I wish, and swear it by the dæmon  
Of the Plysthenides, to bear in patience  
Your harsh reproaches. Let him leave this house,  
Once and for ever; go, and exterminate  
Some other race with mutual slaughter, here  
I shall have little gained, if I drive not  
The parricidal furies from my doors.

## EGISTHUS. CLYTEMNESTRA. CHORUS.

Oh happy day, bringer of just revenge!  
Well may I now confess, that from above  
The Gods regard the crimes of earth, redress  
The injuries of men, now that this man,  
Wrapt in the woven web of the dark furies,  
(A grateful sight to me) has paid the price

Of the foul treachery of his sire to mine ;  
For Atreus, ruler of this land, his father,  
And brother of my father, once contending  
Which should obtain the sovereign power, Thyestes  
Was banished from the kingdom and his home,  
And wandered long a miserable exile :  
But conquered by a love for his own country,  
He came and fell before his household Gods,  
Who heard his earnest prayer, and spared his life,  
Nor stain'd they with his blood his father's threshold.  
Thus much was well :—but the execrable Atreus,  
With an alacrity of wrath, not love,  
Prepared a solemn banquet, as in joy  
Of his return, and served upon his board,  
In honour of his guest, the flesh, and feet,  
And hands of his own children ; so disguised,  
That my unhappy father took, and ate  
The detestable food. That impious fact  
Acknowledged, he was horror-struck, shrieked, fell,  
And vomited the foul repast : then cursing,  
In his just rage, the violated rights  
Of hospitality, invoked some death  
Of horror to the progeny of Pelops.  
Thus perish all the race of Plysthenes :  
Behold the crimes for which he fell, and I  
Am justly of his fate the author. Atreus,  
Me, with my miserable father ; me,  
A thirteenth child, an infant in the cradle,  
Drove from his realm, but justice brought me back,  
When grown to man's estate, and now this day,  
Tho' absent from this house, I fixed my fangs  
Upon that man ; I held him, planned it all,  
I laid the snare—and now, 'twere sweet to die,  
Since I behold him in the toils of vengeance.

## CHORUS.

Such insolent glorying in your wicked deed  
 Is lost on us, Egisthus.—You confess  
 That you deprived that man of life, and by  
 So pitiful an artifice, you alone—  
 Hear thou my words, and put your trust in them—  
 You will not 'scape the vengeance of the people,  
 Stoning to death.

## EGISTHUS.

What, you talk thus, who sit  
 In the ship's nether tier, pull the last oar,  
 Thus speak to him who treads the upper deck,  
 The captain of the vessel: You shall learn,  
 Tho' age is slow, and hard the task to make  
 Such dotards sage, your duty: Chains and hunger  
 Are excellent physicians to sick minds;  
 Know excellently well, even to teach  
 The old, and cure rebellion. See you not,  
 Whither my lessons tend? Look then! nor kick  
 Against the spurs, lest you may wound your flank.

## CHORUS.

\* Woman! the wife of him so late returned  
 In glory from the field, thou who hast dared  
 To lay thy treacherous hands on the great captain,  
 Wilt thou dishonour still a hero's bed?—  
 Still dwell with him who plotted that foul murder?

## EGISTHUS.

These words shall be another fount of tears.  
 Truly your voice is not like that of Orpheus:

\* I have studied to give in this, as in many other passages, the best sense rather than the best construction.



With his sweet singing he delighted all,  
 Drew all things to himself; but you, with loud  
 And idle barking, do but rouse my anger;  
 And shall be dragged. When in another place,  
 You will become more tame.

CHORUS.

What thou the King  
 Of Argos—you, who own you planned his death,  
 And dared not execute the deed yourself,  
 With your own hand.

EGISTHUS.

It best became a woman  
 To put the fraud in practice; upon me  
 Had fallen suspicion, from our ancient feud;  
 But now I hold his sceptre, and will learn  
 To rule these Argives with a rod of iron.  
 I will rein up that pampered restive courser,  
 And teach it to obey the bit and curb.  
 Hunger, the paramour of ungrateful night,  
 Shall conquer its proud spirit.

CHORUS.

Then you own,  
 All dastard as you are, that you imposed  
 The task upon a woman, and a woman  
 The scum of her paternal soil, the shame  
 Of her paternal Gods—a woman slew him—  
 Yet thanks to them, Orestes sees the light;  
 He will appear in happy hour, return  
 To take a last and terrible revenge  
 Upon this guilty pair.

EGISTHUS.

You who can talk,  
Now let us see how you can act—Hola!  
Guards there—the moment presses—help—to arms!

