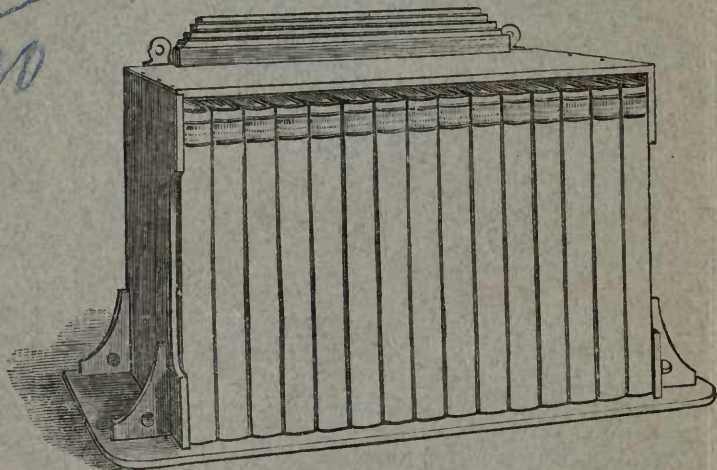


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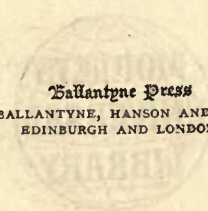
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AND OTHER PLAYS

BY

EURIPIDES

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE BY

ROBERT POTTER

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY HENRY MORLEY

LL.D., PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE AT
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON

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INTRODUCTION.

EURIPIDES is said to have been born on the day of the battle of Salamis, in the year 480 before Christ. His parents, Mnesarchus and Cleito, in dread of the invasion of Xerxes, fled from Athens to the island of Salamis, and on the memorable day of the great victory, Euripides was born there.

The three Greek Tragedians, in the order of their seniority, were all associated by tradition with the battle of Salamis: Æschylus, a man, fought in it; Sophocles, a boy of fifteen, sang at the festival in celebration of it; Euripides was born on the day of it. The living fact is that they were all born in the time of a great struggle that brought out the energies of men. Greece was threatened by an overwhelming force. Men fought with all their souls for what was most worth caring about in life; and it is when men are so stirred to the quick that their manhood speaks most worthily, and Literature is at its best.

.....

An oracle is said to have promised that Euripides should be crowned with sacred garlands. He was taught rhetoric by Prodicus, and so well trained in gymnastics that he won prizes, as a boy, at public games. He studied also philosophy and literature, worked at physics under Anaxagoras, and acquired technical skill as a painter. He collected books, and he had Socrates among his friends. Socrates, it is said, only went to the theatre when plays of Euripides were acted. He wrote a tragedy at the age of eighteen, but no play was acted in his name until his age was about twenty-five. The play then acted—"The Peliades"—is among those which are lost. In the year 441, at the age of about thirty-nine, Euripides for the first time gained the first prize as a dramatist. At forty, therefore, his work in life was determined, and he had won his position. That was sixteen years after the death of Æschylus. It was about the same time probably that Euripides married Choerilla, daughter of Mnesilochus, by whom he had three sons; and he left Athens not long afterwards to visit the Court of Archelaus, King of Macedonia. He died in the year before Christ, 406, aged about seventy-four, torn in pieces, it is said, by the king's dogs.

Euripides, after his first winning of the prize, continued to write plays for more than thirty years. He is reported to have written seventy-five tragedies, of which only five obtained the prize; he is reported also to have written

ninety-two tragedies, of which fifteen were successful. There remain to us eighteen.

In these plays there is a philosophic spirit showing life in action, with keen human sympathies. Euripides was once accused of impiety in a court of justice, and his faith in the gods of Greece had doubts and reservations that a hostile critic could detect. He realized to his own mind the legendary characters, and painted them as human beings really are. As Aristotle said, Sophocles painted men as they ought to be ; Euripides painted them as they are.

Of the plays given in this volume, "Alcestis" was produced in the year 438 B.C. and is the earliest of those which remain to us. It is based on the old Greek myth that set forth the true beauty of marriage, and caused our Chaucer to make Admetus and Alcestis, under Venus, king and queen of love. "Electra" was written probably almost twenty-five years later, and "Orestes" was produced in the year 408, thirty years after "Alcestis," and only two years before the poet's death. The "Trojan Dames" had been produced seven years earlier.

"Iphigenia in Aulis" was one of three plays brought out at the great Dionysia by the youngest son of Euripides after his father's death. The date of the "Iphigenia in Tauris" cannot be determined.

Fables about Euripides abound. He is said to have written his plays in a cavern. He is said to have had two wives who were both false to him, statements against

which there is a good deal of evidence, and for which there is none. The dogs who tore him to death are said to have been women; and their reason for picking him to pieces in that very decisive manner, was that he was going to an assignation (aged seventy-five). In the year 414, eight years before his death, he was bitterly attacked by Aristophanes in the "Thesmophoriazuzæ," and the absence from the attack of any reference to the two bad wives is decisive against the fable. He was married to Chœrilla at least thirty years. Fables abound among the chatter of the world, and when the question is of a poet who was alive two thousand two hundred and fifty years ago, they are apt to be a little untrustworthy. They are not always exactly fitted to the facts when they concern one of us who are now living. On the whole, he is near truth who will think or speak no evil of any one except on evidence that would convince a jury.

H. M.

September 1887.

EURIPIDES.

ALCESTIS.

ADMETUS and Alcestis were nearly related before their marriage. Æolus, the third in descent from Prometheus, was the father of Cretheus and Salmoneus; Æson the father of Jason, and Pheres the father of Admetus, were sons of Cretheus; Tyro, the daughter of Salmoneus, was by Neptune mother to Pelias, whose eldest daughter Alcestis was. The historian, who relates the arts by which Medea induced the daughters of Pelias to cut their father in pieces in expectation of seeing him restored to youth, tells us that Alcestis alone, through the tenderness of her filial piety, concurred not with her sisters in that fatal deed.—*Diodor. Sic.*

Pheres, now grown old, had resigned his kingdom to his son, and retired to his paternal estate, as was usual in those States where the sceptre was a spear. Admetus, on his first accession to the regal power, had kindly received Apollo, who was banished from heaven, and compelled for the space of a year to be a slave to a mortal; and the god, after he was restored to his celestial honours, did not forget that friendly house; but, when Admetus lay ill of a disease from which there was no recovery, prevailed upon the Fates to spare his life, on condition that some near relation would consent to die for him; but neither his father, nor his mother, nor any of his friends, was willing to pay this ransom. Alcestis, hearing this, generously devoted her own life to save her husband's.

Upon this wild and unpromising fable the poet has built this

pleasing drama. With a beautiful simplicity which characterizes the compositions of the ancients, and with a tenderness of which his own heart was peculiarly susceptible, he has given these scenes of domestic sensibility and distress their full effect. The interview indeed between Pheres and Admetus is harsh and indelicate; the Chorus acknowledges it to be so, and rebukes them both; but it is the natural result of the manners and ideas of the times, and therefore not offensive to an Athenian audience, though to us it must appear indecent: it shows what it was intended to show, the impassioned grief of Admetus, and in those times the passions spoke their own natural language without reserve; and, according to the ideas of those times, Pheres must be considered as guilty of the basest and most unnatural pusillanimity. Virgil, the most accurate observer of nature, gives even the unfeeling and savage Mezentius the softening of parental affection, and makes him exclaim, on the sight of his son, who died to save his father—

Tantane me tenuit vivendi, nate, voluptas,
 Ut pro me hostili paterer succedere dextræ
 Quem genui? tuane hæc genitor per vulnera servor,
 Morte tuâ viven?

The design of this tragedy is to recommend the virtue of hospitality, so sacred among the Grecians, and encouraged on political views, as well as to keep alive a generous and social benevolence: the refinement of a double moral ill agrees with the simplicity of the ancients.

The scene is in the vestibule of the house of Admetus.

Palæphatus has given this explanation of the fable: After the death of Pelias, Acastus pursued the unhappy daughters to punish them for destroying their father. Alcestis fled to Pheræ; Acastus demanded her of Admetus, who refused to give her up; he therefore advanced towards Pheræ with a great army, laying the country waste with fire and sword. Admetus marched out of the city to check these devastations, fell into an ambush, and was taken prisoner. Acastus threatened to put him to death. When Alcestis understood that the life of Admetus was in this danger on her account, she went voluntarily and surrendered herself to Acastus, who

discharged Admetus, and detained her in custody. At this critical time Hercules, on his expedition to Thrace, arrives at Pheræ, is hospitably entertained by Admetus, and, being informed of the distress and danger of Alcestis, immediately attacks Acastus, defeats his army, recovers the lady, and restores her to Admetus.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

APOLLO.	HERCULES.
ORCUS.	PHERES.
ALCESTIS.	ATTENDANTS.
ADMETUS.	CHORUS OF PHERÆANS.
EUMELUS.	

APOLLO.

THY royal house, Admetus, yet again
 I visit, where a slave among thy slaves
 Thy table, though a god, I deigned to praise ;
 To this compelled by Jove, who slew my son,
 The healing sage, launching against his breast
 The flaming thunder ; hence enraged I killed
 The Cyclops, that prepared his fiery bolts.
 For this a penal task my vengeful sire
 Assigned me, to a mortal doomed a slave
 Perforce ; I hither came, and fed his herds,
 Who friendly entertained me, guarding then,
 And to this day, his hospitable house.
 Holy the house, and holy is its lord,
 The son of Pheres ; him from death I saved
 The Fates beguiling ; for those ancient powers
 Assented that Admetus should escape
 Death then approaching, would some other go,
 Exchanged for him, to the dark realms beneath.
 His friends, his father, e'en the aged dame
 That gave him birth, were asked in vain ; not one

Was found, his wife except ; for him she willed
 To die, and view no more th' ethereal light.
 She in the house, supported in their arms,
 Now sighs out her last breath : for she must die.
 And this the fate-appointed day : for this,
 Dear as it is, I leave the friendly mansion,
 Lest there pollution find me. But I see
 Orcus advancing near, priest of the dead ;
 He to the house of Pluto will conduct her :
 Observant of the stated time he comes,
 True to the day when she perforce must die.

ORCUS, APOLLO.

ORC. Why art thou here? Why dost thou make this house
 Thy haunt, Apollo? Thou dost wrong, again,
 Th' infernal realms defrauding of their honours,
 Torn from them, or delayed. Sufficed it not
 T' have snatched Admetus from his doom, the Fates
 With fraudulent arts deluding? Now again,
 Armed with thy bow, why dost thou guard his wife,
 Daughter of Pelias, bound by solemn vow,
 Saving her husband's life, to die for him?

APOL. Fear not ; thy right I reverence and just claim.

ORC. What means thy bow, if thou revere the right ?

APOL. It ever is my wont to bear these arms.

ORC. Ay, and unjustly to defend this house.

APOL. I mourn th' afflictions of the man I love.

ORC. Wouldst thou defraud me of this second dead ?

APOL. The first by violence I took not from thee.

ORC. How on the earth then walks he now alive ?

APOL. Ransomed by her, for whom thou now art come.

ORC. And I will lead her to the realms below.

APOL. Take her : I know not if I might persuade thee.

ORC. Him, whom I ought, to seize ; for that prepared.

APOL. No : but t' involve in death ripe, lingering age.

ORC. Full well I understand thy speech and zeal.

APOL. May then Alcestis to that age be spared ?

ORC. No : honour, be assured, delights e'en me.

APOL. Thou canst but take a single life, no more,

ORC. Greater my glory when the youthful die.

APOL. More sumptuous obsequies await her age.

ORC. This were a law in favour of the rich.

APOL. What secret meaning hath thy wisdom here?

ORC. They with their wealth would purchase to die old.

APOL. Wilt thou not then indulge me with this grace?

ORC. Not I indeed : go to : thou knowest my manners.

APOL. Hostile to mortals, hateful to the gods.

ORC. Thou canst not have all that thou shouldst not have.

APOL. Yet, ruthless as thou art, soon wilt thou cease

This contest ; such a man to Pheres' house

Comes, to the frozen continent of Thrace

Sent by Eurystheus for the savage steeds

Yoked to the tyrant's car. He, in this house

A welcome guest t' Admetus, will by force

Take his wife from thee ; and no thanks from me

Will be thy due ; yet what I now entreat

Then thou wilt yield, and I shall hate thee still.

ORC. Say what thou wilt, nothing the more for that

Shalt thou from me obtain : this woman goes,

Be sure of that, to Pluto's dark domain.

I go, and with this sword assert my claim,

For sacred to th' infernal gods that head,

Whose hair is hallowed, by this charmed blade.

CHORUS.

1st SEMICHOR. Before this royal mansion all is still :

What may this melancholy silence mean?

2nd SEMICHOR. And not a friend is nigh, from whom to
learn

Whether we ought to wail the queen now dead,

Or lives she yet, yet sees the light of heaven,

For conjugal affection justly deemed

By me, by all, the noblest of her sex.

1st SEMICHOR. Hear you a cry, hear you a clash of hands
Within, or lamentations for the dead?

2nd SEMICHOR. Not e'en a servant holds his station here

Before the gates. O, 'midst this awful gloom
Appear, bright Pæan, and dispel the storm!

1st SEMICHOR. If she were dead, they would not be thus
silent;

Nor could the body vanish from the house.

2nd SEMICHOR. Whence is thy confidence? My fears o'er-
come me.

1st SEMICHOR. A wife so honoured would Admetus bear
Without due pomp in silence to her tomb?

2nd SEMICHOR. Nor vase of fountain water do I see
Before the doors, as custom claims, to bathe
The corse; and none hath on the portal placed
His locks, in solemn mourning for the dead
Usually shorn; nor does the younger train
Of females raise their sorrowing voices high.

1st SEMICHOR. Yet this the fatal day, when she must leave
The light of heaven.

2nd SEMICHOR. Why dost thou mention this?
O, thou hast touched my heart, hast touched my soul.

1st SEMICHOR. When on the good afflictions fall, to grieve
Becomes the man that hath been prized as honest.

Strophe.

In vain, our pious vows are vain :
Make we the flying sail our care,
The light bark bounding o'er the main,
To what new realm shall we repair?
To Lycia's hallowed strand?
Or where in solitary state,
'Midst thirsty deserts wild and wide
That close him round on ev'ry side,
Prophetic Ammon holds his awful seat?
What charm, what potent hand
Shall save her from the realms beneath?
He comes, the ruthless tyrant Death :
I have no priest, no altar more,
Whose aid I may implore.

Antistrophe.

O that the son of Phœbus now
 Lived to behold th' ethereal light !
 Then might she leave the seats below,
 Where Pluto reigns in cheerless night :
 The Sage's potent art,
 'Till thund'ring Jove's avenging power
 Hurl'd his red thunders at his breast,
 Could from the yawning gulf releast
 To the sweet light of life the dead restore.
 Who now shall aid impart ?
 To ev'ry god at ev'ry shrine.
 The king hath paid the rites divine :
 But vain his vows, his pious care ;
 And ours is dark despair.

CHORUS, FEMALE ATTENDANT.

CHOR. But of the female train one from the house
 Comes bathed in tears : what tidings shall I hear ?
 To weep, if aught of ill befalls thy lords,
 Becomes thee : I would know if yet she lives,
 Or sinks beneath the ruthless power of death.

ATT. As living I may speak of her, and dead.

CHOR. Living and dead at once, how may that be ?

ATT. E'en now she sinks in death, and breathes her last.

CHOR. Unhappy king, of what a wife bereft !

ATT. Nor knows our lord his suffering, ere it comes.

CHOR. Is there no hope then yet to save her life ?

ATT. Th' inevitable day of fate is come.

CHOR. Have you prepared what the sad case requires ?

ATT. Each honour that may grace her obsequies.

CHOR. Illustrious in her death, the best of wives :
 The sun in his wide course sees not her equal.

ATT. The best of wives indeed ; who will gainsay it ?
 What could the brightest pattern of her sex
 Do more ? What greater proof give of the honour

She bears her husband, than a ready will
To die for him ! This all the city knows.
How in the house she hath demeaned herself
Will claim thy admiration. When she knew
The destined day was come, in fountain water
She bathed her lily-tinctured limbs, then took
From her rich chests of odorous cedar formed
A splendid robe, and her most radiant dress ;
Thus gorgeously arrayed she stood before
The hallowed flames, and thus addressed her prayer :
“ O queen, I go to the infernal shades,
Yet, ere I go, with reverence let me breathe
My last request—Protect my orphan children,
Make my son happy with the wife he loves,
And wed my daughter to a noble husband :
Nor let them, like their mother, to the tomb
Untimely sink, but in their native land
Be blest through lengthened life to honoured age.”
Then to each altar in the royal house
She went, and crowned it, and addressed her vows,
Plucking the myrtle bough : nor tear, nor sigh
Came from her, neither did th’ approaching ill
Change the fresh beauties of her vermeil cheek.
Her chamber then she visits, and her bed ;
There her tears flowed, and thus she spoke : “ O bed,
To which my wedded lord, for whom I die,
Led me a virgin bride, farewell ! To thee
No blame do I impute, for me alone
Hast thou destroyed. Disdaining to betray
Thee, and my lord, I die. To thee shall come
Some other woman, not more chaste, perchance
More happy.” As she lay, she kissed the couch,
And bathed it with a flood of tears : that passed,
She left her chamber, then returned, and oft
She left it, oft returned, and on the couch
Fondly, each time she entered, cast herself.
Her children, as they hung upon her robes
Weeping, she raised, and clasped them to her breast
Each after each, as now about to die.

Each servant through the house burst into tears
 In pity of their mistress ; she to each
 Stretched her right hand ; nor was there one so mean
 To whom she spoke not, and admitted him
 To speak to her again. Within the house
 These are our griefs. Admetus must have died,
 Have perished ; but escaping is immersed
 In sorrows, which his heart shall ne'er forget.

CHOR. Well may the groan burst from him, thus to lose
 A wife with every excellence adorned.

ATT. He weeps indeed, and in his arms supports
 His much-loved wife, entreats her not to leave him,
 Asking impossibilities. She wastes
 And fades with her disease ; her languid limbs
 Supporting on his hand, yet while some breath
 Of life remains she wishes to behold
 The radiance of the sun, 'tis her last view,
 As never more to see his golden orb.
 I go to tell them thou art here : not all
 Bear to their lords that firm unshaken faith
 T' attend them in their ills ; but thou of old
 Hast to this house approved thyself a friend.

CHOR. Supreme of gods, is there no remedy
 'To these afflictions, from the storms of fate
 No refuge to our lords ? Some means of safety
 Hast thou assigned ? Or must these locks be shorn,
 And sorrow robe me in her sable weeds ?

ATT. Too plain, my friends, too plain : yet to the gods
 Breathe we our vows, for great their power to save.
 O royal Pæan, for Admetus' ills
 Find some relief ; assist him, O assist him !
 As thou before didst save him, save him now
 From death ; repress the tyrant's murd'rous haste !