CHORUS.

Companions, draw your swords!

EGISTHUS.

I too can die  
With sword in hand.

CHORUS.

You say, that you can die.  
Let fate decide.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

No, no! my loved Egisthus!  
Let us not put our hands to other ills.  
A miserable harvest this of ours  
That we have reaped already! and the measure  
Of sorrow is brim-full: then no more blood.  
Depart, old men, together to your homes,  
Lest evil fall upon you. What we did  
We were compelled to do. More than enough  
From adverse fortune's cruel weight have we  
Endured even now.—These are a woman's councils;  
Follow, if you approve them.

EGISTHUS.

But to dare,  
With senseless tongues, to lance forth 'gainst their sove-  
reign

Such insolent words—their language might provoke  
The Gods.

CHORUS.

An Argive does not flatter criminals.—

EGISTHUS.

A day will come when you shall prove my wrath.

CHORUS.

Not if kind fortune send Orestes home.

EGISTHUS.

I know that exiles ever feed on hope.

CHORUS.

Talk, triumph, outrage, whilst you may; rejoice  
In violating justice.

EGISTHUS.

You shall pay  
The fee of this audacity.

CHORUS.

Crow on,  
And bristle up your feathers, like a cock  
Beside his dame.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Egisthus, care not for  
These harmless curs. Let them bark on—we two,  
With our joint rule, will soon establish order.

## NOTES.

Text of }  
Blomfield. }

### WARDER'S SOLILOQUY.

- IT seems to me impossible to render other than familiarly this soliloquy of the Watchman. No passage has more puzzled commentators and translators, some of whom have latterly, in order to reconcile 33-35. it with their own high-flown ideas, omitted the *τρὶς ἔξ* and *βοῦς ἐπι γλώσση μέγας*. The Vidette begins by saying he has been squatting
3. on the house-top, like a dog, *ἄγκαθεν, κυνὸς δίκην*; that he has had the stars for company, or rather, *κάτοιδα* (made acquaintance with
  6. them), been present at the courts of the *λαμπροὶ δυνασταὶ*, dazzling *dynasters*, no very elegant expression for the planets; applies to the
  25. queen, whom he calls contemptuously *γυνή*, and *Αγαμέμνωνος*
  - 10-14. *γυνή*, the expression *ανδρόβουλον κέαρ*; talks of *μὴ βεβαίως*, &c.
  15. dozing; of Fear, standing at his bedside; of whistling, *μνύρεσθαι*,
  21. called a beacon, *λαμπτήρ νυκτός*, night-dancer; and yet the translators, one and all will have it, that this is very fine, and render it with all the grandiloquence of the buskin. The great merit of Æschylus, like that of Shakspeare (witness Gelissa in the *Chœforæ*) consists in his making all his personages talk in character.

*Of one, a man in every thing but form.* P. 3, L. 12.

10. κρατεῖ <sup>(ν)</sup>ανδρόβουλον—ἐλπίζον <sup>(ω)</sup>κέαρ.

Alludes to the misgovernment of Argos, and the bad ascendancy of Ægysthus; the new reading, *κρατεῖ ἐλπίζον*, is to me incomprehensible, and makes a difficulty where there was none. What sense is to be made of "the hoping heart man-counselling rules."

*Fear stands beside my couch.* P. 3, L. 15.

13. ἐμοὶ φόβος ἀνθ' ὕπτου παρασταεῖ.

When sorrow at my elbow still attends,  
To company my heart with sad laments. MARLOW.

One cannot help smiling at Mr. Kennedy's thinking this resembles the verse in Job, 'Fear came upon me,' &c.

Text of }  
Blomfield. }

*Thou Bacchanal.* P. 4, L. 11.

21. *λαμπτήρ νυκτος.*

The solemnity in honour of Bacchus was performed in the night ; his votaries went to the temple, bearing torches, and had the title of *λαμπτήρες* ; *λαμπτήρ* also, according to Hesychius, was a brasier placed in the middle of the room, on which was piled fuel to burn, and a resinous wood to light the apartment. Æschylus, in the *Choeforæ* uses the word simply as a torch or taper. Here it has the sense I have given it, proved by the *Ιου, Ιου. Ενοε Ενοε.*

· CHORUS. P. 5.

40. Aristophanes, in the *Frogs*, derides the opening chorus.

*Like vultures when they oar.* P. 5, L. 8.

48. *τρόπον αἰγυπιῶν.*

Hercules was always pleased when vultures appeared to him at the undertaking of any expedition, because he esteemed them the justest of all carnivorous animals. See Plutarch. *Dion.*

*Some Pan.* P. 5, L. 14.

52. *ἦ Πᾶν, ἦ Ζεὺς.*

This is a very remarkable passage. Pan was the primitive being, the father of nature. An inscription on the pavement of the Temple of Sais was this :

Ἐγὼ εἶμι πᾶν τὸ γεγονός, καὶ ὄν, καὶ ἐσόμενον, καὶ τὸν ἐμὸν  
πέπλον οὐδεὶς τῶν θνητῶν ἀπεκάλυψεν.

PLUTAR. IN ISID. AND OSI. p. 354.

*Or sacrifice where no lamp sheds its beams.*

P. 5, L. 30.

69. *ἀπύρων ἱερῶν.*

Sacrifices were threefold : *εμπύροι, ἀπύροι,* and *ἀναιμακτοί.* Some consider the allusion was to the Furies ; but it is fanciful.

Text of }  
Blomfield. }

*Swells high the tide of song! I feel the power.*

P. 7, L. 14.

103. κύριός εἶμαι θροδεῖν.

The language of this chorus is truly prophetic, and much of its beauty consists in a rare felicity of words. I would suggest the following reading, and verbal translation, but it is with considerable diffidence, and to prove the necessity of paraphrase, in the choruses at least. I have cared little for the elegance of the Latinity.

Quando Achivorum bithronum robur, Græciæ pubem, consentientem expeditionem, mittit, cum hastâ, et manu pœnas operante, audax avis (i. e. Helena vel Paris) in Trojanam terram, (duorum) alitum regalium rex, unus niger, alter retro-albus, regibus navium (prope) vestibulum ædium apparentes, ab manu quatiente-hastam (portabat), super laté-conspicua palatia, devorantes (i. e. ambo devoraverunt) leporinam, genus numerosam gestans prolem, læsam (impediatam) extremis cursibus.

Longo post tempore, venatur Priami urbem similis modus (i. e. civitas, diutino bello carens viribus, sic delacerabitur). Omnes vero turrium possessiones ante-(riores) fatum plenum populi (i. e. equus ligneus) vi diripiet, si nulla calamitas divinitus (missa) obumbret, futuri operis typus, magnum frenum (insolentiæ) Trojæ, magnum exercitum militatem ab domo (Græcia). Nam irata Diana casta alatis canibus patris, unâ cum fœtu, ante partum, labore-fessam leporinam sacrificantibus. Odit nam cœnam aquilarum.

\* Tam enim benevola, O pulcra, (Diana) pullis nimium infirmis sequi (comites ire matri) innocuarum, et catulis mammas-amantium omnium ferarum agrestium. (Augur) bona horum te precatur symbola (omina) perficere, propitiæ nam (partim) et (partim) infaustæ sunt visiones (aquilarum), et Iæum pæan (cantans) te invoco, ut nullos contra-spirantes, Græcis intempestivos, puppes-detinentes, innavigabiles ventos excites, libans (nec libes) sacrificium alterum iniquum, unconviviale (non epulandum) jurgiorum opificem, cognatum, non-metuentem-virum. Manet enim terribilis, rursus-concitata, domestica fraus, memor ira, filiæ vindex.

108. ἦβαν pro ἦβας.

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\* It should be either ἄφρων δρόμοις ἀέλπτοις, or εὐφρων δρόμοις ἀίπτοις, maddened about the chase which she has lost all hope of enjoying, or kind to the callow young, yet unable to do without the mother.

Text of }  
Blomfield. }

111. *Ξούριος ὄρνις*, *audax avis*, by which I understand Helen or Paris, is an expression ridiculed by Aristophanes, of course for its obscurity. I should think we might interpret it now as we like.
117. *φέρματε* pro *φέρματι*.
124. *ἀγρεῖ* pro *ἀιρεῖ*.
129. *ἄτα* pro *ἄγα*.
130. *πρότυπὸν* adv. pro *πρότυπέν*.
131. *στρατευθέν ὄικω*, pro *στρατωθέν ὄικω*.
137. *ἀκαλά*, or *ωκαλά*, Doric, as *ακυπρις*, is used in Theocritus, or *ωνασσα*, by Hesiod, pro *α καλά*.
138. *εόντων*, or *όντων* pro (*λέοντων*) making a distinction between the gentle and the savage animals.

*They lighting their dry pyramid of heather.*

P. 16, L. 15.

286, *γραιας ἐρείκης*.

Potter makes *Ερείκη* a proper name, an old observation, and a still greater mistake in his Hellespont.