CHOR. Alas, alas ! Woe, woe is me ! Thou son
 Of Pheres, wilt thou bear to live, deprived
 Of such a wife ? Will not despair unsheath
 The self-destroying sword ? Will it not find
 Some means of violent death ? This day thy wife—
 Dear should I say ? nay, dearest to thy soul—

Shalt thou see dead. But she comes forth, and with her
 Her husband. Groan, thou land of Pheres, raise
 The cry of mourning ; for the best of women
 Wastes with disease, and drooping to the earth
 Sinks to th' infernal Pluto's dreary realms.
 Never will I pronounce the nuptial state
 To pleasure more allied than grief : of old
 This often have I noted, chiefly now
 Viewing my king's affliction, who, bereft
 Of this sweet excellence, is doomed to pass
 A solitary life estranged from joy.

ALCESTIS, ADMETUS, EUMELUS, CHORUS.

ALC. Thou sun, and thou fair light of day, ye clouds
 That in quick eddies whirl along the sky !

ADM. Sees thee and me most wretched, yet in nought
 Offending 'gainst the gods that thou shouldst die.

ALC. O earth, ye tow'ring roofs, thou bridal bed
 Raised in Iolcos, my paternal seat !

ADM. O thou poor sufferer, raise thee, leave me not ;
 Entreat the powerful gods to pity thee.

ALC. I see the two-oared boat, the Stygian barge ;
 And he, that wafts the dead, grasps in his hand
 His pole, and calls me, " Why dost thou delay ?
 Haste thee ; thou lingerest ; all is ready here.
 Charon impatient speeds me to begone."

ADM. A melancholy voyage this to me.
 O thou unhappy, what a fate is ours !

ALC. He drags me, some one drags me to the gates
 That close upon the dead ; dost thou not see him,
 How stern he frowns beneath his gloomy brows,
 Th' impetuous Pluto ? What wouldst thou with me ?
 Off, let me go ! Ah, what a dreary path,
 Wretched, most wretched, must I downwards tread !

ADM. To thy friends mournful, most to me, and these
 Thy children, who with me this sorrow share.

ALC. No longer hold me up, hold me no longer ;
 Here lay me down : I have not strength to stand :

Death is hard by, dark night creeps o'er my eyes.
 My children, O my children, now no more,
 Your mother is no more : farewell ! May you
 More happy see the golden light of heaven !

ADM. Ah, what a mournful word is this ! To me
 Than any death more painful. By the gods,
 Forsake me not. Shouldst thou be taken from me,
 I were no more ; in thee I live ; thy love,
 Thy sweet society my soul reveres.

ALC. Thou seest, Admetus, what to me the Fates
 Assign ; yet, ere I die, I wish to tell thee
 What lies most near my heart. I honoured thee,
 And in exchange for thine my forfeit life
 Devoted ; now I die for thee, though free
 Not to have died, but from Thessalia's chiefs
 Preferring whom I pleased in royal state
 To have lived happy here : I had no will
 To live bereft of thee with these poor orphans ;
 I die without reluctance, though the gifts
 Of youth are mine to make life grateful to me.
 Yet he that gave thee birth, and she that bore thee,
 Deserted thee, though well it had beseemed them
 With honour to have died for thee, t' have saved
 Their son with honour, glorious in their death.
 They had no child but thee, they had no hope
 Of other offspring shouldst thou die ; and I
 Might thus have lived, thou mightst have lived, till age
 Crept slowly on, nor wouldst thou heave the sigh
 Thus of thy wife deprived, nor train alone
 Thy orphan children. But some god appointed
 It should be thus : thus be it. Thou to me
 Requite this kindness ; never shall I ask
 An equal retribution, nothing bears
 A value high as life : yet my request
 Is just, thou wilt confess it ; for thy love
 To these our children equals mine, thy soul
 If wisdom tempers. In their mother's house
 Let them be lords : wed not again, to set
 A stepdame o'er my children, some base woman

That wants my virtues ; she through jealousy
 Will work against their lives, because to thee
 I bore them : do not this, I beg thee do not ;
 For to the offspring of a former bed
 A stepdame comes sharp as a serpent's tooth.
 My son, that holds endearing converse with thee,
 Hath in his father a secure protection.
 But who, my daughter, shall with honour guide
 Thy virgin years ? What woman shalt thou find,
 New-wedded to thy father, whose vile arts
 Will not with slanderous falsehoods taint thy name,
 And blast thy nuptials in youth's freshest bloom
 For never shall thy mother see thee led
 A bride, nor at thy throes speak comfort to thee,
 Then present when a mother's tenderness
 Is most alive : for I must die ; the ill
 Waits not a day, but quickly shall I be
 Numbered amongst the dead. Farewell, be happy
 And thou, my husband, mayst with honour boast
 Thou hast been wedded to a virtuous wife ;
 And you, my children, glory in your mother.

CHOR. Fear not : I boldly pledge my faith that this
 He will perform, if reason holds her seat.

ADM. This shall be done, let not such fears disturb thee,
 It shall be done ; for living thou wast mine,
 And dead thou only shalt be called my wife.
 Never in thy dear place Thessalian bride
 Shall call me husband : no, nor other woman,
 Though from a line of ancient kings she draws
 Her noble blood, and boasts each peerless grace
 Of native beauty. I am blest with children,
 Nor wish I more ; in these I pray the gods
 I may have joy, since all my joy in thee
 Is lost. This mourning not one single year,
 But to my life's last period, shall be borne.
 How hateful are my parents ! for their words
 Alone were friendly, not their deeds ; whilst thou,
 Paying the dearest forfeit for my life,
 Hast saved me. Shall I ever cease to mourn,

Deprived of such a wife? Hence I renounce
 The feast, the cheerful guest, the flow'ry wreath,
 And song that used to echo through my house :
 For never will I touch the lyre again,
 Nor to the Libyan flute's sweet measures raise
 My voice : with thee all my delights are dead.
 Thy beauteous figure, by the artist's hand
 Skilfully wrought, shall in my bed be laid ;
 By that reclining, I will clasp it to me,
 And call it by thy name, and think I hold
 My dear wife in my arms, and have her yet,
 Though now no more I have her : cold delight
 I ween ; yet thus th' affliction of my soul
 Shall I relieve, and visiting my dreams
 Shalt thou delight me ; for to see a friend
 Is grateful to the soul, come when he will,
 Though an unreal vision of the night.
 Had I the voice of Orpheus, and his skill
 Of power to soothe with my melodious strains
 The daughter of bright Ceres, or her husband,
 That from their realms I might receive thee back,
 I would go down ; nor should th' infernal dog,
 Nor the stern Charon, sitting at his oar
 To waft the dead, restrain me, till thy life
 I had restored to the fair light of day.
 But there await me till I die ; prepare
 A mansion for me, as again with me
 To dwell ; for in thy tomb will I be laid
 In the same cedar, by thy side composed ;
 For ev'n in death I will not be disjoined
 From thee, who hast alone been faithful to me.

CHOR. For her dear sake thy sorrows will I share
 As friend with friend ; and she is worthy of it.

ALC. You hear, my children, what your father's words
 Have promised, not to wed another woman
 To your discomfort, nor dishonour me.

ADM. I now repeat it ; firm shall be my faith.

ALC. On this, receive thy children from my hands.

ADM. A much-loved gift, and from a much-loved hand.

ALC. Be now, instead of me, a mother to them.

ADM. If they lose thee, it must indeed be so.

ALC. When I should live, I sink among the dead.

ADM. Ah me, what shall I do bereft of thee!

ALC. Time will abate thy grief, the dead is nothing.

ADM. O lead me, by the gods, lead me down with thee.

ALC. Enough, it is enough that I die for thee.

ADM. O fate, of what a wife dost thou deprive me!

ALC. A heavy weight hangs on my darkened eye.

ADM. If thou forsake me, I am lost indeed.

ALC. As one that is no more I now am nothing.

ADM. Ah, raise thy face : do not forsake thy children.

ALC. It must be so perforce : farewell, my children!

ADM. Look on them, but a look!

ALC. I am no more.

ADM. How dost thou? Wilt thou leave us then?

ALC. Farewell!

ADM. And what a wretch, what a lost wretch am I!

CHOR. She's gone; thy wife, Admetus, is no more.

EUM. O my unhappy fate!

My mother sinks to the dark realms of night,

Nor longer views this golden light;

But to the ills of life exposed

Leaves my poor orphan state.

Her eyes, my father, see, her eyes are closed,

And her hand nerveless falls.

Yet hear me, O my mother, hear my cries,

It is thy son that calls,

Who prostrate on the earth breathes on thy lips his sighs.

ADM. On one that hears not, sees not : I and you

Must bend beneath affliction's heaviest load.

EUM. Ah, she hath left my youth :

My mother, my dear mother, is no more,

Left me my sufferings to deplore ;

Who shall my sorrows soothe ?

Thou too, my sister, thy full share shalt know

Of grief, thy heart to rend.

Vain, O my father, vain thy nuptial vows,

Brought to this speedy end ;
 For, when my mother died, in ruin sunk thy house.

CHOR. Admetus, thou perforce must bear these ills :
 Thou'rt not the first, nor shalt thou be the last
 Of mortal men, to lose a virtuous wife :
 For know, death is a debt we all must pay.

ADM. I know it well ; not unawares this ill
 Falls on me ; I foresaw, and mourned it long.
 But I will bear the body hence ; attend :
 And, whilst you wait, raise with alternate voice
 The pæan to the ruthless god that rules
 Below : and through my realms of Thessaly
 I give command that all in solemn grief
 For this dear woman shear their locks, and wear
 The sable garb of mourning ; from your steeds,
 Whether in pairs they whirl the car, or bear
 Single the rider's rein, their waving manes
 Cut close ; nor through the city be the sound
 Of flute or lyre for twelve revolving moons.
 Never shall I entomb one dearer to me,
 Or one more kind : these honours from my hands
 She merits, for she only died for me.

Strophe 1.

Immortal bliss be thine,
 Daughter of Pelias, in the realms below,
 Immortal pleasures round thee flow,
 Though never there the sun's bright beams shall shine.
 Be the black-browed Pluto told,
 And the Stygian boatman old,
 Whose rude hands grasp the oar, the rudder guide,
 The dead conveying o'er the tide,
 Let him be told, so rich a freight before
 His light skiff never bore ;
 Tell him that o'er the joyless lakes
 The noblest of her sex her dreary passage takes.

Strophe 2.

Thy praise the bards shall tell,
 When to their hymning voice the echo rings,
 Or when they sweep the solemn strings,
 And wake to rapture the seven-chorded shell,
 Or in Sparta's jocund bowers,
 Circling when the vernal hours
 Bring the Carnean feast, whilst through the night
 Full-orbed the high moon rolls her light ;
 Or where rich Athens proudly elevate
 Shows her magnificent state :
 Their voice thy glorious death shall raise,
 And swell th' enraptured strain to celebrate thy praise.

Antistrophe 1.

O that I had the power,
 Could I but bring thee from the shades of night
 Again to view this golden light,
 To leave that boat, to leave that dreary shore,
 Where Cocytus deep and wide
 Rolls along his sullen tide !
 For thou, O best of women, thou alone
 For thy lord's life daredst give thy own.
 Light lie the earth upon that gentle breast,
 And be thou ever blest !
 But should he choose to wed again,
 Mine and thy children's hearts would hold him in disdain.

Antistrophe 2.

When, to avert his doom,
 His mother in the earth refused to lie ;
 Nor would his ancient father die
 To save his son from an untimely tomb ;
 Though the hand of time had spread
 Hoar hairs o'er each aged head ;
 In youth's fresh bloom, in beauty's radiant glow,
 The darksome way thou daredst to go,

And for thy youthful lord's to give thy life.
 Be mine so true a wife ;
 'Though rare the lot : then should I prove
 Th' indissoluble bond of faithfulness and love.

HERCULES, CHORUS.

HERC. Ye strangers, citizens of Pheræ, say
 If I shall find Admetus in the house.

CHOR. There is the son of Pheres, Hercules.
 But what occasion, tell us, brought thee hither
 To Thessaly ; to Pheræ why this visit ?

HERC. A toil imposed by the Tiryinthian king.

CHOR. And whither roving ? on what journey bound ?

HERC. For the four steeds that whirl the Thracian's car.

CHOR. How to be won ; art thou a stranger there ?

HERC. A stranger, never on Bistonian ground.

CHOR. These horses are not won without strong contest.

HERC. The toil, whate'er it be, I could not shun.

CHOR. He must be slain, or death awaits thee there.

HERC. Not the first contest this I have essayed.

CHOR. Shouldst thou o'ercome their lord, what is the prize ?

HERC. His coursers to Eurystheus I shall lead.

CHOR. No slight task in their mouths to place the curb.

HERC. I shall, though from their nostrils they breathe fire.

CHOR. With their fierce jaws they rend the flesh of men.

HERC. So feeds the mountain savage, not the horse.

CHOR. Their mangers shalt thou see all stained with blood.

HERC. From whom does he that bred them draw his race ?

CHOR. From Mars this king of golden-shielded Thrace.

HERC. How is this toil assigned me by my fate,
 In enterprise so hazardous and high
 Engaged, that always with the sons of Mars
 I must join battle ? With Lycaon first,
 With Cygnus next ; now with these furious steeds
 And their proud lord another contest waits me :
 But never shall Alcmena's son be seen
 To tremble at the fierceness of a foe.

CHOR. But, see, the sceptred ruler of this land,
 Admetus, from his house advances to thee.

ADMETUS, HERCULES, CHORUS.

ADM. Hail, son of Jove, of Perseus' noble blood.

HERC. Hail thou, Admetus, king of Thessaly.

ADM. I am no stranger to thy friendly wishes.

HERC. Why are thy locks in sign of mourning shorn?

ADM. 'Tis for one dead, whom I must this day bury.

HERC. The god avert thy mourning for a child!

ADM. My children, what I had, live in my house.

HERC. Thy aged father, haply he is gone.

ADM. My father lives, and she that bore me lives.

HERC. Lies then thy wife Alcestis 'mongst the dead?

ADM. Of her I have in double wise to speak.

HERC. As of the living speakst thou, or the dead?

ADM. She is, and is no more: this grief afflicts me.

HERC. This gives no information, dark thy words.

ADM. Knowst thou not then the destiny assigned her?

HERC. I know that she submits to die for thee.

ADM. To this assenting is she not no more?

HERC. Lament her not too soon; await the time.

ADM. She's dead; one soon to die is now no more.

HERC. It differs wide to be, or not to be.

ADM. Such are thy sentiments, far other mine.

HERC. But wherefore are thy tears? What friend is dead?

ADM. A woman; of a woman made I mention.

HERC. Of foreign birth, or one allied to thee.

ADM. Of foreign birth, but to my house most dear.

HERC. How in thy house then did she chance to die?

ADM. Her father dead, she came an orphan hither.

HERC. Would I had found thee with no grief oppressed.

ADM. With what intent dost thou express thee thus?

HERC. To seek some other hospitable hearth.

ADM. Not so, O king; come not so great an ill.

HERC. To those that mourn a guest is troublesome.

ADM. Dead are the dead: but enter thou my house.

HERC. Shame that with those who weep a guest should feast.

ADM. We have apartments separate, to receive thee.

HERC. Permit me to depart, much will I thank thee.

ADM. It must not be; no, to another house

Thou must not turn aside. Go thou before;
 Ope those apartments of the house which bear
 A different aspect ; give command to those
 Whose charge it is to spread the plenteous table,
 And bar the doors between : the voice of woe
 Unseemly heard afflicts the feasting guest.

CHOR. What wouldst thou do, Admetus? Such a grief
 Now lying heavy on thee, canst thou bear
 T' admit a guest? Doth this bespeak thee wise?

ADM. If from my house or city I should drive
 A coming guest, wouldst thou commend me more?
 Thou wouldst not : my affliction would not thus
 Be less, but more unhospitable I ;
 And to my former ills this further ill

Be added, I should hear my mansion called
 The stranger-hating house. Besides, to me
 His hospitable doors are always open,
 Whene'er I tread the thirsty soil of Argos.

CHOR. Why didst thou then conceal thy present grief,
 A stranger friend arriving, as thou sayst?

ADM. My gate he would not enter, had he known
 Of my affliction aught : yet acting thus
 Some may perchance deem me unwise, nor hold me
 Worthy of praise ; yet never shall my house
 Know to dishonour or reject a guest.

CHORUS.

Strophe i.

Yes, liberal house, with princely state
 To many a stranger, many a guest
 Oft hast thou oped thy friendly gate,
 Oft spread the hospitable feast.
 Beneath thy roof Apollo deigned to dwell,
 Here strung his silver-sounding shell,
 And mixing with thy menial train
 Deigned to be called the shepherd of the plain :

And as he drove his flocks along,
 Whether the winding vale they rove,
 Or linger in the upland grove,
 He tuned the pastoral pipe or rural song.

Strophe 2.

Delighted with thy tuneful lay
 No more the savage thirsts for blood ;
 Amidst thy flocks in harmless play
 Wantons the lynx's spotted brood ;
 Pleased from his lair on Othrys' rugged brow
 The lion seeks the vale below ;
 Whilst to thy lyre's melodious sound
 The dappled hinds in sportive measures bound ;
 And as the vocal echo rings,
 Lightly their nimble feet they ply,
 Leaving their pine-clad forests high,
 Charmed with the sweet notes of thy gladdening strings.

Antistrophe 1.

Hence is thy house, Admetus, graced
 With all that Plenty's hand bestows,
 Near the sweet-streaming current placed
 That from the lake of Bœbia flows.
 Far to the west extends the wide domain,
 Rich-pastured mead and cultured plain ;
 Its bound, the dark Molossian air,
 Where the Sun stations his unharnessed car,
 And stretching to his eastern ray,
 Where Pelion rising in his pride
 Frowns o'er th' Ægean's portless tide,
 Reaches from sea to sea thy ample sway.

Antistrophe 2.

Yet wilt thou open thy gate e'en now,
 E'en now wilt thou receive this guest :
 Though from thine eye the warm tear flow,
 Though sorrow rend thy suffering breast :

Sad tribute to thy wife, who knew in death
 Lamented lies thy roof beneath.
 But Nature thus her laws decreed,
 The generous mind is prompt to generous deed ;
 For all the power of wisdom lies
 Fixed in the righteous bosom : hence
 My soul assumes this confidence,
 Fair to the virtuous shall Success arise.

ADMETUS, CHORUS.

ADM. Ye citizens of Pheræ, present here,
 Benevolent to me, my dead adorned
 With every honour, the attendant train
 Are bearing to the tomb and funeral pyre.
 Do you, for ancient usage so requires,
 Address her as she takes her last sad way.

CHOR. Thy father Pheres ! See, his aged foot
 Advances ; his attendants in their hands
 Bear gorgeous presents, honours to the dead.

PHERES, ADMETUS, CHORUS.

PHER. I come, my son, joint sufferer in thy griefs ;
 For thou hast lost a good and virtuous wife,
 None will gainsay it ; but thou must perforce
 Endure this, though severe. These ornaments
 Receive, and let her go beneath the earth :
 These honours are her due, since for thy life
 She died, my son ; nor would she I should be
 Childless, nor suffered me bereft of thee
 To waste in grief my sad remains of life.
 The life of all her sex hath she adorned
 With added lustre by this generous deed.
 O thou, that hast preserved my son, and raised
 Our sinking glories, hail ! E'en in the house
 Of Pluto be thou blest ! Such marriages
 Pronounce I good ; others of little worth.

ADM. Thou comest not to these obsequies by me

Invited, nor thy presence do I deem
Friendly. She never in thy ornaments
Shall be arrayed, nor wants she aught of thine
To grace her funeral rites. Then was the time
To show thy social sorrow, when my life
The Fates demanded : thou couldst stand aloof,
Old as thou art, and give a younger up
To die ; and wouldst thou now bewail her death ?
Art thou my father ? No ; nor she, who says
She brought me forth, my mother, though so called ;
But the base offspring of some slave thy wife
Stole me, and put me to her breast. Thy deeds
Show what thou art by plain and evident proof :
And never can I deem myself thy son,
Who passest all in mean and abject spirit.
At such an age, just trembling on the verge
Of life, that wouldst not—nay, thou daredst not—die
For thine own son : but you could suffer her,
Though sprung from foreign blood. With justice then
Her only as my father must I deem,
Her only as my mother ; yet this course
Mightst thou have run with glory, for thy son
Daring to die ; brief was the space of life
That could remain to thee. I then had lived
My destined time ; she too had lived, nor thus
Of her forsaken should I wail my loss.
Yet all that makes man happy hadst thou proved,
Blest through thy life : in royalty thy youth
Grew up ; I was thy son t' inherit from thee
Thy treasures, that not childless hadst thou died,
Leaving thy desolated house a prey
To plundering strangers. Neither canst thou say
Thou gavest me up to death as one that held
Thy age in rude contempt : I honoured thee
With holy reverence, requited thus
By thee and her that bore me. Other sons
Wilt thou not therefore speed thee to beget,
To cherish thy old age, to grace thee dead
With sumptuous vest, and lay thee in the tomb ?

That office never shall my hand perform,
For, far as in thee lay, I died ; if yet
I view this light, fortune presenting me
Other deliverer, his son I am,
With pious fondness to support his age.
Unmeaning is the old man's wish to die,
Of age complaining and life's lengthened course ;
For, at th' advance of death, none has the will
To die : old age is no more grievous to them.

CHOR. Forbear ; enough the present weight of woe.
My son, exasperate not a father's mind.

PHER. Me as some worthless Lydian dost thou rate,
My son, or Phrygian slave bought with thy gold ?
Dost thou not know I am Thessalian born,
Of a Thessalian father, truly free ?
Opprobrious are thy words, reviling me
With youthful insolence, not quitted so.
I gave thee birth, thence lord of my fair house ;
I gave thee nurture, that indeed I owed thee,
But not to die for thee : such law from nature
Received I not, that fathers for their sons
Should die, nor does Greece know it. For thyself,
Whether misfortune press thee, or thy state
Be happier, thou wast born : thou hast from me
Whate'er behoves thee : o'er an ample realm
Thou now art king, and I shall leave thee more,
A large extent of lands ; for from my father
These I received. In what then have I wronged thee ?
Or what deprived thee ? Die not thou for me,
Nor I for thee. Is it to thee a joy
To view the light of heaven ? and dost thou think
Thy father joys not in it ? Long I deem
The time below ? But little is the space
Of life, yet pleasant. Thou, devoid of shame,
Hast struggled not to die, and thou dost live
Passing the bounds of life assigned by fate,
By killing her. My mean and abject spirit
Thou dost rebuke, O thou most timid wretch,
Vanquished e'en by a woman, who for thee,

Her young and beauteous husband, freely died.
 A fine device that thou mightst never die,
 Couldst thou persuade who at the time might be
 Thy wife to die for thee ; yet canst thou load
 Thy friends with vile reproach, if they decline
 To do it, base and timid as thou art.
 But hold thy peace ; and think, if life be dear
 To thee, it must be dear to all. On us,
 If thou wilt throw reproaches, thou shalt hear
 Enough of thy ill deeds, and nothing false.

CHOR. Too much of ill already hath been spoken :
 Forbear, old man, nor thus revile thy son.

ADM. Say what thou wilt, I have declared my thoughts :
 But if it gives thee pain to hear the truth,
 Much it behoved thee not to wrong me thus.

PHER. Had I died for thee, greater werè the wrong.

ADM. Is death alike then to the young and old ?

PHER. With one life ought we live, and not with two.

ADM. Mayst thou then live a greater age than Jove !

PHER. And dost thou, nothing injured, curse thy parents ?

ADM. I saw thee fondly coveting long life.

PHER. Her, that died for thee, wilt thou not entomb ?

ADM. These are the tokens of thy abject spirit.

PHER. By us she died not, that thou wilt not say.

ADM. Ah, mayst thou some time come to want my aid !

PHER. Wed many wives, that more may die for thee.

ADM. On thee be that reproach, thou wouldst not die.

PHER. Sweet is this light of heaven, sweet is this light.

ADM. Base is thy thought, unworthy of a man.

PHER. Would it not joy thee to entomb my age ?

ADM. Die when thou wilt, inglorious wilt thou die.

PHER. An ill report will not affect me dead.

ADM. Alas, alas, how shameless is old age !

PHER. She was not shameless, but thou foundst her mad.

ADM. Begone, and suffer me t' entomb the dead.

PHER. I go : thou shalt entomb her, as thyself
 Her murderer. Look for vengeance from her friends.
 Acastus is no man, if his hands fail
 Dearly t' avenge on thee his sister's blood.

ADM. Why get thee gone, thou and thy worthy wife ;
 Grow old together, as you well deserve,
 Childless, your son yet living ; never more
 Meet me beneath this roof. Go ! Were it decent
 To interdict thee by the herald's voice,
 I would forbid thee ever set thy foot
 Within this mansion of thy ancestors.
 But let us go, since we must bear our ill,
 And place her body on the funeral pyre.

CHOR. O thou unhappy, nobly daring woman,
 Most generous, brightest excellence, farewell !
 Courteous my Hermes and th' infernal king
 Receive thee : in those realms if aught of grace
 Awaits the virtuous, be those honours thine,
 And be thy seat nigh Pluto's royal bride.

ATT. To many a guest ere now, from various realms
 Arriving, in this mansion have I spread
 The hospitable feast ; but at this hearth
 A viler than this stranger never shared
 The bounty of Admetus : though he saw
 My lord oppressed with grief, it checked him not,
 He boldly entered ; nor with sober cheer
 Took the refreshment offered, though he knew
 Th' affliction of the house. If what he would
 We brought not on the instant, he enforced
 His harsh commands ; and, grasping in his hands
 A goblet wreathed with ivy, filled it high
 With the grape's purple juice, and quaffed it off
 Untempered, till the glowing wine inflamed him ;
 Then, binding round his head a myrtle wreath,
 Howls dismal discord ; two displeasing strains
 We heard, his harsh notes, who in nought revered
 Th' afflictions of Admetus, and the voice
 Of sorrow through the family that wept
 Our mistress ; yet our tearful eyes we showed not,
 Admetus so commanded, to the guest.
 My office bids me wait, and in the house
 Receive this stranger, some designing knave,
 Or ruffian robber : she meantime is borne

Out of the house, nor did I follow her,
 Nor stretched my hand lamenting my lost mistress :
 She was a mother to me, and to all
 My fellow-servants ; from a thousand ills
 She saved us, with her gentleness appeasing
 Our lord when angry : justly do I hate
 This stranger then, who came amidst our grief.

HERCULES, ATTENDANT.

HERC. You fellow, why that grave and thoughtful look ?
 Ill it becomes a servant's countenance
 To frown on strangers, whom he should receive
 With cheerfulness. A good friend of thy lord
 Is present : all the welcome he can get
 From thee, a sullen and contracted brow,
 Mourning a loss that touches not this house.
 Come hither, that thou mayst be wiser, friend ;
 Knowst thou the nature of all mortal things ?
 Not thou, I ween ; how shouldst thou ? Hear from me :
 By all of human race death is a debt
 That must be paid, and none of mortal men
 Knows whether till to-morrow life's short space
 Shall be extended : such the dark events
 Of fortune ; never to be learned, nor traced
 By any skill. Instructed thus by me
 Bid pleasure welcome, drink, the life allowed
 From day to day esteem thine own, all else
 Fortune's. To Venus chief address thy vows—
 Of all the heavenly powers she, gentle queen,
 Kindest to man, and sweetest : all besides
 Reckless let pass, and listen to my words,
 If thou seest reason in them, as I think
 Thou dost : then bid excessive grief farewell,
 And drink with us ; master these present ills,
 And bind thy brows with garlands ; well I know
 The circling bowl will waft thy spirits to bliss,
 Now sunk in dark and sullen melancholy.
 Since we are mortal, be our minds intent

On mortal things ; to all the grave, whose brows
With cares are furrowed, let me judge for thee,
Life is no life, but a calamity.

ATT. These things we know ; but what becomes us now
Ill suits with festal revelry and mirth.

HERC. A woman dies, one unrelated ; check
Thy grief : the lords of this fair mansion live.

ATT. Live ! Knowst thou not th' afflictions of this house ?

HERC. Unless thy lord in something hath deceived me.

ATT. Liberal his mind, too liberal to the guest.

HERC. No : for a stranger dead he hath done well.

ATT. No stranger, but a near domestic loss.

HERC. Is it some sorrow which he told not me ?

ATT. Go thou with joy ; ours are our lord's afflictions.

HERC. These are not words that speak a foreign loss.

ATT. If such, thy revelry had not displeased me.

HERC. Then by my friendly host I much am wronged.

ATT. Thy coming was unseasonable ; this house
Wanted no guest : thou seest our locks all shorn,
Our grief and sable vests.

HERC. Who then is dead ?
One of his children, or his aged father ?

ATT. His wife Alcestis, stranger, is no more.

HERC. What sayst thou ? And e'en so could you receive me ?

ATT. It shamed him to reject thee from his house.

HERC. O wretch, of what a wife art thou bereft !

ATT. Not she alone, we all are lost with her.

HERC. I might have thought this when I saw his eye
Flowing with tears, his locks shorn off, and grief
Marked on his face : but he persuaded me,
Saying that one of foreign birth he mourned,
And bore her to the tomb : unwillingly
Ent'ring these gates I feasted in the house,
My hospitable friend with such a grief
Oppressed ; nay more, I revelled, and my head
With garlands shaded : but the fault was thine,
Who didst not tell me that a woe like this
Thy house afflicted. But inform me where
She is interred ; where shall I find her tomb ?

ATT. Right in the way that to Larissa leads
Without the city wilt thou find her tomb.

HERC. Now my firm heart, and thou, my daring soul,
Show what a son the daughter of Electryon,
Alcmena of Tirynthia, bore to Jove.
This lady, new in death, behoves me save,
And, to Admetus rend'ring grateful service,
Restore his lost Alcestis to his house.
This sable-vested tyrant of the dead
My eye shall watch, not without hope to find him
Drinking th' oblations nigh the tomb. If once
Seen from my secret stand I rush upon him,
These arms shall grasp him till his panting sides
Labour for breath; and who shall force him from me,
Till he gives back this woman? Should I fail
To seize him there, as coming not to taste
The spilt blood's thickening foam, I will descend
To the drear house of Pluto and his queen,
Which the sun never cheers, and beg her thence,
Assured that I shall lead her back, and place her
In my friend's hands, whose hospitable heart
Received me in his house, nor made excuse,
Though pierced with such a grief; this he concealed
Through generous thought and reverence to his friend.
Who in Thessalia bears a warmer love
To strangers? Who, through all the realms of Greece?
It never shall be said this generous man
Received in me a base and worthless wretch.

ADMETUS, CHORUS.

ADM. Ah me! Ah me! How mournful this approach!
How hateful to my sight this widowed house!
Ah, whither shall I go? where shall I rest?
What shall I say? or what forbear to say?
How may I sink beneath this weight of woe?
To misery was I born, wretch that I am;
I envy now the dead, I long for them,
Long to repose me in that house. No more

With pleasure shall I view the sun's fair beams,
 No more with pleasure walk upon this earth :
 So dear an hostage death has rent from me,
 And yielded to th' infernal king his prey.

CHOR. Go forward, yet go forward ; to thy house
 Retire.

ADM. Ah me !

CHOR. Thy sufferings do indeed
 Demand these groans.

ADM. O miserable me !

CHOR. Thy steps are set in sorrow, well I know,
 But all thy sorrow nought avails the dead.

ADM. Wretch that I am !

CHOR. To see thy wife no more,
 No more to see her face, is grief indeed.

ADM. O, thou hast touched on that which deepest wounds
 My mind : what greater ill can fall on man
 Than of a faithful wife to be deprived ?
 O that I ne'er had wedded, in the house
 Had ne'er dwelt with her ! The unmarried state
 I envy, and deem those supremely blest
 Who have no children ; in one single life
 To mourn is pain that may be well endured :
 To see our children wasting with disease,
 To see death ravaging our nuptial bed,
 This is not to be borne, when we might pass
 Our lives without a child, without a wife.

CHOR. Fate comes, resistless Fate.

ADM. Unhappy me !

CHOR. But to thy sorrows wilt thou put no bounds ?

ADM. Woe, woe, woe, woe !

CHOR. A ponderous weight indeed
 To bear, yet bear them. Thou art not the first
 That lost a wife : misery, in different forms
 To different men appearing, seizes all.

ADM. Ye lasting griefs, ye sorrows for our friends
 Beneath the earth ! Ah, why did ye restrain me ?
 I would have cast myself into the tomb,
 The gaping tomb, and lain in death with her,

The dearest, best of women ; there for one
Pluto had coupled two most faithful souls,
Together passing o'er th' infernal lake.

CHOR. I had a friend, by birth allied to me,
Whose son, and such a son as claimed his tears,
Died in the prime of youth, his only child ;
Yet with the firmness of a man he bore
His grief, though childless, and declining age
Led him with hasty steps to hoary hairs.

ADM. Thou goodly mansion, how shall I endure
To enter thee, how dwell beneath thy roof,
My state thus sunk ! Ah me, how changed from that,
When 'midst the pines of Pelion blazing round,
And hymeneal hymns, I held my way,
And led my loved Alcestis by her hand :
The festal train with many a cheerful shout
Saluted her, now dead, and me, and hailed
Our union happy, as descended each
From generous blood and high-born ancestry.
Now for the nuptial song, the voice of woe—
For gorgeous robes, this black and mournful garb—
Attends me to my halls, and to my couch,
Where solitary sorrow waits me now.

CHOR. This sorrow came upon thee 'midst a state
Of happiness, a stranger thou to ills :
Yet is thy life preserved : thy wife is dead,
Leaving thy love ; is there aught new in this ?
Many hath death reft of their wives before.

ADM. My friends, I deem the fortune of my wife
Happier than mine, though otherwise it seems ;
For never more shall sorrow touch her breast,
And she with glory rests from various ills.
But I, who ought not live, my destined hour
O'erpassing, shall drag on a mournful life,
Late taught what sorrow is. How shall I bear
To enter here ? To whom shall I address
My speech ? Whose greeting renders my return
Delightful ? Which way shall I turn ? Within
In lonely sorrow shall I waste away,

As widowed of my wife I see my couch,
 The seats deserted where she sat, the rooms
 Wanting her elegance. Around my knees
 My children hang, and weep their mother lost :
 These too lament their mistress now no more.
 This is the scene of misery in my house :
 Abroad, the nuptials of Thessalia's youth
 And the bright circles of assembled dames
 Will but augment my grief : ne'er shall I bear
 To see the loved companions of my wife.
 And if one hates me, he will say, " Behold
 The man, who basely lives, who dared not die,
 But, giving through the meanness of his soul
 His wife, avoided death, yet would be deemed
 A man : he hates his parents, yet himself
 Had not the spirit to die." These ill reports
 Cleave to me : why then wish for longer life,
 On evil tongues thus fallen, and evil days ?

CHORUS.

Strophe 1.

My vent'rous foot delights
 To tread the Muses' arduous heights ;
 Their hallowed haunts I love t' explore,
 And listen to their lore :
 Yet never could my searching mind
 Aught, like necessity, resistless find ;
 No herb of sovereign power to save,
 Whose virtues Orpheus joyed to trace,
 And wrote them in the rolls of Thrace ;
 Nor all that Phœbus gave,
 Instructing the Asclepian train,
 When various ills the human frame assail,
 To heal the wound, to soothe the pain,
 'Gainst her stern force avail.

Antistrophe 1.

Of all the powers divine
 Alone none dares approach her shrine ;
 To her no hallowed image stands,
 No altar she commands ;
 In vain the victim's blood would flow ;
 She never deigns to hear the suppliant vow.
 Never to me mayst thou appear,
 Dread goddess, with severer mien,
 That oft in life's past tranquil scene
 Thou hast been known to wear.
 By thee Jove works his stern behest :
 Thy force subdues e'en Scythia's stubborn steel :
 Nor ever does thy rugged breast
 The touch of pity feel.

Strophe 2.

And now, with ruin pleased,
 On thee, O king, her hands have seized,
 And bound thee in her iron chain :
 Yet her fell force sustain.
 For from the gloomy realms of night
 No tears recall the dead to life's sweet light ;
 No virtue, though to heaven allied,
 Saves from th' inevitable doom :
 Heroes and sons of gods have died,
 And sunk into the tomb.
 Dear, whilst our eyes her presence blest,
 Dear, in the gloomy mansions of the dead ;
 Most generous she, the noblest, best,
 Who graced thy nuptial bed.

Antistrophe 2.

Thy wife's sepulchral mound
 Deem not as common, worthless ground,
 That swells their breathless bodies o'er
 Who die, and are no more.

No : be it honoured as a shrine
 Raised high, and hallowed to some power divine.
 The traveller, as he passes by,
 Shall thither bend his devious way,
 With reverence gaze, and with a sigh
 Smite on his breast, and say,
 "She died of old to save her lord ;
 Now blest among the blest : Hail, power revered ;
 To us thy wonted grace afford !"
 Such vows shall be preferred.
 But see, Admetus, to thy house, I ween,
 Alcmena's son bends his returning steps.

HERCULES, ADMETUS, CHORUS.