*Succeeds another Lampadist in the course.* P. 17, L. 1.

303. *λαμπαδηφόρων νόμος*.

Those who are curious to know what has been said about the *Lampadoforia* may consult the following writers : Cic. de Fini. L. 5. C. 1. p. 196, Paus. L. 1. C. 30. p. 35, Herod. L. 8. c. 93, Plut. in Solon, L. 1. p. 79, Plat. de Republ. L. 1. p. 318.

From these authorities, it would appear that there were several kinds of flambeau-races, diversified according to the games celebrated at the festivals of the different gods of Greece. In those in honour of Prometheus the torch was lit at his altar, certain distances being first marked out for the several competitors, who successively received the flambeau one from the other. Those who suffered it to go out, could not start again. This was a race which occupied a long time, because each of the runners before he could be a winner must have carried it unextinguished through all the stations, and thus sometimes the prize was adjudged to more than one person. Generally,

Text of }  
Blomfield. }

however, only three started. From a vase I have seen, it seems there were also equestrian Lampadioria, to which Pindar refers.

In the Frogs of Aristophanes we find also an allusion to these games; *λαμπάδα δ' ουδεις ολος τε φορεϊν*, which is explained thus in a MS. note to an edition of that author I have: *Currentes facem gestabant, Ea fatigatus, unus proximo in manu dabat, et ipse defessus alio, et deinceps alius alio successivè tradebat in vicem.* I think these are nearly Cicero's words. And we find in Persius,

(vicissim)  
Quasi cursores vitai lampada tradunt.

At the marriage festivals of Greece they have races of a similar description at the present day. Potter omits all mention of this allusion; and Symonds says, all those who started gained the prize; a strange race.

And the last runner and the first is victor.

The interpretation I have put on the passage turns on the *δ'ο*, *save that* in the race of beacon.

They,  
The first and last gained equally the prize.

*Soundly as mariners when the danger's past.*

P. 17, last line.

327. *ωσ δυσδαίμονες.*

The new reading, *εὐδαίμονες*, spoils the passage.

*Blooms on in spite of Eld.* P. 28, L. 9.

567. *ἀει γὰρ ηβᾶ τοῖς γέρονσιν εὐ μαθεῖν.*

Nec tarda senectus  
Debilitat vires animi, mutatque vigorem. VIRGIL.

632 to 55. There is a magnificent description of this storm in Cointius Smirnæus, an author whose work is not in sufficient esteem.

*We saw the Egæan, as with flowery weeds.* P. 31, L. 31.

642. *ὀρῶμεν ἀνθοῦν πέλαγος Αἰγαῖον νεκροῖς.*

——— or scattered sedge  
Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed  
Has vexed the red sea coast.



Text of }  
Blomfield. }

——— who beheld  
From the safe shore their floating carcasses.  
——— so thick bestrown  
Lay these covering the flood. MILTON.

Page 35.

In Strophe IV. Symonds is far too vague and paraphrastic; he takes twenty-eight lines for eighteen of the original; and independent of his obscurity, we look in vain for "surfeiter, too glorious to be good," and a vast number of expressions.

*Ocean-hell.* P. 32, L. 10.

650. "Ἀδην πόντιον.

Ocean-hell. BYRON.

STROPHE I. P. 32.

670. Ἐλίαν means destroying.

See note to the Prometheus, as to Παρονομασία.

*At midnight's mantling hour.* P. 33, L. 8.

672. ἀβροπήμων προκαλυμμάτων.

This ἀβροπήμων is new to me, and quite incomprehensible. ἀβροσίμων is not very clear, and rather ridiculous to talk about her toilette; quere if the word was not αβροτάμων, nocte-vagantum: a coined word, but fairly so, and a hardy expression, but not too hardy for Æschylus. Horace has imitated this chorus in his 'Pastor cum traheret;' and Aristophanes, in his Frogs, the simile of the lion, which if applied to Helen is ridiculous; but it is not, as the παρ' αὐτὰ, L. 716, shows.

*A thought of breathless calm.* P. 34, L. 18.

717. φρόνημα μὲν νηνέμου γαλήνης.

Symonds's paraphrase is beautiful, but any thing rather than the original. I do not speak of Potter; for in what choral ode does he give the reader the slightest conception of Æschylus?

Text of }  
Blomfield. }

*From her mild eyes a sweet and delicate dart.*

P. 34, L. 21.

719.           μαλθακὸν ὀμμάτων βέλος.  
And from about her shot darts of desire  
Into all eyes.     MILTON.

*Hybris.*   P. 35, L. 3.

738. ὑβρις.  
Hybris was the Goddess of contumely or outrage, as Dycè was  
of justice—a name by which I have called her.

*Who love to seem and not to be,  
For all, &c. &c.*   P. 35, L. 15.

805.           Παύροις γὰρ ἀνδρῶν ἐστὶ συγγενὲς τόδε.  
How counterfeit a coin they are who friends  
Bear in their superscription, of the most  
I would be understood, in prosperous days  
They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head.   SAM. AG.

*Ah who can tell, when far from her loved lord,  
What solitary hours a wife must pass.*   P. 38, L. 9-10.

835.           ἦσθαι δόμοις ἔρημον ἔκπαγλον κακῶν.  
Whilst I at home sate full of cares and fears,  
Wailing his absence in my widowed bed.   SAM. AG.

—brooding on past pleasures,  
*Now turned to pain.*   P. 38, L. 11.

836. I have adopted my Greek friend's suggestion of *κλαίβσαν ἡδονας*,  
for *κλύεσαν κληδόνας*. It seems unlikely that Æschylus would  
have made use of the same word three times in the same speech, and  
twice of precisely the same expression.

*That at the setting of the Pleiades.*   P. 37, L. 2.

839.           ἀμφὶ Πλειάδων δύσιν.  
Troy, according to Æschylus, was taken at the end of the autumn.  
The Pleiades setting at that season of the year in Greece.

Text of }  
Blomfield. }

*I waited for the promised beacon-fires,  
Ever in vain expected.* P. 39, L. 13.

863. τὰς ἀμφὶ σοὶ κλαίουσα λαμπτηρουχίας.  
Oh, many a night on my lone couch reclined,  
Still would I rise to watch the beacon-fire. BYRON.

*A day that dawns serenely beautiful  
After a night of tempest.* P. 39, L. 27.

872. γῆν φανείσαν ναυτίλοις παρ' ἐλπίδα.  
A pinnace anchoring in a craggy bay  
After a tempest. MILTON.

*Of shells that sparkle in the silver sands.* P. 43, L. 2.

932. Πολλῆς πορφύρας.

I need scarcely remark that the word purple is derived from the Greek word for these shells.

*Thou too hast made a summer of our winter.*  
P. 43, L. 13.

942. θάλπος μὲν ἐν χειμῶνι.  
Now is the winter of our discontent  
Made glorious summer. SHAKESPEARE.

*But who by incantation's magic art, &c.* P. 44, L. 24.

990. οὐδὲ τὸν ορθοδαῆ, &c.

Æsculapius brought to life Hippolitus, and was killed by Jove's thunder for usurping his power. See Pindar, 3 Pyth. Ode.

*It fails, it droops desponding and alone,  
And like a dying taper fades in night away.*  
P. 45, L. 7.

998. νῦν δ' ὑπὸ σκότῳ, &c.

Shelley has imitated and surpassed, in his Ode to Liberty, perhaps the sublimest in our or any language, this passage. V. last paragraph.

Text of }  
Blomfield. }

*The Lavations.* P. 45, L. 21.

1004. *κοινωνὸν εἶναι χερνίβων.*

This office was performed by the lowest slaves, and consisted in washing the blood from the hands of the priests after the sacrifice. Ariadne, abandoned by Theseus, says, Vid. Nonn. Dion. L. xvii. V. 390, that she would even become his slave, and bring the Lavation-water. The character of Clytemnestra is well drawn in this scene, and prepares the reader for what follows.

SCENE BETWEEN CASSANDRA AND THE CHORUS.

P. 47, &c.

1039. In this scene, I have followed Barthelemy's opinion, that whenever the chorus participated in the action, they did not sing. Had Symonds done so, it would have been more effective.—Le chœur chez lui (Æschylus) ne se borne plus à chanter des cantiques ; il fait partie de tout ; il est l'appui des malheureux, le conseil des rois, l'effroi des tyrans, le confident de tous : quelquefois il participe à l'action pendant tout le temps qu'elle dure. C'est ce que ses successeurs auraient dû pratiquer plus souvent.—He adds : Le chœur, ou plutôt son coryphée, dialoguait avec les acteurs, et ce dialogue n'était que déclamé. Le chœur était envisagé sous deux aspects différents, suivant les deux espèces de fonctions qu'il avait à remplir. Dans les intermèdes, qui tenaient lieu de nos entr'actes, toutes les voix se réunissaient, et chantaient ensemble ; dans les scènes où il se mêlait à l'action, il était représenté par son coryphée. Voilà pourquoi Horace (Art. Poet. V. 194), et Aristote ont dit que le chœur faisait l'office d'un acteur. . . Barthelemy cites as an example, the Agamemnon, the Seven before Thebes, and the Supplices.