HERC. I would speak freely to my friend, Admetus,
 Nor what I blame keep secret in my breast.
 I came to thee amidst thy ills, and thought
 I had been worthy to be proved thy friend.
 Thou toldst me not the obsequies prepared
 Were for thy wife, but in thy house receivdst me
 As if thou grievdst for one of foreign birth.
 I bound my head with garlands, to the gods
 Pouring libations in thy house with grief
 Oppressed. I blame this : yes, in such a state
 I blame this : yet I come not in thine ills
 To give thee pain ; why I return in brief
 Will I unfold. This woman from my hands
 Receive to thy protection, till returned
 I bring the Thracian steeds, having there slain
 The proud Bistonian tyrant ; should I fail,
 Be that mischance not mine, for much I wish
 Safe to revisit thee, yet should I fail,
 I give her to the safeguard of thy house.
 For with much toil she came into my hands.
 To such as dare contend some public games,
 Which well deserved my toil, I find proposed,
 I bring her thence, she is the prize of conquest ;
 For slight assays each victor led away

A courser ; but for those of harder proof
 The conqueror was rewarded from the herd,
 And with some female graced ; victorious there,
 A prize so noble it were base to slight.
 Take her to thy protection, not by stealth
 Obtained, but the reward of many toils ;
 The time perchance may come when thou wilt thank me.

ADM. Not that I slight thy friendship, or esteem thee
 Other than noble, wished I to conceal
 My wife's unhappy fate ; but to my grief
 It had been added grief, if thou hadst sought
 Elsewhere the rites of hospitality ;
 Suffice it that I mourn ills which are mine.
 This woman, if it may be, give in charge,
 I beg thee, king, to some Thessalian else,
 That hath not cause like me to grieve ; in Pheræ
 Thou mayst find many friends ; call not my woes
 Fresh to my memory ; never in my house
 Could I behold her but my tears would flow ;
 To sorrow add not sorrow ; now enough
 I sink beneath its weight. Where should her youth
 With me be guarded ? for her gorgeous vests
 Proclaim her young ; if mixing with the men
 She dwell beneath my roof, how shall her fame,
 Conversing with the youths, be kept unsullied ?
 It is not easy to restrain the warmth
 Of that intemperate age ; my care for thee
 Warns me of this. Or if from them removed
 I hide her in th' apartments late my wife's,
 How to my bed admit her ? I should fear
 A double blame ; my citizens would scorn me
 As light, and faithless to the kindest wife
 That died for me, if to her bed I took
 Another blooming bride ; and to the dead
 Behoves me pay the highest reverence
 Due to her merit. And thou, lady, know,
 Whoe'er thou art, that form, that shape, that air
 Resembles my Alcestis. By the gods,
 Remove her from my sight. It is too much,

I cannot bear it : when I look on her,
Methinks I see my wife ; this wounds my heart,
And calls the tears fresh gushing from my eyes.
This is the bitterness of grief indeed.

CHOR. I cannot praise thy fortune ; but behoves thee
To bear with firmness what the gods assign.

HERC. O that from Jove I had the power to bring
Back from the mansions of the dead thy wife
To heaven's fair light, that grace achieving for thee !

ADM. I know thy friendly will. But how can this
Be done ? The dead return not to this light.

HERC. Check then thy swelling griefs ; with reason rule
them.

ADM. How easy to advise, but hard to bear !

HERC. What would it profit shouldst thou always groan ?

ADM. I know it ; but I am in love with grief.

HERC. Love to the dead calls forth the ceaseless tear.

ADM. O, I am wretched more than words can speak.

HERC. A good wife hast thou lost, who can gainsay it ?

ADM. Never can life be pleasant to me more.

HERC. Thy sorrow now is new, time will abate it.

ADM. Time, sayst thou ? Yes, the time that brings me
death.

HERC. Some young and lovely bride will bid it cease.

ADM. No more : what sayst thou ? Never could I think——

HERC. Wilt thou still lead a lonely, widowed life ?

ADM. Never shall other woman share my bed.

HERC. And think'st thou this will aught avail the dead ?

ADM. This honour is her due, where'er she be.

HERC. This hath my praise, though near allied to frenzy.

ADM. Praise me, or not, I ne'er will wed again.

HERC. I praise thee that thou'rt faithful to thy wife.

ADM. Though dead, if I betray her may I die !

HERC. Well, take this noble lady to thy house.

ADM. No, by thy father Jove let me entreat thee.

HERC. Not to do this would be the greatest wrong.

ADM. To do it would with anguish rend my heart.

HERC. Let me prevail ; this grace may find its meed.

ADM. O that thou never hadst received this prize !

HERC. Yet in my victory thou art victor with me.

ADM. 'Tis nobly said : yet let this woman go.

HERC. If she must go, she shall : but must she go ?

ADM. She must, if I incur not thy displeasure.

HERC. There is a cause that prompts my earnestness.

ADM. Thou hast prevailed, but much against my will.

HERC. The time will come when thou wilt thank me for it.

ADM. Well, if I must receive her, lead her in.

HERC. Charge servants with her ! No, that must not be.

ADM. Lead her thyself then, if thy will incline thee.

HERC. No, to thy hand alone will I commit her.

ADM. I touch her not ; but she hath leave to enter.

HERC. I shall entrust her only to thy hand.

ADM. Thou dost constrain me, king, against my will.

HERC. Venture to stretch thy hand, and touch the stranger's.

ADM. I touch her, as I would the headless Gorgon.

HERC. Hast thou her hand ?

ADM. I have.

HERC. Then hold her safe.

Hereafter thou wilt say the son of Jove

Hath been a generous guest : view now her face,

See if she bears resemblance to thy wife,

And thus made happy bid farewell to grief.

ADM. O gods, what shall I say ? 'Tis marvellous,
Exceeding hope. See I my wife indeed ?

Or doth some god distract me with false joy ?

HERC. In very deed dost thou behold thy wife.

ADM. See that it be no phantom from beneath.

HERC. Make not thy friend one that evokes the shades.

ADM. And do I see my wife, whom I entombed ?

HERC. I marvel not that thou art diffident.

ADM. I touch her ; may I speak to her as living ?

HERC. Speak to her ; thou hast all thy heart could wish.

ADM. Dearest of women, do see I again

That face, that person ? This exceeds all hope :

I never thought that I should see thee more.

HERC. Thou hast her ; may no god be envious to thee.

ADM. O, be thou blest, thou generous son of Jove !
Thy father's might protect thee ! Thou alone

Hast raised her to me ; from the realms below
How hast thou brought her to the light of life ?

HERC. I fought with him that lords it o'er the shades.

ADM. Where with the gloomy tyrant didst thou fight ?

HERC. I lay in wait, and seized him at the tomb.

ADM. But wherefore doth my wife thus speechless stand ?

HERC. It is not yet permitted that thou hear
Her voice addressing thee, till from the gods
That rule beneath she be unsanctified
With hallowed rites, and the third morn return.
But lead her in : and as thou'rt just in all
Besides, Admetus, see thou reverence strangers.
Farewell : I go t' achieve the destined toil
For the imperial son of Sthenelus.

ADM. Abide with us, and share my friendly hearth.

HERC. That time will come again ; this demands speed.

ADM. Success attend thee ; safe mayst thou return.

Now to my citizens I give in charge,
And to each chief, that for this blest event
They institute the dance, let the steer bleed,
And the rich altars, as they pay their vows,
Breathe incense to the gods ; for now I rise
To better life, and grateful own the blessing.

CHOR. With various hand the gods dispense our fates :
Now showering various blessings, which our hopes
Dared not aspire to ; now controlling ills
We deemed inevitable ; thus the god
To these hath given an end exceeding thought.
Such is the fortune of this happy day.

The first part of the paper is devoted to a
 description of the various species of
 plants which are found in the
 country. The second part is
 devoted to a description of the
 animals which are found in the
 country. The third part is
 devoted to a description of the
 minerals which are found in the
 country. The fourth part is
 devoted to a description of the
 climate of the country. The fifth
 part is devoted to a description
 of the soil of the country. The
 sixth part is devoted to a
 description of the population of
 the country. The seventh part
 is devoted to a description of
 the commerce of the country.

ELECTRA.



THE subject of this Drama is the same with that of the Choephoræ of Æschylus ; the disposition of it is different, as might be expected from the different genius of the poets. The reader, who was struck with the sublime conception, the glowing imagery, and solemn magnificence of the Choephoræ, will here find his soul softened with compassion for the high-born Electra forcibly wedded to a peasant, dwelling in a sordid cottage, and compelled to the laborious offices of a menial slave. Our own history gives us an example of the like unfeeling insolence in the low-minded rulers of our unhappy kingdom about the year 1648, who intended to apprentice the Princess Elizabeth to a button-maker : the poor lady escaped their malice by dying in prison at Carisbrooke Castle. The gentleness of Electra in this humble state, and her faithful attention to the domestic concerns of Auturgus, throw an amiableness over her character, which neither Æschylus nor Sophocles, upon their plans, could give her, and interest us warmly in her favour ; and this is but a softer shade of the same generous mind, the same virtuous sense of duty, which shows itself so fierce and determined in encouraging and assisting her brother to revenge their father's murder. The three great poets have taken different methods in the discovery of Orestes to his sister : in Æschylus this has most dignity, in Sophocles it is most affecting, in Euripides most natural. In the circumstances which lead to the agnition, as the critics call it, our poet is thought to have reflected with an ill-natured severity on Æschylus. "C'est une malice d'Euripide," says P. Brumoy, "pour tourner la recon-

noissance d'Eschyle en ridicule." If it be so, we are sorry for so ungenerous a return for the many obligations he is under to his great master ; but, after all, it may well be supposed that the circumstances here reprobated were the popular tradition ; for had Æschylus been left to his own invention, his rich imagination would have formed something better ; and that Euripides intended only to reject the weak proofs built on this tradition, which, like the prophecy of Celæno and the completion of it in the Æneid, could not be passed over unnoticed, we are led to this supposition by the following circumstance. To the surmise of the faithful preserver of Orestes, that he might have returned in secret, and have paid these honours at the tomb of his father, Electra says :

Unworthy of a wise man are thy words,
If thou canst think that to Mycenæ's realms
My brother e'er with secret step will come,
Fearing Ægisthus.

This is consistent with the high spirit of Electra ; but she censures as unwise not only the circumstances alleged in proof by the old man, but even the method dictated by the God of Wisdom ; and probably the whole passage intends only to show that Electra had no idea of her brother's return, and of course to heighten her surprise and joy at the discovery. The circumstances of Clytemnestra's death are managed by Sophocles with wonderful art : the scene, in which Ægisthus uncovers the body expecting to have found that of Orestes, and instantly perceives that vengeance is bursting upon him, is finely conceived, and affords an excellent subject for picture ; but the consequence of this is, that the death of Ægisthus has nothing in it affecting ; he is a malefactor led to execution. Æschylus describes the vindictive prince as rushing upon the adulterous murderer with impatient fury : Euripides is long and minute in his account ; some of the circumstances are pleasing, they all are curious, and highly valuable, as giving an exact picture of the manners and religion of the ancients. Euripides has with great judgment preserved the characters of Orestes and Electra throughout the drama, as they were at first designed by Æschylus ; this has not escaped the censure of some critics : but the poet is defended with such strength of argument in the " Notes on the

Art of Poetry," v. 127, that any attempt to a further vindication here would be impertinent.

It may not be improper to observe that the word *Auturgus* signifies a man who does his own work with his own hands, and it is used by Euripides in that sense; the translator hopes to be excused for converting it into a proper name.

The scene is near the bounds of the Argive territory, a mountainous country, and before the cottage of *Auturgus*.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

AUTURGUS.
ELECTRA.
ORESTES.
PYLADES.

TUTOR.
MESSENGER.
CASTOR AND POLLUX.
CHORUS OF MYCENÆAN VIRGINS.

AUTURGUS.

THOU ancient glory of this land, famed stream
Of Inaches, thou sawst the mighty host,
When in a thousand ships to Phrygia's strand
The royal Agamemnon bore the war.
The Dardan monarch slain, the towers of Troy
And the proud city levelled with the ground,
To Argos he returned, and many spoils
From the barbarians rent triumphant fixed
In the high temples. There his toils were crowned
With conquest; but by Clytemnestra's wiles,
His wife, and by Ægisthus' murdering hands,
Son of Thyestes, in his house he died;
Leaving the ancient sceptre, from the hand
Of Tantalus to him derived, he fell.
And now Ægisthus lords it o'er the land,
His royal throne possessing, and his wife,

Daughter of Tyndarus. He, when for Troy
He sailed, his son Orestes in his house
And young Electra's budding beauties left.
Orestes, by Ægisthus marked for death,
The guardian of his father's youth by stealth
To Strophius bore, that in the Phocian land
He might protect him. In her father's house
Remained Electra : her, when youth's warm bloom
Glowed on her cheek, the high-born chiefs of Greece
In marriage sought : through fear lest she should bear
To any Argive sons that might revenge
The death of Agamemnon, in the house
Ægisthus held her, and repulsed the suit
Of ev'ry wooer. But his gloomy fears
Still prompting that by stealth she might bear sons
To one of noble lineage, he resolved
To kill her ; but her mother, though her soul
Was fierce and ruthless, saved her from his hands :
She for her husband's murder had some plea
To urge, but dreaded from her children's blood
Public abhorrence. Then Ægisthus framed
These villainous designs : he offered gold,
The son of Agamemnon, from this land
Escaped, whoe'er would kill ; to me espoused
He gives Electra ; from Mycenæ sprung
My parents, thus far no reproach is mine,
My race illustrious, but not blest with wealth,
And poverty obscures my noble birth.
To one thus sunk he gave her, that his fears
Might likewise sink ; for should she wed a man
Whose high rank gives him lustre, he might rouse
The murder of her father, sleeping now,
And vengeance then might on Ægisthus fall.
Yet, Venus be my witness, by my touch
She hath not been dishonoured ; she is still
A virgin. In my humble state I scorn
Such insult to the daughters of the great.
I grieve too for Orestes, hapless youth,
To me in words allied, should he return

To Argos, and behold his sister placed
 In marriage so unworthy of her birth.
 This some may deem a folly, to receive
 A virgin in my house, and touch her not ;
 But let such know that by distorted rules
 They measure continence, themselves depraved.

ELECTRA, AUTURGUS.

ELEC. O dark-browed Night, nurse of the golden stars,
 In thee this vase sustaining on my head
 I to the flowing river bend my steps
 (Not by necessity to this compelled,
 But to the gods to show the insolent wrongs
 I suffer from Ægisthus), and my griefs
 For my lost father to the wide extent
 Of ether breathe : for from the royal house
 Me my destructive mother hath driven forth,
 To gratify her husband : having borne
 T' Ægisthus other children, she hath made
 Me and Orestes outcasts from the house.

AUT. Why wilt thou thus, unhappy lady, toil,
 For my sake bearing labours, nor desist
 At my desire ? Not thus hast thou been trained.

ELEC. Thee equal to the gods I deem my friend ;
 For in my ills thou hast not treated me
 With insult. In misfortunes thus to find,
 What I have found in thee, a gentle power
 Lenient of grief, must be a mighty source
 Of consolation. It behoves me then,
 Far as my power avails, to ease thy toils,
 That lighter thou mayst feel them, and to share
 Thy labour, though unbidden : in the fields
 Thou hast enough of work ; be it my task
 Within to order well. The lab'rer, tired
 Abroad, with pleasure to his house returns,
 Accustomed all things grateful there to find.

AUT. Go then, since such thy will : nor distant far
 The fountain from the house. At the first dawn

My bullocks yoked I to the field will drive,
 And sow my furrows : for no idle wretch,
 With the gods always in his mouth, can gain
 Without due labour the support of life.

ORESTES, PYLADES.

ORES. O Pylades, thee first of all mankind
 Faithful and friendly I esteem ; alone
 Hast thou received Orestes, held me high
 In thy dear love, thus with misfortunes pressed
 And suffering, as I suffer, dreadful ills,
 Wrought by Ægisthus, whose accursed hand,
 And my destructive mother joined her aid,
 Murdered my father. But the Argive soil,
 Comanded by the god's oracular voice,
 No mortal conscious to my steps, I tread,
 His murder on his murd'ers to avenge.
 This night my father's tomb have I approached,
 Poured the warm tear, presented my shorn locks,
 And offered on the pyre the victim's blood,
 Secret from those who lord it o'er this land.
 The walls I enter not, a double charge
 At once emprising ; to the Argive bounds
 I come, that by the tyrant's spies if known
 I to another's realms may soon retire ;
 And seek my sister ; for they say that here
 In marriage joined she dwells, a virgin now
 No more : with her I would hold converse, hei
 Take my associate in this deed, and learn
 All that hath passed within the walls. But now,
 For now the grey morn opes her radiant eye,
 Retire we from this public path : perchance
 Some ploughman, or some female slave, from whom
 We may gain knowledge, may in sight appear.
 And see, a female slave, her tresses shorn,
 Bears from the spring her vase ; sit we awhile,
 And question her, if haply from her words
 We may learn aught for which we hither came.

ELECTRA.

Strophe.

Begin, begin, for this the hour,
 The mournful measures weeping pour.
 Is there a wretch like me on earth?
 The royal Agamemnon gave me birth,
 My mother Clytemnestra—shame
 Fall on that odious name!
 And me each tongue within Mycenæ's walls
 Th' unhappy, lost Electra calls.
 My soul to grief a prey,
 My hated life in anguish wastes away:
 My tears for thee, my father, flow,
 For in the shades below,
 • By cursed Ægisthus and his barb'rous wife—
 Ah me, ah me, my miseries!—
 Basely deprived of life,
 The royal Agamemnon lies.
 Yet once more raise the tearful strain,
 The sweetly-mournful measures soothe my pain.

Antistrophe.

Begin, begin, for this the hour,
 The mournful members weeping pour.
 Unhappy brother, in what state,
 What house is cruel servitude thy fate,
 Thy sister, in those rooms confined
 Once by her sire assigned
 The chaste retirement of her happier years,
 Thy wretched sister left to tears,
 Tears which incessant flow
 From the deep anguish of severest woe?
 O mayst thou come (O Jove, O Jove,
 Hear from thy throne above!)

To soothe the pangs my tortured heart that rend :
 T' avenge thy father basely slain,
 Mayst thou to Argos bend
 Thy weary, wand'ring foot again.
 Take from my head this vase, that high
 May swell the mournful nightly melody.

Epode.

The dismal song, the song of death,
 To thee, my father, will I raise,
 To thee among the shades beneath :
 So pass my mournful days.
 For thee my bleeding breast I tear,
 And beat my head, and rend my hair,
 Shorn as an off'ring to the dead :
 Yes, poor Electra beat thy head.
 As some broad-rolling stream along,
 For his lost father torn away,
 Caught in the wily net a prey,
 The tuneful cygnet pours the song ;
 So thee, my father, I lament,
 In thy last bath deprived of breath,
 Stretched on the bed of death :
 So I deplore the curst intent
 Formed 'gainst thy sad return from Troy,
 The keen axe furious to destroy.
 For thee no crown thy wife designed,
 No festive wreath thy brows to bind,
 But the relentless trenchant sword :
 And, by her raging passions led,
 Aids the base murd'rer's deed abhorred,
 Then takes him to her bed.

ELECTRA, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Strophe 1.