*Which of the prophecies*

*Has ever given to man one happy augury.* P. 51, L. 5.

1103. *ἀπὸ δὲ θεσφάτων τίς ἀγαθὰ φάτις.*

Whoever by consulting at thy shrine  
Returned the wiser, or the more instruct  
To fly or follow what concerned him most,  
And run not sooner to his fatal snare. PAR. REG.

Text of }  
Blomfield. }

*The curse that let the elder fury in,  
Ate. P. 53, last line.*

1163. Πρώταρχόν ἄτην.

Pelops, the father of Atreus, killed by treachery, Myrtilus, the charioteer of Enomaus.

*Lycean king. P. 58, L. 6.*

1228. Λυκείον.

It has puzzled the commentators to account for this title, as applied to Apollo. In a mountainous country like Greece, abounding in wolves, whose madness occasioned such havoc among the flocks, it was natural to dedicate temples to him, under the name of Lupercal. Lycian had another signification, as in the Supplices. The winds that come over the Lycian mountains are supposed to bring the plague that has always ravaged Greece; and Apollo, or the Sun, that draws the pestilent vapours from marshes, was considered, as in Horace, and Hom. Ili. L. 1, the god of pestilence. Bivouacking on the banks of the Simois was not very healthy I imagine.

*This rod of divination, and this wreath  
About my neck. P. 58, L. 18.*

1230. Περὶ δέρη στέφη.

ζαθέως  
Κληΐδας κ'ζαπο χρόοσιν.  
—στέφρων ἱερως στολμως. EUR. TROAD.

*But not with fear,  
As flaps the bird its limed wings. P. 61, L. 14.*

1286. θάμνον ὡς ὄρνις.

The commentators, and among the rest, Symonds, render this in a manner quite different from that I have done. I imagine it alludes to the manner of catching thrushes with limed twigs, common in Greece and Italy at the present day. θάμνος means a twig as well as a grove or leafy covert.

*I now behold thee  
For the last time, O Sun! P. 62, L. 6.*

1296. ἠλίω δ' ἐπεύχομαι.

Sophocles, in his Ajax has copied this address.

Text of }  
Blomfield. }

*Whose brightest hours a shadow can destroy.*

P. 62, L. 13.

1298.

ευτυχοῦντα μὲν  
σκιά τις ἂν τρέψειεν.

But perfect shadows in a sunshine day. MARLOW.

*Like figures that a wetted sponge effaces.* P. 62, L. 15.

1300. υγρώσων σπόγγος.

Or trifles for choice matters worth a sponge. PAR. REG.

The ancients made use of slates like those used in our schools, with a sponge attached to them.

*Of adverse fortune, or a prosperous lot,  
Sad as mine is, the last I pity most.* P. 62, L. 16-17.

1301. καὶ ταῦτ' ἐκείνων μᾶλλον ὀικτείρω πολὺ.

Barthelemy has rendered the sense perfectly :

O honneurs humains, brillantes and vaines images, qu'un ombre peut obscurcir, une goutte d'eau effacer ; *la prosperite de l'homme me fait plus de pitié que ses malheurs.* Voyages d'Anacars.

Symonds omits this sentiment altogether, which I am much surprized at. Pindar, Od. Py. L. 11. V. 76; makes nearly the same reflection.

*Let us all die rather than endure it :  
Slavery is worse than death.* P. 64, L. 9-10.

1335. ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀνεκτὸν, ἀλλὰ κατθανεῖν κρατεῖ.

The worst is death, and better die to live,  
Than live in infamy under such a king. MARLOW, ED. II.

*A third and last libation.* P. 65, L. 24.

1357. τρίτην ἐπιδίδωμαι.

In their sacrifices to the Gods the Greeks poured forth the lustral water three times ; the last libation was to Jove, the preserver. This mockery of the most holy rite shows that Clytemnestra had no sense of religion. Neither Potter or Symonds take any notice of this passage.

Text of }  
Blomfield. }

*Libations o'er his corse.* P. 66, L. 2.

1365. ἐπισπένδειν νεκρῷ.

We know, from the *Electra* of Euripides,

Ἀγαμεμνῶνος δὲ τυμβος ἠτισμάσμενος  
Ὀύποτε οὐ χόας, &c.

that no respect was paid to the corpse of Agamemnon. *Electra* makes the same complaint in the *Chœforæ*, and I think Agamemnon himself to Ulysses in the *Odyssey*.

1544 to 55. Nothing can be worse than the repetition of the semichorus and chorus at the end of this scene, as suggested by Burney. The string of proverbs put into the mouth of the chorus ought immediately, as in the old editions, to be replied to by Clytemnestra. The punctuation of the whole speech renders it now quite impossible for the sphynx to explain. The old reading was very preferable, and as follows:—a full stop after *δνειδους*. Another after *κρῖναι*. Another after *ἔρξαντα*. The *ἀραῖον* for *ῥᾶον* is no improvement—*quis facilliter* (i. e. *impunitè*) *ejiciet*, &c. *Προσάψη* as it once stood, or should have stood for *προσάψαι*, is much better sense than *πρὸς ἄτη*; meaning, a race abounding in misery is linked together, or misery is glued to misery—from *κολλάω*; hence the French word for glue. But I am a translator and not a commentator, and have already swelled my notes too much; or I should have many more observations to make.

*The race of Plisthenes.* P. 73, L. 15.

1595. Πλισθένης γένος.

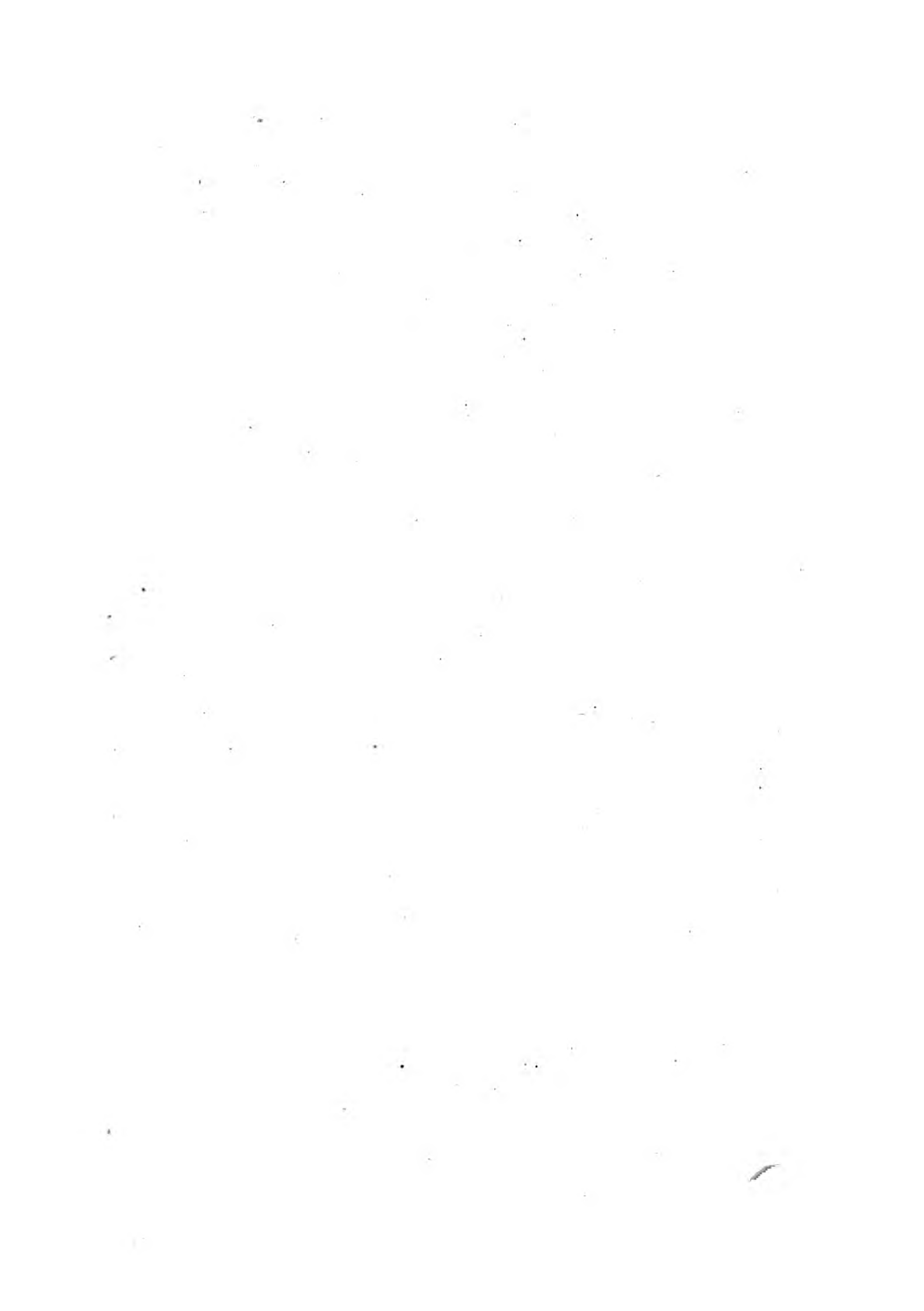
Potter says he does not understand this passage. None can be easier of explanation. It is ironical. Plisthenes, the son of Atreus, was really the father of Agamemnon and Menelaus. Clytemnestra's Plisthenides is equally contemptuous.