Daughter of Agamemnon, I with speed,
 Electra, to thy rustic cottage fly :
 For one, whose herds on these rude mountains feed,
 A swain, on whose good faith we firm rely,
 Came, from Mycenæ came ;
 The Argives, thus he says, proclaim
 Three days of festal rites divine,
 And all the virgins haste to Juno's shrine.

ELECTRA.

Strophe 2.

No more, my friends, the gorgeous vest,
 Which in her happier hours Electra graced,
 No more the gem in gold enchased,
 With vivid radiance sparkling on my breast,
 Delight my mind : my feet no more
 The mazy-winding dance shall tread,
 No more the train of Argive virgins lead.
 In tears, ah me ! I melt away ;
 In tears, sad solace of each wretched day,
 My ceaseless mis'ries I deplore.
 My sordid toils these locks defile,
 Around me see these vestments vile :
 Of Agamemnon's daughter this the fate ?
 Where now my father's royal state ?
 Where the proud glories of his name,
 And Troy recording sad her conqueror's mighty fame ?

CHORUS.

Antistrophe 1.

Great is the goddess : go then, with us go ;
 Receive whate'er thy beauties may improve,
 The gold, the vests with various dyes that glow.
 Thinkst thou with tears th' unhonoured gods to move ?
 Not won by sighs their aid,
 But by pure vows with rev'rence paid,
 The gods, to crush thy foes, will send,
 And blessings on thy future days t' attend.

ELECTRA.

Antistrophe 2.

My cries, my vows, no god will hear,
 Nor heeded they my father's spouting gore.
 Ah me ! the murdered I deplore,
 And for the living exile pour the tear :
 He, distant from his native land,
 Wanders, poor outcast, o'er the earth,
 And seeks mean refuge at some servile hearth,
 Dragging from realm to realm his woes,
 Though in his veins the blood of monarchs flows.
 I, by oppression's iron hand
 Driven from my father's royal seat,
 Dwell in this low obscure retreat,
 Here waste in toils my wretched life away,
 Or o'er the rugged mountains stray :
 Whilst, glorying in her impious deeds,
 My mother to her bed the blood-stained murd'rer leads.

CHOR. The sister of thy mother, Helena,
 Hath been the cause of many ills to Greece,
 And to thy house.

ELEC. Ah me ! ye female train,
 My measures I break off : some strangers, lodged

Nigh to the cottage, from their ambush rise.
 Fly by the path, I to the house will fly ;
 Let us be swift t' escape their ruffian hands.

ORESTES, PYLADES, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

- ORES. Stay, thou unhappy ; fear not aught from me.
 ELEC. Thee, Phœbus, that I die not, I implore.
 ORES. Others more hated would I rather kill.
 ELEC. Away, nor touch one whom thou oughtst not touch.
 ORES. There is not whom more justly I may touch.
 ELEC. Why with thy sword in ambush near my house ?
 ORES. Stay, hear ; not vain thy stay thou soon shalt own.
 ELEC. I stay ; the stronger thou, I in thy power.
 ORES. Bearing thy brother's words to thee I come.
 ELEC. Most welcome. Breathes he yet this vital air ?
 ORES. He lives : I first would speak what brings thee joy.
 ELEC. O, be thou blest for these most grateful words !
 ORES. To both in common this I give to share.
 ELEC. Where is th' unhappy outcast wand'ring now ?
 ORES. He wastes his life not subject to one state.
 ELEC. Finds he with toil what life each day requires ?
 ORES. Not so ; but mean the wand'ring exile's state.
 ELEC. But with what message art thou from him charged ?
 ORES. T' inquire, if living, where thou bearest thy griefs.
 ELEC. First, then, observe my thin and wasted state.
 ORES. Wasted with grief, so that I pity thee.
 ELEC. Behold my head, its crispéd honours shorn.
 ORES. Mourning thy brother or thy father dead ?
 ELEC. What can be dearer to my soul than these ?
 ORES. Alas ! What deemst thou are thy brother's thoughts ?
 ELEC. He, though far distant, is most dear to me.
 ORES. Why here thy dwelling from the city far ?
 ELEC. O stranger, in base nuptials I am joined.
 ORES. I feel thy brother's grief. To one of rank ?
 ELEC. Not as my father once to place me hoped.
 ORES. That hearing I may tell thy brother ; speak.
 ELEC. This is his house : in this I dwell remote.
 ORES. This house some digger or some herdsman suits.

- ELEC. Generous, though poor, in reverence me he holds.
 ORES. To thee what reverence doth thy husband pay?
 ELEC. He never hath presumed t' approach my bed.
 ORES. Through sacred chastity, or from disdain?
 ELEC. Scorning my noble parents to disgrace.
 ORES. How in such nuptials feels he not a pride?
 ELEC. Him, who affianced me, not my lord he deems.
 ORES. Thinking Orestes might revenge the wrong?
 ELEC. This too he fears; yet modest is his mind.
 ORES. A generous man, and one who merits much.
 ELEC. If to his house the absent e'er returns.
 ORES. But this debasement could thy mother brook?
 ELEC. Their husbands, not their children, wives regard.
 ORES. Why did Ægisthus offer this base wrong?
 ELEC. Thus placing me, he wished my children weak.
 ORES. That from thee no avengers might arise.
 ELEC. For this design may vengeance on him fall.
 ORES. That yet thou art a virgin doth he know?
 ELEC. He knows it not. This undisclosed we hold.
 ORES. Are these, who hear us, faithful, and thy friends?
 ELEC. Never thy words or mine will they disclose.
 ORES. What should Orestes do, if he return?
 ELEC. Canst thou ask this? How base. The time now
 calls—
- ORES. But how thy father's murd'ers should he slay?
 ELEC. Daring to do what they, who slew him, dared.
 ORES. Couldst thou, with him, thy mother bear to kill!
 ELEC. With the same axe, by which my father fell.
 ORES. This may I tell him, and thy soul resolved?
 ELEC. My mother's blood first shedding, might I die!
 ORES. O, were Orestes nigh, to hear these words!
 ELEC. If seen, I should not know him, stranger, now.
 ORES. No wonder, for when parted both were young.
 ELEC. Nor by my friends, save one, would he be known.
 ORES. Who bore him, as they say, by stealth from death?
 ELEC. The aged guardian of my father's youth.
 ORES. Was thy dead father honoured with a tomb?
 ELEC. As he was honoured, from the house cast forth.
 ORES. Alas the barbarous deed! A sense of ills,

Which strangers suffer, wounds the human heart.
 But speak, that to thy brother I may bear,
 By thee informed, words which perchance may wound
 His ear, but which concerns him much to know.
 Those, who have knowledge, feel the tender touch
 Of pity, not th' unknowing ; yet to know
 Too much is oft the bitter source of grief.

CHOR. My soul is with the same desire inflamed.
 For, from the city distant, nought I know
 Of the ills there ; I wish to be informed.

ELEC. I would speak, if I might ; and to a friend
 May I not speak my suffering father's wrongs,
 And mine ? But, stranger, since to this discourse
 Thou dost enforce me, I conjure thee tell
 Orestes his calamities, and mine.

Tell him in what mean garb thou seest me clad,
 How sordid, and beneath what lowly roof,
 Born as I was to royalty, I lodge.
 I, labouring at the loom the lengthened robe,
 Shall want the vest to clothe my nakedness :
 And, bearing water from the flowing fount,
 No more partaker of the feast, no more
 Myself a virgin, 'midst the virgin train
 Leading the dance, to them I bid adieu ;
 To Castor also bid adieu, to whom,
 Ere to the gods advanced, I was betrothed,
 As from the same illustrious lineage sprung.
 Meantime my mother 'midst the Phrygian spoils
 Sits on her throne, the Asiatic dames,
 Made by my father's conquest slaves, attend
 Her state, their rich Idæan vests confined
 With clasps of gold, my father's clodded gore
 Yet putrid in the house ; and the same car,
 In which my father rode, his murderer mounts
 The sceptre, ensign of his kingly sway
 O'er Greece in arms confederate, he with pride
 Grasps in his bloody hands. The monarch's tomb
 Unhonoured nor libations hath received,
 Nor myrtle bough ; no hallowed ornament

Hath dignified the pyre. Inflamed with wine
 My mother's husband, the illustrious lord,
 For so they call him, tramples on the earth
 Insultingly where Agamemnon lies ;
 And hurling 'gainst his monument a stone,
 Thus taunts us with proud scorn : " Where is thy son,
 Orestes where ? Right noble is thy tomb
 Protected by his presence." Thus he mocks
 The absent : but, O stranger, tell him this,
 Suppliant I beg thee. Many give the charge,
 And I interpret it ; my hands, my tongue,
 My mind desponding with its grief, my head
 Shorn of its tresses, and his father. Shame,
 Base shame it were if, when his father's arm
 Subdued the Trojans, he should want the power
 Alone to hurl his vengeance on one man,
 Now in youth's prime, and from a nobler sire.

CHOR. But see, the man, thy husband, to his toils
 Giving a respite, hastens to his house.

AUTURGUS, ELECTRA, ORESTES, PYLADES, CHORUS.

AUT. Ha ! who these strangers, whom before my doors
 I see ? Why come they to these rustic gates ?
 Of me aught want they ? With young men to stand
 Abroad, a woman's honour ill beseems.

ELEC. Thou faithful friend, let no suspicion touch
 Thy mind : their converse truly shalt thou know.
 These by Orestes charged, are come to me.
 Strangers, forgive what he hath said amiss.

AUT. What say they ? Lives he ? Is he yet a man ?

ELEC. He lives, they say, and speak what wins my faith.

AUT. Remembers he his father, and thy wrongs ?

ELEC. This lives in hope : an exile's state is weak.

AUT. What from Orestes come they to relate ?

ELEC. He sent them secret to observe my ills.

AUT. Some they behold, and some thou mayst relate.

ELEC. They know them, of each circumstance informed.

AUT. Then long ago my lowly doors to them

Should have been opened. Enter ye the house ;
 And for your welcome tidings you shall share
 Such hospitable viands as the stores
 Of my poor mansion yield. You, who attend,
 What for their journey needful they have brought
 Bear in : nor you refuse ; for you are come
 Friends to a friendly man ; poor though I am,
 A sordid spirit never will I show.

ORES. Now by the gods, is this the man who holds
 Thy marriage in such holy reverence,
 Scorning to do Orestes shameful wrong ?

ELEC. The poor Electra's husband this is called.

ORES. Nature hath giv'n no outward mark to note
 The generous mind : the qualities of men
 To sense are indistinct. I oft have seen
 One of no worth a noble father shame,
 And from vile parents worthy children spring,
 Meanness oft grov'ling in the rich man's mind,
 And oft exalted spirits in the poor.

How then discerning shall we judge aright ?
 By riches ? Ill would they abide the test ;
 By poverty ? On poverty awaits
 This ill, through want it prompts to sordid deeds ;
 Shall we pronounce by arms ? But who can judge,
 By looking on the spear, the dauntless heart ?
 Such judgment is fallacious ; for this man,
 Nor great among the Argives, nor elate
 With the proud honours of his house, his rank
 Plebeian, hath approved his liberal heart.

Will you not then learn wisdom, you whose minds
 Error with false presentments leads astray ?

Will you not learn by manners and by deeds
 To judge the noble ? Such discharge their trust
 With honour to the state, and to their house :

Mere flesh, without a spirit, is no more
 Than statues in the forum : nor in war
 Doth the strong arm the dang'rous shock abide
 More than the weak : on nature this depends,
 And an intrepid mind. But we accept

Thy hospitable kindness : for the son
 Of Agamemnon, for whose sake we come,
 Present or not, is worthy : to this house
 Go, my attendants ; I must enter it :
 This man, though poor, more cheerful than the rich
 Receives me ; to his kindness thanks are due.
 More would it joy me if thy brother, blest
 Himself, could lead me to his prosperous house ;
 Yet haply he may come ; th' oracular voice
 Of Phœbus firmly will be ratified :
 Lightly of human prophecies I deem.

[ORESTES *and his attendants enter the house.*

CHOR. Ne'er till this hour, Electra, were our hearts
 So warmed with joy : for fortune now perchance,
 Though slow in her advance, may firmly stand.

ELEC. Why, thou unhappy, of thy humble house
 Knowing the penury, wouldst thou receive
 Such guests, of rank superior to thine own ?

AUT. Why not ? If they are noble, so their port
 Denotes them, will they not alike enjoy
 Contentment, be their viands mean or rich ?

ELEC. Since thou hast done what suits not thy low state,
 To my loved father's aged guardian go ;
 He near the river Tanus, which divides
 The realms of Argos from the Spartan land,
 An outcast from the city, leads his herds ;
 Entreat him to attend thee to thy house,
 Supplying what may entertain thy guests.
 He will rejoice, presenting to the gods
 His vows, when he shall hear the son, preserved
 By him, yet lives ; for from my father's house
 We from my mother nothing should receive ;
 And bitter were the tidings, should she learn,
 What most would grieve her, that Orestes lives.

AUT. These words, since such thy pleasure, I will bear
 To the old man. But enter thou the house
 With speed, and all things set in order there ;
 For many things a woman, be her thoughts
 Intent, may find to form the grateful feast ;

And in the house such plenty yet remains,
 As for one day may well supply their wants.
 Yet on such subjects when my thoughts are turned,
 I deem of wealth as having mighty power
 To give the stranger welcome, and to aid
 The body when afflicted with disease ;
 But of small moment to the daily food
 Which nature craves ; for to supply her wants
 An equal measure serves the rich and poor.

CHORUS.

Strophe 1.

Ye gallant ships, that o'er the main
 Rushed with innumerable oars,
 Dancing amidst the Nereid train
 To Troy's detested shores,
 Your dark-beaked prows, whilst wanton round
 The pipe enamoured dolphins bound,
 The son of Thetis pleased to guide
 Achilles, leaping on the strand
 (With Agamemnon's martial band),
 Where Simois rolls his tide.

Antistrophe 1.

The Nereids left th' Eubœan shore,
 And arms divinely bright
 For Vulcan's golden anvils bore :
 O'er Pelion's rocky height,
 O'er sacred Ossa's wood-crowned brow,
 Which shows the nymphs the plains below,
 They passed, the warlike father where
 Th' heroic son of Thetis bred,
 The pride of Greece, by glory led
 Th' Atreidæ's toils to share.

Strophe 2.

One, who the spoils of Troy had shared,
 I saw in Nauplia's port, and raptured hung,
 O son of Thetis, on his tongue,
 Whilst he the glories of thy shield declared ;
 On its bright orb what figures rise,
 Terrific to the Phrygians' eyes :
 Grasping the Gorgon's head, the verge around,
 With waving wings his sandals bound,
 A sculptured Perseus rises o'er the main :
 Protector of the pastured plain,
 Hermes, the messenger of Jove,
 Seems with the favoured chief his golden wings to move.

Antistrophe 2.

Full in the midst the orb of day
 In all its radiance blazes through the sky ;
 The fiery coursers seem to fly,
 And silent rolling o'er the ethereal way
 The stars refulgent through the night,
 To Hector's eyes a dreadful sight ;
 High on the helmet Sphinxes glow in gold,
 Who, whilst their prey their talons hold,
 In triumph seem their barb'rous song to pour
 The richly burnished hauberk o'er ;
 Breathing fierce flames, with horrid speed
 The dire Chimæra springs to seize Pirene's steed.

Epode.

Dreadful the blood-stained spear ; the car
 Four coursers whirl amidst the war,
 Behind them clouds of dust black-rising roll.
 Such martial chiefs the monarch led ;
 Yet by a hand accursed he bled,
 By his wife's hand : her noble blood
 From the rich streams of Tyndarus flowed,

But deeds of horror darken on her soul.
 Yet may the gods' avenging power
 On thee their righteous fury shower ;
 Yet may thy neck the falchion wound,
 Yet may I see thy blood distain the ground !

OLD TUTOR, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

TUT. Where is my honoured mistress, my loved child,
 Daughter of Agamemnon, once my charge ?
 Steep to her house and difficult th' ascent ;
 With pain my age-enfeebled feet advance,
 Yet lab'ring onwards with bent knees I move
 To seek my friends. O daughter, for mine eyes
 Before the house behold thee, I am come,
 Bringing this tender youngling from my fold,
 These garlands, from the vases these fresh curds,
 And this small flask of old and treasured wine
 Of grateful odour ; scanty the supply,
 Yet, with aught weaker if allayed, the cup
 Will yield a grateful bev'rage. Let one bear
 Into the house these presents for thy guests.
 I with these tattered vests meanwhile will wipe
 Mine eyes, for they are wet with gushing tears.

ELEC. Why, good old man, thus wet thy tearful eyes ?
 After this length of time dost thou recall
 The memory of my ills ? or mourn the flight
 Of poor Orestes, or my father's fate,
 Whom, in thy hands sustaining, once thy care
 Nurtured, to thee and to thy friends in vain ?

TUT. In vain : but this my soul could not support ;
 For to his tomb, as on the way I came,
 I turned aside, and falling on the ground,
 Alone and unobserved, indulged my tears ;
 Then of the wine, brought for thy stranger guests,
 Made a libation, and around the tomb
 Placed myrtle branches ; on the pyre I saw
 A sable ewe, yet fresh the victim's blood,
 And clust'ring auburn locks shorn from some head :

I marvelled, O my child, what man had dared
 Approach the tomb, for this no Argive dares :
 Perchance with secret step thy brother came,
 And paid these honours to his father's tomb.
 But view these locks, compare them with thine own,
 Whether like thine their colour : nature loves
 In those who from one father draw their blood
 In many points a likeness to preserve.

ELEC. Unworthy of a wise man are thy words,
 If thou canst think that to Mycenæ's realms
 My brother e'er with secret step will come,
 Fearing Ægisthus : then between our locks
 What can th' agreement be ? To manly toils
 He in the rough palæstra hath been trained,
 Mine by the comb are softened ; so that hence
 Nothing may be inferred : besides, old man,
 Tresses like-coloured often mayst thou find
 Where not one drop of kindred blood is shared.

TUT. Trace but his footsteps, mark th' impression, see
 If of the same dimensions with thy feet.

ELEC. How can th' impression of his foot be left
 On hard and rocky ground ? But were it so,
 Brother and sister never can have foot
 Of like dimensions : larger is the man's.

TUT. But hath thy brother, should he come, no vest
 Which thou wouldst know, the texture of thy hands,
 In which, when snatched from death, he was arrayed ?

ELEC. Knowst thou not, when my brother from this land
 Was saved, I was but young ? But were his vests
 Wrought by my hands, then, infant as he was,
 How could he now, in his maturer age,
 Be in the same arrayed, unless his vests
 Grew with his person's growth ? No ; at the tomb
 Some stranger, touched with pity, sheared his locks,
 Or native, by the tyrant's spies unmarked.

TUT. Where are these strangers ? I would see them : much
 Touching thy brother wish I to inquire.

ELEC. See, from the house with hast'ning step they come.

ORESTES, PYLADES, ELECTRA, TUTOR, CHORUS.

TUT. Their port is noble : but th' exterior form
Of cheats the eye ; many of noble port
Are base : yet will I bid the strangers hail.

ORES. Hail, hoary sire ! Electra, of what friend
Doth chance present us the revered remains ?

ELEC. The guardian, strangers, of my father's youth.

ORES. Is this the man who bore thy brother hence ?

ELEC. The man who saved him this, if yet he lives.

ORES. Why doth he scan me with that curious eye,
As if inspecting some bright impress marked
On silver ? Some resemblance doth he trace ?

ELEC. In thee he pleased may mark my brother's years.

ORES. A much-loved man. Why wheels he round me thus ?

ELEC. I too am struck with wonder, seeing this.

TUT. My dear, my honoured child, address the gods.

ELEC. For what ? Some absent, or some present good ?

TUT. To hold the treasure, which the god presents.

ELEC. See, I address the gods : what wouldst thou say ?

TUT. Look now on him, my child, that dearest youth.

ELEC. I feared before thy senses were not sound.

TUT. My sense not sound, when I Orestes see !

ELEC. Why speakest thou what all my hopes exceeds ?

TUT. In him beholding Agamemnon's son.

ELEC. What mark hast thou observed, to win my faith ?

TUT. That scar above his eyebrow, from a fall
Imprinted deep, as in his father's house
He long ago, with thee, pursued a hind.

ELEC. I see the mark remaining from his fall.

TUT. Why the most dear delayst thou yet t' embrace ?

ELEC. No longer now will I delay : the marks
By thee discovered are persuasive proofs.
O thou at length returned, beyond my hopes
Thus I embrace thee.

ORES. And my arms at last
Thus fondly clasp thee.

ELEC. This I never thought ;

ORES. Nor could I hope it.

ELEC. Art thou he indeed?

ORES. Alone to thee in firm alliance joined,
If well this net, my present task, I draw.

ELEC. I am assured; or never must we more
Believe that there are gods, if impious wrongs
Triumphant over justice bear the sway.

CHOR. Yes, thou art come, O ling'ring day,
At length art come, and beaming bright
Showst to Mycenæ's state his glorious light,
Who, from his father's palace chased,
A wretched wand'rer long disgraced,
Cheers us with his returning ray.
Some god, some god, my royal friend,
Back our own radiant victory leads.
Raise then thy hands, and to the skies
Let for thy brother suppliant vows arise,
That, as with daring foot he treads,
Success, success may on his steps attend.

ORES. So may it be. With joy thy dear embrace
I now receive: at length the time will come
When it shall be repeated. But, old man,
For opportune thy coming, tell me now
What I shall do on the base murd'rer's head,
And on my mother's, who impurely shares
His nuptial bed, t' avenge my father's death.
Have I no friend at Argos? not one left
Benevolent? Are, with my fortunes, all
Entirely lost? To whom shall I apply?
Doth the night suit my purpose, or the day?
Or which way shall I turn against my foes?

TUT. Amidst thy ruined fortunes, O my son,
Thou hast no friend. Where shall the man be found
Prompt in a prosp'rous or an adverse state
Alike to share? But learn this truth from me,
For of thy friends thou wholly art bereft,
Nor doth e'en hope remain; in thine own hand
Now, and in fortune, thou hast all wherewith
To gain thy father's house and regal state.

- ORES. What shall we do t' effect this glorious end?
TUT. Ægisthus and thy mother thou must kill.
ORES. For that I come : but how obtain that crown?
TUT. Thou canst not enter, if thou wouldst, the walls.
ORES. With guards defended, and with spear-armed hands?
TUT. Ay ; for he fears thee, nor untroubled sleeps.
ORES. Well ; let thine age some counsel then impart.
TUT. Hear me ; this now hath to my thought occurred.
ORES. Mayst thou point out and I perceive some good !
TUT. I saw Ægisthus, hither as I came.
ORES. I am attentive to thee : in what place ?
TUT. Near to those meadows where his coursers feed.
ORES. What doing ? Hope arises from despair.
TUT. A feast, it seems, preparing to the Nymphs.
ORES. Grateful for children born, or vows for more ?
TUT. I know but this, the victims were prepared.
ORES. With him what men ? Or with his slaves alone ?
TUT. No Argive there, but his domestic train.
ORES. Is there who would discover me, if seen ?
TUT. No : these are slaves who never saw thy face.
ORES. To me, if I prevail, they might be friends.
TUT. Such the slave's nature : but this favours thee.
ORES. How to his person near shall I approach ?
TUT. Beneath his eye pass when the victims bleed.
ORES. That way, it seems, some pastured fields are his.
TUT. That he may call thee to partake the feast.
ORES. A bitter guest, if so it please the gods.
TUT. Then, as th' occasion points, thy measures form.
ORES. Well hast thou said. But where my mother now ?
TUT. At Argo's ; but the feast she soon will grace.
ORES. Why not together with her husband come ?
TUT. Dreading the people's just reproach, she stayed.
ORES. She knows then the suspicions of the state ?
TUT. She does : the impious woman all abhor.
ORES. How then together shall I slay them both ?
ELEC. I will form measures for my mother's death.
ORES. Fortune shall guide them to a good event.
ELEC. May she in this be aiding to us both !
ORES. It shall be so : but what dost thou devise ?

ELEC. To Clytemnestra go, old man, and say
To a male child Electra hath giv'n birth.

TUT. That she long since, or lately bore this child?

ELEC. Tell her the days require the lustral rites.

ORES. And how thy mother's death doth this effect?

ELEC. Hearing my child-bed illness, she will come.

TUT. She hath no tenderness for thee, my child.

ELEC. Nay, my parturient honours she will weep.

TUT. Perchance she may : but brief thy purpose speak.

ELEC. Death, certain death awaits her, if she comes.

TUT. Within these gates then let her set her feet.

ELEC. Soon to the gates of Pluto shall she turn.

TUT. Might I see this, with pleasure I would die.

ELEC. First then, old man, conduct him to the place.

TUT. The hallowed victims where Ægisthus slays?

ELEC. Then meet my mother, and relate my words.

TUT. That she shall think them uttered by thy lips.

ELEC. Now is thy task : by thee he first must bleed.

ORES. Had I a guide, this instant would I go.

TUT. Thy steps with ready zeal I will direct.

ORES. God of my country, god of vengeance, Jove!

O, pity us! Our sufferings pity claim.

ELEC. Pity us, for our race from thee we draw!

ORES. And thou, whose altars at Mycenæ blaze,

Imperial Juno, give us victory,

If in a righteous cause we ask thy aid!

ELEC. O, give us to avenge our father's death!

ORES. And thou, my father, who beneath the earth

Hast thy dark dwelling, through unholy deeds—

And thou, O Earth, to whom I stretch my hands,

Great queen—protect thy children, O protect

Thy most dear children : come, and with thee bring,

To aid our cause, each mighty dead, that shook

The spear with thee, and with thee conquered Troy!

Hearst thou, so foully by my mother wronged,

And all, the impious murderers who abhor?

ELEC. All this, I know, my father hears; but now

The time demands thee. Go! By thy bold hand,

I charge thee, let the vile Ægisthus die:

For in the fatal contest shouldst thou fall,
 My life too ends ; nor say thou that I live,
 For I will plunge the sword into my throat.
 This go I to prepare. If glad report
 Of thy success arrive, then all the house
 Shall echo to my joy : but shouldst thou die,
 All otherwise. Thou hearst what I resolve.

ORES. I know it all.

ELEC. In this behoves thee much
 To be a man. Ye women, let your voice
 Give signal, like a flaming beacon, how
 The contest ends : I will keep watch within,
 Holding the keen sword ready in my hands ;
 For never shall my body from my foes,
 If I must fall, indecent outrage bear.

CHORUS.

Strophe 1.

The Argive mountains round,
 'Mongst tales of ancient days
 From age to age recorded, this remains :
 Tuned to mellifluous lays
 Pan taught his pipe to sound,
 And as he breathed the sprightly swelling strains,
 The beauteous ram with fleece of gold,
 God of shepherds on he drove.
 The herald from the rock above
 Proclaims, "Your monarch's wonders to behold,
 Wonders to sight, from which no terrors flow,
 Go, Mycenæans, to th' assembly go."
 With rev'rence they obey the call,
 And fill th' Atridæ's spacious hall.

Antistrophe 1.

Its gates with gold o'erlaid
 Wide oped each Argive shrine,

And from the altars hallowed flames arise ;
 Amidst the rites divine,
 Joying the Muse to aid,
 Breathed the brisk pipe its sweet notes to the skies ;
 Accordant to the tuneful strain
 Swelled the loud-acclaiming voice,
 Now with Thyestes to rejoice :
 He, all on fire the glorious prize to gain,
 With secret love the wife of Atreus won,
 And thus the shining wonder made his own ;
 Then to th' assembly vaunting cried,
 " Mine is the rich Ram's golden pride."

Strophe 2.

Then, oh then, indignant Jove
 Bade the bright sun backward move,
 And the golden orb of day,
 And the morning's orient ray :
 Glaring o'er the western sky
 Hurl'd his ruddy lightnings fly :
 Clouds, no more to fall in rain,
 Northward roll their deep'ning train :
 Libyan Ammon's thirsty seat,
 Withered with the scorching heat,
 Feels nor showers nor heavenly dews
 Grateful moisture round diffuse.

Antistrophe 2.

Fame hath said (but light I hold
 What the voice of fame hath told)
 That the sun, retiring far,
 Backward rolled his golden car,
 And his vital heat withdrew,
 Sick'ning man's bold crimes to view.
 Mortals, when such tales they hear,
 Tremble with a holy fear,

And th' offended gods adore :
 She, this noble pair who bore,
 Dared to murder, deed abhorred !
 This forgot, her royal lord.

CHOR. Ah me, ah me ! Heard you a noise, my friends ?
 Or doth imagination startle me
 With vain alarms ? Not indistinct the sounds,
 Like Jove's low-mutt'ring thunder, roll along.
 Come from the house, revered Electra, come.

ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ELEC. What hath befall'n, my friends, what danger comes ?

CHOR. This only know I, death is in that noise.

ELEC. I heard it, distant, yet it reached my ear.

CHOR. The sound comes rolling from afar, yet plain.

ELEC. Comes from an Argive, or my friends, the groan ?

CHOR. I know not : for confused the voices rise.

ELEC. This must to me be death ; why then delay ?

CHOR. Forbear : that clear thou mayst thy fortunes know.

ELEC. No : we are vanquished : none with tidings comes.

CHOR. They will : not light t' effect a monarch's death.

MESSENGER, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

MESS. To you, ye virgins of Mycenæ, joy
 I bring ; to all his friends my message speaks :
 Orestes is victorious, on the ground
 Ægisthus, Agamemnon's murd'rer, lies.
 Behoves you then address th' immortal gods.

ELEC. And who art thou ? How wilt thou prove thy truth ?

MESS. Thy brother's servant knowst thou not in me ?

ELEC. O thou most welcome, through my fears I scarce
 Distinguished thee : I recognize thee now.
 What, is my father's hated murd'rer dead ?

MESS. Twice, what thou wishest, I his death announce.

CHOR. All-seeing justice, thou at length art come.

ELEC. What was the manner of his death? How fell
This vile son of Thyestes? I would know.

MESS. Departing from this house, the level road
We entered soon, marked by the chariot-wheel
On either side. Mycenæ's noble king
Was there, amidst his gardens with fresh streams
Irriguous walking, and the tender boughs
Of myrtles, for a wreath to bind his head,
He cropt. He saw us; he addressed us thus
Aloud: "Hail, strangers! Who are ye, and whence,
Come from what country?" Then Orestes said,
"Thessalians, victims to Olympian Jove
We, at the stream of Alpheus, go to slay."
The king replied, "Be now my guests, and share
The feast with me; a bullock to the Nymphs
I sacrifice; at morn's first dawn arise,
Then you shall go: but enter now my house."
Thus as he spoke, he took us by the hand,
And led us nothing loth: beneath his roof,
Soon as we came, he bade his slaves prepare
Baths for the strangers, that the altars nigh,
Beside the lustral ewers, they might stand:
Orestes then, "With lavers from the pure
And living stream we lately have been cleansed:
But with thy citizens these rites to share,
If strangers are permitted, we, O king,
Are ready, to thy hospitable feast
Nothing averse." The converse here had end.
Their spears, with which they guard the king, aside
Th' attendants laid; and to their office all
Applied their hands: some led the victim, some
The basket bore, some raised the flames, and placed
The cauldrons on the hearth: the house resounds.
Thy mother's husband on the altars cast
The salted cakes, and thus addressed his vows:
"Ye Nymphs that haunt the rocks, these hallowed rites
Oft let me pay, and of my royal spouse
Now absent, both by fortune blest as now,
And let our foes, as now, in ruin lie—"

Thee and Orestes naming. But my lord
Far other vows addressed, but gave his words
No utterance, to regain his father's house.
Ægisthus then the sacrificing sword
Took from the basket, from the bullock's front
To cut the hair, which on the hallowed fire
With his right hand he threw, and, as his slaves
The victim held, beneath its shoulder plunged
The blade ; then turning to thy brother spoke :
" Amongst her noble arts Thessalia boasts
To rein the fiery courser, and with skill
The victim's limbs to sever. Stranger, take
The sharp-edged steel, and show that fame reports
Of the Thessalians truth." The Doric blade
Of tempered metal in his hand he grasped,
And from his shoulders threw his graceful robe ;
Then, to assist him in the toilsome task,
Chose Pylades, and bade the slaves retire.
The victim's foot he held, and its white flesh,
His hand extending, bared, and stript the hide
Ere round the course the chariot twice could roll,
And laid the entrails open. In his hands
The fate-presaging parts Ægisthus took
Inspecting : in the entrails was no lobe ;
The valves and cells the gall containing show
Dreadful events to him that viewed them near ;
Gloomy his visage darkened. But my lord
Asked whence his saddened aspect. He replied,
" Stranger, some treachery from abroad I fear ;
Of mortal men Orestes most I hate,
The son of Agamemnon. To my house
He is a foe." " Wilt thou," replied my lord,
" King of this state, an exile's treachery dread ?
But that, these omens leaving, we may feast,
Give me a Phthian for this Doric blade,
The breast asunder I will cleave." He took
The steel, and cut. Ægisthus, yet intent,
Parted the entrails ; and as low he bowed
His head, thy brother, rising to the stroke,

Drove through his back the pond'rous axe, and rived
 The spinal joints. His heaving body writhed
 And quivered struggling in the pangs of death.
 The slaves beheld, and instant snatched their spears,
 Many 'gainst two contesting ; but my lord
 And Pylades with dauntless courage stood
 Opposed, and shook their spears. Orestes then
 Thus spoke: " I come not to this state a foe,
 Nor to my servants ; but my father's death
 I on his murd'rer have avenged. You see
 Th' unfortunate Orestes ; kill me not,
 My father's old attendants." At those words
 They all restrained their spears ; and he was known
 By one grown hoary in the royal house.
 Crowns on thy brother's head they instant placed,
 With shouts of joy. He comes, and with him brings
 Proof of his daring, not a Gorgon's head,
 But, whom thou hatest, Ægisthus ; blood for blood,
 Bitter requital, on the dead is fall'n.

CHOR. Now for the dance, my friend, thy foot prepare,
 Now with joy-enraptured tread,
 Light as the hind that seems to bound in air,
 The sprightly measures lead.
 Thy brother comes, and on his brows
 A crown hath conquest placed :
 A wreath so glorious ne'er the victor graced
 Where famed Alpheüs flows.
 Come then, and with my choral train
 To Conquest raise the joyful strain.

ELEC. O light, and thou resplendent orb of day,
 O earth, and night which I beheld before,
 Now I view freely, freely now I breathe,
 Now that Ægisthus, by whose murd'ring hand
 My father fell, is dead. Whate'er my house
 To grace the head contains, I will bring forth,
 My friends, and crown my brother's conq'ring brows.

CHOR. Whate'er of ornament thy house contains
 Bring, to grace thy brother's head.
 My choir the dance. accorded to sweet strains

Dear to the Muse, shall lead.
 For now our kings, whose honoured hand
 The sceptre justly swayed,
 Low in the dust th' oppressive tyrant laid,
 Again shall rule the land.
 Rise then, my voice, with cheerful cries,
 Attempered to thy triumph rise.

ELECTRA, ORESTES, PYLADES, CHORUS.

ELEC. O glorious victor, from a father sprung
 Victorious in th' embattled fields of Troy,
 Orestes, for thy brows receive this crown.
 From the vain contest of the length'ned course
 Thou comest not, but victorious o'er thy foe,
 Ægisthus slain, by whom thy father bled,
 And I have been undone. Thou too, brave youth,
 Trained by a man most pious, in his toils
 Faithful associate, Pylades, receive
 From me this wreath; for thine an equal share
 Of danger. Ever let me hold you blessed.

ORES. First, of this glorious fortune deem the gods,
 Electra, sov'reign rulers; then to me,
 The minister of fortune and the gods,
 Give the due praise. I come not to relate
 That I have slain Ægisthus: deeds shall speak
 For me; a proof to all, his lifeless corse
 I bring thee: treat it as thy soul inclines:
 Cast it by rav'nous beasts to be devoured,
 Or to the birds, the children of the air,
 Fix it, impaled, a prey: the tyrant now,
 Ægisthus, is thy slave, once called thy lord.

ELEC. Shame checks my tongue: yet something would I
 speak.

ORES. What wouldst thou? Speak: thy fears are vanished
 now.

ELEC. I fear t' insult the dead, lest censures rise.

ORES. Not one of all mankind would censure thee.

ELEC. Hard to be pleased our city, prompt to blame.

ORES. Speak what thou wouldst, my sister ; for to him
Inexpiable enmity we bear.