THE END.

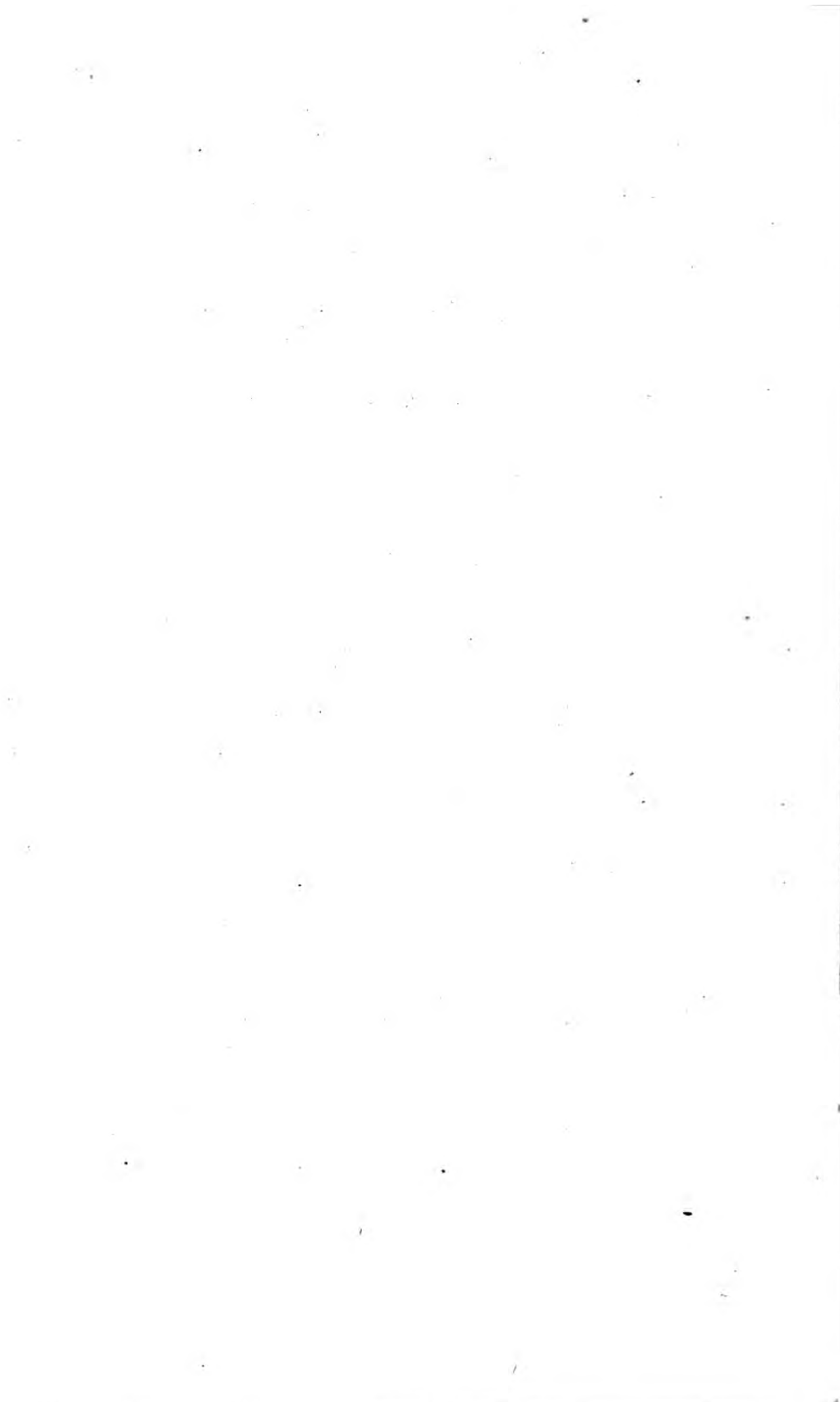
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