ELEC. Let me then speak : but where shall I begin
Thy insults to recount ? With what conclude ?
Or how pursue the train of my discourse ?
I never with the opening morn forbore
To breathe my silent plaints, which to thy face
I wished to utter, from my former fears
If e'er I should be free : I now am free.
Now, to thee living what I wished to speak,
I will recount. Thou hast destroyed my hopes,
Made me an orphan, him and me bereft
Of a dear father, by no wrongs enforced.
My mother basely wedding, thou hast slain
The glorious leader of the Grecian arms,
Yet never didst thou tread the fields of Troy.
Nay, such thy folly, thou couldst hope to find
My mother, shouldst thou wed her, nought of ill
To thee intending : hence my father's bed
By thee was foully wronged. But let him know
Who with forbidden love another's wife
Corrupts, then by necessity constrained
Receives her as his own, should he expect
To find that chastity preserved to him,
Which to her former bed was not preserved,
He must be wretched from his frustrate hope.
And what a life of misery didst thou lead,
Though not by thee deemed ill ? Thy conscious mind
Of thy unholy nuptials felt the guilt :
My mother knew that she an impious man
In thee had wedded ; and, polluted both,
Thou hadst her fortune, she thy wickedness.
'Mongst all the Argives this had fame divulged,
The man obeys the wife, and not the wife
Her husband : shameful this, when in the house
The woman sovereign rules, and not the man.
And when of children speaks the public voice
As from the mother, not the father sprung,
To me it is displeasing. He who weds

A wife of higher rank and nobler blood,
 Sinks into nothing, in her splendour lost.
 This truth unknown, thy pride was most deceived,
 Thyself as great thou vauntedst, in the power
 Of riches vainly elevate ; but these
 Are nothing, their enjoyment frail and brief ;
 Nature is firm, not riches ; she remains
 For ever, and triumphant lifts her head.
 But unjust wealth, which sojourns with the base,
 Glitters for some short space, then flies away.
 To women thy demeanour I shall pass
 Unmentioned, for to speak it ill beseems
 A virgin's tongue ; yet I shall make it known
 By indistinct suggestion. Arrogance
 Swelled thy vain mind, for that the royal house
 Was thine, and beauty graced thy perfect form.
 But be not mine a husband whose fair face
 In softness with a virgin's vies, but one
 Of manly manners ; for the sons of such
 By martial toils are trained to glorious deeds :
 The beauteous only to the dance give grace.
 Perish, thou wretch, to nothing noble formed ;
 Such wast thou found, and vengeance on thy head
 At length hath burst ; so perish all, that dare
 Atrocious deeds ! Nor deem, though fair his course
 At first, that he hath vanquished Justice ere
 He shall have reached the goal, the end of life.

CHOR. His deeds were dreadful ; dreadful hath he felt
 Your vengeance. With great power is Justice armed.

ORES. So let it be. But bear this body hence,
 My slaves ; to darkness let it be consigned ;
 That when my mother comes, before she feels
 The deadly stroke, she may not see the corse.

ELEC. Forbear ; to other subjects turn we now.

ORES. What, from Mycenæ see I aid advance ?

ELEC. This is no friendly aid ; my mother comes.

ORES. As we could wish, amidst the toils she runs.

ELEC. High on her car in splendid state she comes.

ORES. What shall we do ? Our mother shall we kill ?

ELEC. On seeing her hath pity seized thy heart ?

ORES. She bore me, bred me ; her how shall I slay ?

ELEC. As she thy noble father slew and mine.

ORES. O Phœbus, wild and rash the charge thou gavst.

ELEC. Who then are sage, if Phœbus be unwise ?

ORES. The charge to kill my mother : impious deed !

ELEC. What guilt were thine t' avenge thy father's death ?

ORES. Now pure, my mother's murderer I should fly.

ELEC. Will vengeance for thy father be a crime ?

ORES. But I shall suffer for my mother's blood.

ELEC. To whom thy father's vengeance then assign ?

ORES. Like to the gods perchance some demon spoke.

ELEC. What, from the sacred tripod ! Vain surmise.

ORES. Ne'er can my reason deem this answer just.

ELEC. Sink not, unmanned, to weak and timorous thoughts.

ORES. For her then shall I spread the fatal net ?

ELEC. In which her husband caught by thee was slain.

ORES. The house I enter. Dreadful the intent :

Dreadful shall be my deeds. If such your will,

Ye heavenly powers, so let it be ; to me

A bitter, yet a pleasing task assigned.

CLYTEMNESTRA, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

CHOR. Imperial mistress of the Argive realms,

Drawing from Tyndarus thy noble birth,

And sister to th' illustrious sons of Jove,

Who 'midst the flaming ether dwell in stars,

By mortals lab'ring in the ocean waves

In honour as their great preservers held,

Hail ! Equal with the gods I thee revere,

Thy riches such, and such thy happy state ;

Thy fortune, queen, our veneration claims.

CLYT. First from the car, ye Trojan dames, alight ;

Then take my hand, that I too may descend.

The temples of the gods with Phrygian spoils

Are richly graced : these, from the land of Troy

Selected, for the daughter which I lost,

A small, but honourable prize, are mine.

ELEC. And may not I, for from my father's house
I am an outcast slave, this wretched hut
My mean abode, thy blest hand, mother, hold?

CLYT. My slaves are here : labour not thou for me.

ELEC. Why hast thou driven me from the house a slave?
For when the house was taken, I was seized,
As these, an orphan of my father rest.

CLYT. Such were the measures which thy father planned,
Where it beseemed him least, against his friends.

For I will speak (though when a woman forms
An ill opinion, from her tongue will flow
Much bitterness) my wrongs from him received :
These known, if for thy hatred thou hast cause,
'Tis just that thou abhor me ; but if not,
Why this abhorrence ? Me did Tyndarus
Give to thy father, not that I should die,
Nor my poor children : yet he led away,
Her nuptials with Achilles the pretence,
To Aulis led my daughter, in whose bay
His fleet was stationed ; on the altar there
My Iphigenia, like a blooming flower,
Did he mow down. Averting hostile arms
That threatened desolation to the state,
Or for the welfare of his house, to save
His other children, if for many one
A victim he had slain, the deed had found
Forgiveness : but for Helena, because
She was a wanton, and his faithless wife
Her husband could not punish, for this cause
My daughter he destroyed : yet for these wrongs,
Great as they were, I had not been enraged,
Nor had I slain my husband ; but he came,
And with him brought the raving prophetess
Admitted to his bed, and thus one house
Contained two wives. Women indeed are frail,
Nor other shall I speak ; but, this inferred,
Whene'er the husband from his honour swerves,
From his connubial bed estranged, the wife
Will imitate his manners, and obtain

Some other friend ; yet slander 'gainst our sex
 Raises her voice aloud ; while those who cause
 These trespasses, the men, no blame shall reach.
 Had Menelaus in secret from his house
 Been borne, ought I Orestes to have slain,
 To save my sister's husband ? His son's death
 How had thy father brooked ? And should not he,
 Who slew my daughter, die ? Was I to bear
 Patient his wrongs ? I slew him ; to that path,
 Which only I could tread, I turned my foot,
 Uniting with his foes ; for of his friends
 Against him who with me would lift the sword ?
 If, that thy father not with justice died,
 Aught thou wouldst urge against me, freely speak.

ELEC. What thou hast said is just ; yet shame attends
 That justice ; for the wife, if aught she knows
 Of sober sense, should to her husband yield
 In all things unreluctant. If thy mind
 Dissents, nor to the measure of my speech
 Accedes, yet let my mother her last words
 Call to her memory ; let me freely speak.

CLYT. I now repeat them, nor retract, my child.

ELEC. But, hearing, wilt thou not inflict some ill ?

CLYT. I will not ; but with kindness will requite.

ELEC. Then I will speak, and preface thus my speech.
 I wish, my mother, that a better mind
 Were thine ; for excellence of form hath brought
 To thee and Helena deserved praise.
 Nature hath formed you sisters, light and vain,
 Of Castor much unworthy. She was borne
 Away, and by her own consent undone ;
 Thou hast destroyed the noblest man of Greece :
 Thy daughter's death thy pretext, thou hast slain
 Thy husband ; but so well as I none knows,
 Before it was decreed that she should die,
 Whilst from Mycenæ his departure yet
 Was recent, at the mirror didst thou form
 The graceful ringlets of thy golden hair.
 The wife, that in her husband's absence seeks

With curious care to set her beauty forth,
 Mark as a wanton : she with nicest skill
 Would not adorn her person to appear
 Abroad, but that she is inclined to ill.
 Of all the Grecian dames didst thou alone,
 I know, rejoice, when prosperous were the arms
 Of Troy ; but when defeated, on thine eyes
 A cloud hung dark ; for never didst thou wish
 That Agamemnon should from Troy return.
 Yet glorious was th' occasion offered thee
 The strength of female virtue to display :
 Thou hadst a husband in no excellence
 Inferior to Ægisthus : and so vile
 Thy sister's conduct, thou hadst power from thence
 The highest honour to thyself to draw ;
 For in the foulness of th' example vice
 Instructive holds a mirror to the good.
 But if my father, as thou urgest, killed
 Thy daughter, how have I to thee done wrong ?
 My brother how ? Or why, when thou hadst slain
 Thy husband, didst thou not to us consign
 Our father's house, but make it the lewd scene
 Of other nuptials purchased by that prize ?
 Nor is thy husband exiled for thy son ;
 Nor hath he died for me, though, far beyond
 My sister's death, me living hath he slain.
 If blood, in righteous retribution, calls
 For blood, by me behoves it thou shouldst bleed,
 And by thy son Orestes, to avenge
 My father : there if this was just, alike
 Is it just here. Unwise is he, who weds,
 Allured by riches or nobility,
 A vicious woman : all that greatness brings
 Must yield to that endeared domestic bliss,
 Which on the chaste though humble bed attends.

CHOR. Respecting women fortune ever rules
 In nuptials : some a source of joy I see
 To mortals ; some nor joy nor honour know.

CLYT. Always, my daughter, was thy nature formed

Fond of thy father : not unusual this :
Some love the men, and on their mothers some
With greater warmth their sweet affections place.

I will forgive thee : nor indeed, my child,
In deeds done by me do I so rejoice.

But do I see thee, fresh from childbirth, thus
Unbathed, and in these wretched vestments clad ?

Ah, my unhappy counsels, that I urged
My husband 'gainst thee to a rage too harsh !

ELEC. Too late to breathe the sigh, when thou canst
give

No healing medicine. My father dead,
Why not recall thy outcast wand'ring son ?

CLYT. I fear : my welfare I regard, not his,
Said to breathe vengeance for his father's death.

ELEC. Against us why thy husband so enrage ?

CLYT. Such is his nature : and impetuous thine.

ELEC. My grief is great : but I will check my rage.

CLYT. And he no longer will be harsh to thee.

ELEC. High his aspiring ; in my house he dwells.

CLYT. Seest thou what contests thou wouldst raise anew ?

ELEC. I say no more : I fear him, as I fear——

CLYT. Cease this discourse. My presence why required ?

ELEC. That I am late a mother thou, I ween,
Hast heard : make thou the sacrifice for me,

I have no skill, on the tenth rising morn

What for my son the rites require ; for me,

This my first child, experience hath not taught.

CLYT. This is her task, who aided at the birth.

ELEC. Unaided and alone I bore the child.

CLYT. So neighbourless, so friendless stands thy house

ELEC. None with the poor a friendship wish to form.

CLYT. Then I will go, and offer to the gods,
The days accomplished, for thy son. This grace

For thee performed, I hasten to the fields,

Where to the nymphs my husband now presents

The hallowed victim. My attendants, drive

These chariots hence, and lead the steeds to stalls ;

When you imagine to the gods these rites

I shall have paid, again be present here :
My husband too behoves it me to grace.

ELEC. Let my poor house receive thee ; but take heed
Lest thy rich vests the black'ning smoke defiles.
There shalt thou sacrifice, as to the gods,
Behoves thee sacrifice : the basket there
Is for the rites prepared, and the keen blade
Which struck the bull : beside him shalt thou fall
By a like blow : in Pluto's courts his bride
He shall receive, with whom in heaven's fair light
Thy couch was shared : to thee this grace I give ;
Thou vengeance for my father shalt give me.

CHORUS.

Strophe.

Refluent the waves of mischief swell,
The forceful whirlwind veers around.
Then in the bath my monarch fell :
The roofs, the battlements resound ;
The polished stones, that form the walls,
His voice re-echo, as the hero falls,
“ Why, barb'rous woman, by thy hand,
After ten years of war on Phrygia's plain
Returned victorious to my native land,
Why, barb'rous woman, am I slain ?”

Antistrophe.

Now Justice, for the injured bed
Which light Love gloried to betray,
Turns back with vengeance on her head,
Who dared her lord to slay.
Long absent in the fields of fame
Scarce to the high Cyclopean towers he came,
Eager to shed his blood she strove ;
With her own hand the keen-edged axe she swayed,
With her own hand the murd'rous weapon drove,
And low her hapless husband laid.

Epode.

Hapless to such a pest allied,
 She, like a lioness, in savage pride
 Midst shaggy forests wild that feeds,
 Dared such atrocious deeds.

CLYT. O, by the gods, my children, do not kill [*Within.*
 Your mother !

CHOR. Heard you in the house her cry ?

CLYT. Ah me, ah me !

CHOR. I too lament thy fate,
 Fall'n by thy children's hands. Th' avenging god
 Dispenses justice when occasion calls.
 Dreadful thy punishment ; but dreadful deeds,
 Unhappy, 'gainst thy husband didst thou dare.
 Stained with their mother's recent-streaming blood,
 See, from the house they come, terrible proof
 Of ruthless slaughter. Ah ! there is no house,
 Nor hath been, with calamities oppressed,
 More than the wretched race of Tantalus.

ORESTES, PYLADES, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ORES. O Earth, and thou all-seeing Jove, behold
 These bloody, these detested deeds ! In death
 Stretched on the ground beneath my hand they lie,
 Both lie, a sad atonement for my wrongs.

ELEC. Much to be mourned, my brother, to be mourned
 With tears, and I the cause. Unchecked, unawed
 I to my mother came, I boldly came
 To her that gave me birth. Alas thy fate,
 Thy fate, my mother ! Thou hast suffered ills,
 And from thy children, whose remembrance time
 Can ne'er efface, deeds ruthless, and far worse
 Than ruthless : yet with justice hast thou paid
 This debt to vengeance for my father's blood.

ORES. O Phœbus, vengeance from thy hallowed shrine

Didst thou command, unutterable deeds,
But not obscure, through thee are done, from Greece
The bloody bed removed. But to what state
Shall I now go, what hospitable house?

Who will receive me? Who, that fears the gods,
Will look on me, stained with my mother's blood?

ELEC. And whither, to what country shall I fly,
Wretch that I am? What nuptials shall be mine?
What husband lead me to the bridal bed?

ORES. Again, again thy sober sense returns,
Changed with the gale: thy thoughts are holy now,
Then ruled by frenzy. To what dreadful deeds,
O thou most dear, hast thou thy brother urged
Reluctant? Didst thou see her, when she drew
Her vests aside, and bared her breasts, and bowed
To earth her body, whence I drew my birth,
Whilst in her locks my furious hand I wreathed?

ELEC. With anguished mind, I know, thou didst proceed,
When heard thy wailing mother's piteous cries.

ORES. These words, whilst with her hand she stroked my
cheeks,
Burst forth, "Thy pity I implore, my son:"
Soothing she spoke, as on my cheeks she hung,
That bloodless from my hand the sword might fall.

CHOR. Wretched Electra, how couldst thou sustain
A sight like this? How bear thy mother's death,
Seeing her thus before thine eyes expire?

ORES. Holding my robe before mine eyes I raised
The sword, and plunged it in my mother's breast.

ELEC. I urged thee to it: I too touched the sword.

CHOR. Of deeds most dreadful this which thou hast done.
Cover thy mother's body; in her robes
Decent compose her wounded limbs.—Thou gavst
Being to those who were to murder thee.

ELEC. Behold my friends, and not my friends, we wrap
Her robes around her, to our house the end
Of mighty ills.

CHOR. But see, above the house
What radiant forms appear? or are they gods

Celestial? Mortals through th' ethereal way
Walk not : but why to human sight disclosed ?

CASTOR *and* POLLUX.

Hear, son of Agamemnon : for to thee
Thy mother's brothers, twin-born sons of Jove,
Castor, and this my brother Pollux, speak.
Late having calmed the ocean waves, that swelled
The lab'ring vessel menacing, we came
To Argos, where our sister we beheld,
Thy mother, slain. With justice vengeance falls
On her : in thee unholy is the deed.
Yet Phœbus, Phœbus—— But, my king is he,
I will be silent : yet, though wise, he gave
To thee response not wise : but I must praise
Perforce these things. Thou now must do what Fate
And Jove decree. To Pylades affy
Electra ; let him lead her to his house
His bride : but leave thou Argos ; for its gates,
Thy mother slain, to thee is not allowed
To enter ; for the Furies, hounds of hell,
Will chase thee, wand'ring, and to madness whirled.
Go then to Athens, seat of Pallas, clasp
Her hallowed image : that they touch thee not
She o'er thy head her Gorgon shield will hold.
They from her dreadful dragons will start back
Appalled. The mount of Mars is there, where first
On blood the gods sate judges, when enraged
That by unhallowed nuptials wrong had stained
His daughter, Mars, to ruthless vengeance fired,
Slew Halirrhothius, of ocean's lord
The son. Most righteous from that time is held
The judgment there, and by the gods confirmed :
There thou must make appeal, this bloody deed
Be there decided : from the doom of blood
Absolved the equal numbers of the shells
Shall save thee that thou die not ; for the blame
Apollo on himself will charge, whose voice
Ordained thy mother's death : in future times

This law for ever shall be ratified,
 The votes in equal number shall absolve.
 At this the dreadful goddesses with grief
 Deep-wounded through the yawning earth shall sink
 E'en at the mount ; thence an oracular gulf
 Hallowed, revered by mortals. On the banks
 Of Alpheus, the Lycæan temple near,
 Thou must inhabit an Arcadian state.
 And from thy name the city shall be called.
 This I have said to thee ; but in the earth
 The citizens of Athens shall entomb
 The body of Ægisthus : the last rites
 Due to thy mother Menelaus shall pay,
 At Nauplia late from vanquished Troy arrived,
 And Helena. From Egypt, from the house
 Of Proteus, she returns : to Ilion's towers
 She went not ; but, that strife and bloody war
 'Mongst mortal men might rise, an imaged form
 Resembling Helena Jove sent to Troy.
 This virgin now let Pylades receive
 His bride, and home to the Achaian land
 Conduct her. Him, to thee in words allied,
 To Phocis let him lead, and give him there,
 Just to his modest virtue, ample wealth.
 Thou to the narrow Isthmus bend thy steps,
 Thence speed thee to the blest Cecropian state.
 The fated doom, assigned for blood, fulfilled,
 Thou shalt be happy, from thy toils released.

CHOR. O sons of Jove, may we presume t' approach,
 And converse with you be allowed to hold ?

CAST. You may ; no curse this blood derives on you.

ORES. May I address you, sons of Tyndarus ?

CAST. Thou mayst : to Phœbus this dire deed I charge.

CHOR. Gods as you are, and brothers to the slain,
 Why from the house did not your power avert
 This deadly ill ?

CAST. The dire necessity
 Of fate impelled it, and the voice unwise
 Of Phœbus from his shrine.

ELEC. But me what voice
Of Phœbus urged, what oracle, that I
The murderer of my mother should become ?

CAST. Common the actions, common too the fates.
One demon, hostile to your parents, rent
The hearts of both.

ORES. For such a length of time
Not seen, loved sister, am I torn so soon
From thy dear converse, leaving thee so soon,
And left ?

CAST. She hath a husband, and a house,
Nor suffers aught severe, save that she leaves
The Argive state.

ORES. And what severer woe
Can rend the anguished heart, than to be driv'n
An outcast from our country ? I must leave
My father's house, and for my mother's blood
The sentence passed by foreign laws abide.

CAST. Resume thy courage : to the sacred seat
Of Pallas shalt thou come ; be firm, endure.

ELEC. O my loved brother, clasp, O clasp my breast
Close to thy breast. For from our father's house
A mother's curse hath torn us, dreadful curse !

ORES. Thus let me clasp thee : o'er me, as now dead,
As o'er my tomb thy lamentations pour.

CAST. Ah, thou hast uttered sorrows e'en to gods
Mournful to hear. In me, in heaven's high powers
Is pity for the woes of mortal men.

ORES. I shall no more behold thee.

ELEC. And no more
Shall I come near thy sight.

ORES. No more with thee
Shall I hold converse : this my last address.

ELEC. Farewell, Mycenæ ! And you, virgins, born
In the same state with me, farewell, farewell !

ORES. O thou most faithful, dost thou go e'en now ?

ELEC. I go ; but dew my softened eyes with tears.

ORES. Go, Pylades, go thou with joy, and wed
Electra.

CAST. Them the nuptial rites await.
Haste thou to Athens, fly these hounds of hell ;
For 'gainst thee they their hideous steps advance,
Gloomy and dark, their hands with serpents armed,
Rejoicing in the dreadful pains they give.
To the Sicilian sea with speed we go,
To save the vessels lab'ring in the waves.
But to the impious through th' ethereal tract
We no assistance bring. But, those to whom
Justice and sanctity of life is dear,
We from their dang'rous toils relieve, and save.
Let no one then unjustly will to act,
Nor in one vessel with the perjured sail ;
A god to mortals this monition gives.

CHOR. Oh, be you blest ! And those, to whom is giv'n
Calmly the course of mortal life to pass
By no affliction sunk, pronounce we blest.

ORESTES.

To the *Choephoræ* of *Æschylus* we owe the “*Electra*” and “*Orestes*” of *Euripides*, and particularly that wonderful scene in which the madness of *Orestes* is represented. This was touched with a masterly hand by the great father of tragedy; but *Euripides*, as hath been observed before, had the skill to give this sketch its finishing, and to heighten it with the warmest glow of colouring. Our poet is here, as *Longinus* describes him, like a lion that at first disregards his assailants, but, as soon as he feels the spear, lashes himself up to rage, and rushes on with impetuous ardour. If his genius did not of itself carry him to the sublime, he has here forced his nature to the true tragic elevation. Here, as the critic finely observes, the poet himself saw the *Furies*; and what his imagination so finely conceived, he forced his audience almost to see. *Euripides*, indeed, particularly studied to enrich his tragedies with these two passions, Love and Madness; and he succeeded very happily in them. *Shakespeare* knew well how to paint the horrors of an imagination disturbed with the consciousness of guilt, and all that perilous stuff which weighs upon the heart, when *Macbeth* felt

His secret murders sticking on his hands :

but the frenzy of *Orestes* receives a peculiar heightening from the tenderness with which the scene opens and concludes; we have here all the sublime conception and noble daring of *Æschylus* united with that sympathetic softness which characterizes *Euripides*.

As we form our first acquaintance with these Grecian princes

from Homer, and imbibe an early veneration for their noble qualities embellished by the graces of his poetry, we are hurt at finding the gallant Menelaus, the intrepid hero, the affectionate brother, represented as an ungrateful, unfeeling, timid, designing poltroon. Aristotle (Poet. c. 15) is generally understood as censuring the poet for this unnecessary depravation of the hero's manners; but the words of the critic are so concise, and derive so little light from the connection, that they may be considered as a mysterious oracular sentence which wants an expounder; perhaps it excuses the poet upon the necessity, and indeed it is not easy to conceive how the drama, had it given to Menelaus other manners, could have been worked up to this terrible height of tragic distress.

But a stronger and more important censure must ever fall on the sanguinary spirit of revenge which breathes through this drama. Even Tyndarus, who professes the highest reverence for the laws, and declares his resolution to support them, urges the death of Orestes and Electra, though he acknowledges that the wisdom of their ancestors allowed the offenders to atone their guilt by banishment: thus his argument confutes itself, and he is a fine image of a person who deceives even himself with the pretext of justice, by viewing things through the false medium of passion. The cool and dispassionate Pylades proposes to kill Helena, because her death would afflict the heart of Menelaus with grief: Orestes readily engages in the horrid design: the Chorus, the faithful guardian of virtue, approves it: and Electra, far from expressing any abhorrence of this cruel murder, advises her brother to seize Hermione, and, should Menelaus refuse to save their lives, to plunge the sword into her breast. We may be assured that these sentiments were received with approbation, because the tender Virgil, whose heart was alive to all the feelings of humanity, hath adopted them, and given them to his pious Æneas:

Extinxisse tamen nefas, et sumpsisse merentis
Laudabor poenas; animumque explesse juvabit
Ultricis flammæ, et cineres satiasset meorum.

Æneid, ii. 585.

But it should be remembered that this savage and sanguinary spirit does not characterize Orestes or Æneas; it was general

in those ages, when not to revenge an injury was considered as a mark of a base and servile mind : their morality allowed, and their religion sanctified, such revenge. If our minds are more enlightened, and our manners more humanized, we know from whence we derive the advantage.

The scene is in the royal palace at Argos.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

ELECTRA.
HELENA.
ORESTES.
MENELAUS.
TYNDARUS.

PYLADES.
MESSENGER.
PHRYGIAN SLAVE.
CHORUS OF ARGIVE VIRGINS.

ELECTRA.

THERE is not in the stores of angry heaven
Aught terrible, affliction or distress,
But miserable man bears its full weight.
E'en Tantalus, the son of Jove, the blest
(Not to malign his fate), hangs in the air,
And trembles at the rock, which o'er his head
Projects its threat'ning mass ; a punishment
They say, for that to heaven's high feast admitted,
A mortal equal with th' immortals graced,
He curbed not the intemperance of his tongue ;
The sire of Pelops he, of Atreus this,
For whom the Fates weaving a diadem
Wove discord with the thread, to kindle war
Betwixt the brothers, Atreus and Thyestes.
But why recite things horrible to tell ?
Him Atreus feasted, having slain his sons.
From Atreus (may oblivion hide the rest)
Th' illustrious Agamemnon, if illustrious,

And Menelaus had birth ; Aërope
 Of Crete their mother. Menelaus espoused
 The fatal Helen, by the gods abhorred.
 Th' imperial Agamemnon wooed the bed
 Of Clytemnestra, memorable to Greece ;
 From her three daughters sprung, Chrysothemis
 And Iphigenia, and myself Electra,
 One son, Orestes, from this wicked mother,
 Who in th' inextricable robe entangled
 Her husband murdered, for a cause which ill
 Becomes a virgin's modest lips t' unfold.
 Th' injustice of Apollo must I blame ?
 Orestes he commands to slay his mother,
 Nor bears to all the glory of the deed.
 Not disobedient to the god he slew her.
 I had my share, such as a woman might,
 And Pylades assisted in the act.
 Since then the poor Orestes pines away
 Impaired with cruel sickness ; on his bed
 He lies ; his mother's blood to frenzy whirls
 His tortured sense : th' avenging powers, that haunt
 His soul with terrors thus, I dare not name.
 The sixth day this, since on the hallowed pile
 My slaughtered mother purged her stains away.
 No food hath passed his lips, no bath refreshed
 His limbs ; but in his garments covered close,
 When his severe disease abates a little,
 He melts in tears ; and sometimes from his couch
 Starts furious, like a colt burst from his yoke.
 Meantime the state of Argos hath decreed
 That shelt'ring roof, and fire, and conference
 Be interdicted to us matricides.
 And this decisive day the states pronounce
 Our doom, to die crushed with o'erwhelming stones,
 Or by th' avenging sword plunged in our breasts.
 Yet have we one small ray of bright'ning hope,
 Hope that we die not ; for from Troy returned
 After long wand'rings Menelaus arrives,
 His vessels in the Nauplian harbour moored,

And to this strand impels his eager oar ;
 But the woe-working Helen in the shades
 Of shelt'ring night, lest some, whose sons were slain
 Beneath the walls of Troy, seeing her walk
 In day's fair light, with vengeful rage might rise,
 And crush the shining mischief, first he lands,
 And sends her to our house : there now she is,
 Weeping her sister's fate and our afflictions.
 Yet 'midst her grief this comfort she enjoys,
 Hermione, her virgin daughter, whom
 At Sparta, when she sailed for Troy, she left,
 The father to my mother's care consigned ;
 In her delighted she forgets her woes.
 But my quick eye glances to each access,
 If Menelaus advancing I might see.
 Weak help from others, if not saved by him :
 The house of the unhappy hath no friend.

ELECTRA, HELENA.

HEL. Daughter of Clytemnestra and the chief
 That drew from Atreus his illustrious birth,
 Virgin of ripest years, how is it, say,
 With thee, unhappy, and the wretch Orestes,
 Who in his mother's blood imbrued his hands ?
 With thee conversing I am not polluted,
 Charging the crime on Phœbus. Yet I mourn
 My sister's fate ; for since I sailed to Troy,
 Urged to that madness by th' offended gods,
 These eyes have not beheld her ; yet, her loss
 Deploring, at her fortunes drop the tear.

ELEC. Why should I tell thee what thine eyes behold,
 The race of Agamemnon in distress ?
 Myself attendant on th' unhappy dead,
 But that he breathes a little he is dead.
 Sit sleepless : yet reproach I not his ills.
 But thou art happy, happy is thy husband ;
 To us in our calamities ye come.

HEL. How long on this sick-bed hath he been laid ?

ELEC. E'er since he shed her blood who gave him breath.

HEL. Ah, wretch! Ah, wretched mother thus to perish!

ELEC. Such our lost state I sink beneath our ills.

HEL. Do me one grace I beg thee by the gods.

ELEC. As watching at my brother's couch I may.

HEL. Wilt thou go for me to my sister's tomb?

ELEC. My mother's dost thou mean? And wherefore go?

HEL. These locks and my libations to present.

ELEC. What hinders but thou visit thy friend's tomb?

HEL. And show me to the Grecians? Shame forbids.

ELEC. Too late discreet; when shameless from thy
house——

HEL. Just is thy censure, but not friendly to me.

ELEC. And at Mycenæ dost thou feel this shame?

HEL. I dread the fathers, whose sons died at Troy.

ELEC. Against thee loud the voice of Argos cries.

HEL. Oblige me then, and free me from this fear.

ELEC. I could not look upon my mother's tomb.

HEL. To send these offerings by a slave were shame.

ELEC. Hermione, thy daughter, why not send?

HEL. A virgin 'midst the crowd! Indecent this.

ELEC. The favours of the dead, who trained her youth
With fond affection, thus she might repay.

HEL. 'Tis justly urged: I will obey thee, virgin,
And send my daughter; for thy words are wise.

Hermione, come hither: to the tomb

Of Clytemnestra these libations bear,

And these my locks; there pour this honied bowl

Foaming with milk and wine; on the high mound,

Addressing thus the dead, "These hallowed gifts

Helen, thy sister, offers, who through fear

Approaches not thy tomb, dreading the crowd

Of Argos." Bid her be propitious to us,

To me, to thee, my husband, and these two,

These wretched two, whom Phœbus hath undone.

Then promise all that to a sister's shade

A sister should bestow: go, my child, haste,

Present these gifts; then speed thy quick return.

ELEC. O nature, in the bad how great an ill!

[*Alone.*]

But in the virtuous strong thy power to save.
 See, she hath shorn th' extremity of her locks,
 Anxious of beauty, the same woman still !
 May the gods hate thee, as thou hast ruined me,
 And him, and universal Greece !—Ah me,
 My loved companions come, whose friendly grief
 Attunes their sad notes to my mournful strains.
 He sleeps now ; they will wake him, and my eyes
 Will melt in tears, when I behold him rave.

ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ELEC. Dearest of women, softly set your feet,
 Not to be heard ; gently advance ; no noise.
 Kind is your friendship : but t' awake him now
 From this sweet rest would be a grief to me.

CHOR. Silence, silence ! Softly tread :

Nor foot be heard, nor sound, nor noise.

ELEC. This way far, far from the bed.

CHOR. I obey.

ELEC. Hush, let thy voice

Steal on my ear

Soft as the whispers of the breathing reed.

CHOR. Soft as the whispers of the breathing reed

My voice shall steal upon thy ear.

ELEC. Ay, thus, low, low ; softly come near ;

Come softly, friends, and tell me why

This visit. A long sleep hath closed his eye.

CHOR. Doth hope then brighten on his ill ?

ELEC. Alas, what hope ? Behold him lie ;

He breathes, a little breathes, and still

Heaves at short intervals a sigh.

CHOR. Unhappy state !

ELEC. Death were it, should you, as thus loud you weep,

Fright from his eyelids the sweet joys of sleep.

CHOR. Yet wail I his unhappy state,

Abhorred deeds of deadly hate,

Rage of vindictive, tort'ring woes,

Which the relentless powers of heaven impose.

ELEC. Unjust, unjust the stern command,
 The stern command Apollo gave
 From Themis' seat, his ruthless hand
 In blood, in mother's blood to lave.

CHOR. Ah, turn thine eye.

He stirs, he moves, rolled in the cov'ring vest.

ELEC. Wretch, thy rude clamours have disturbed his rest.

CHOR. And yet I think sleep locks his eye.

ELEC. Wilt thou be gone? hence wilt thou fly,

That quiet here again may dwell?

CHOR. Again composed he sleeps again.

ELEC. 'Tis well.

CHOR. Awful queen, whose gentle power

Brings sweet oblivion of our woes,

And in the calm and silent hour

Distils the blessings of repose,

Come awful Night,

Come from the gloom of Erebus profound,

And spread thy sable-tinctured wings around;

Speed to this royal house thy flight;

For pale-eyed Grief, and wild Affright,

And all the horrors of Despair,

Here pour their rage, and threaten ruin here.

ELEC. Softly let your warblings flow;

Further, a further distance keep;

The far-off cadence sweet and low

Charms his repose, and aids his sleep.

CHOR. Tell us, what end

Awaits his mis'ries?

ELEC. Death: that end I fear.

He tastes no food.

CHOR. Death then indeed, and near.

ELEC. When Phœbus gave the dire command

To bathe in mother's blood his hand,

By whom the father sunk in dust,

He doomed us victims.

CHOR. Dire these deeds, but just.

ELEC. She slew, she died.—Thy hand abhorred

In dust my bleeding father laid:

And for thy blood, in vengeance poured,
 We perish, perish as the dead.
 The shadowy train
 Thou joinest : but my life shall waste away
 In tears the night, in sighs and groans the day.
 But, ah ! to whom shall I complain !
 Nor child nor husband soothes my pain :
 For ever drag I my distress,
 Sigh, mourn, and weep in lonely wretchedness.

CHOR. Go nearer, royal virgin ; nearer view him,
 That under this soft sleep the sleep of death
 Deceive thee not : I like not this still rest.

ORESTES, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ORES. O gentle Sleep, whose lenient power thus soothes
 Disease and pain, how sweet thy visit to me,
 Who wanted thy soft aid ! Blessing divine,
 That to the wretched givest wished repose,
 Steeping their senses in forgetfulness !—
 Where have I been ! Where am I ? How brought hither ?
 My late distraction blots remembrance out.

ELEC. My most dear brother, oh, what heart-felt joy
 To see thee lie composed in gentle sleep !
 Wilt thou I touch thee ? Shall I raise thee up ?

ORES. Assist me then, assist me ; from my mouth
 Wipe off this clotted foam ; wipe my moist eyes.

ELEC. Delightful office, for a sister's hand
 To minister relief to a sick brother.

ORES. Lie by my side, and from my face remove
 These squalid locks ; they blind my darkened eyes.

ELEC. How tangled are the ringlets of thy hair,
 Wild and disordered through this long neglect !

ORES. Pray lay me down again : when this ill frenzy
 Leaves me, I am very feeble, very faint.

ELEC. There, there : the bed is grateful to the sick,
 A mournful, but a necessary tenure.

ORES. Raise me again ; more upright ; bend me forward.

CHOR. The sick are wayward through their restlessness.

ELEC. Or wilt thou try with slow steps on the ground
To fix thy feet? Variety is sweet.

ORES. Most willingly: it hath the show of health;
The seeming hath some good, though void of truth.

ELEC. Now, my loved brother, hear me, whilst the Furies
Permit thy sense thus clear and undisturbed.

ORES. Has thou aught new? If good, I thank thee
for it;

If ill, I have enough of ill already.

ELEC. Thy father's brother, Menelaus, arrives;
His fleet rides anchored in the Nauplian bay.

ORES. Comes he then? Light on our afflictions dawns:
Much to my father's kindness doth he owe.

ELEC. He comes; and, to confirm what now I say,
Brings Helena from Ilium's ruined walls.

ORES. More to be envied, were he saved alone;
Bringing his wife, he brings a mighty ill.

ELEC. The female line of Tyndarus was born
To deep disgrace, and infamous through Greece.

ORES. Be thou unlike them then; 'tis in thy power;
And further than in words thy virtue prove.

ELEC. Alas, my brother, wildly rolls thine eye;
So quickly changed! the frenetic fit returns.

ORES. Ah, mother! Do not set thy Furies on me.
See, how their fiery eyeballs glare in blood,
And wreathing snakes hiss in their horrid hair!
There, there they stand, ready to leap upon me.

ELEC. Rest thee, poor brother, rest thee on thy bed;
Thou seest them not; 'tis fancy's coinage all.

ORES. O Phœbus, they will kill me, these dire forms,
These Gorgon-visaged ministers of hell!

ELEC. Thus will I hold thee, round thee throw mine arms,
And check th' unhappy force of thy wild starts.

ORES. Off, let me go! I know thee, who thou art,
One of the Furies; and thou grapplest with me,
To whirl me into Tartarus. Avaunt!

ELEC. What shall I do? Ah me, where shall I seek
Assistance, since th' unfriendly god frowns on us!

ORES. Bring me the bow of horn which Phœbus gave me,

And with it bade me drive these fiends away,
Should they affright me with their madd'ning terrors.

ELEC. Shall any god by mortal hands be wounded?

ORES. Should she not instant vanish from my sight.

Heard you the clang? Saw you the wingéd shaft
Bound from the distant-wounding bow? Ha, ha!
Here yet! On swift wings mount th' ethereal air,
And there impeach the oracle of Phœbus.—

Whence this disquiet? Why thus pants my breath?

Ah, whither am I wandered from my bed?

For from the storm the high-swoln waves subside.

Why dost thou weep, my sister? Why decline

Thy drooping head, and hide it in thy vest?

I blush to give thee part in my disease,

And wound with grief thy virgin tenderness.

Let not my ills be thus infectious to thee;

Thou barely didst assent; I did the deed,

I shed her blood. But Phœbus I must blame,

Who urged me to this most unholy act;

Then, save with soothing words, assist me not.

Had these eyes seen my father, had I asked him

In duty if I ought to slay my mother,

I think he would have prayed me not to plunge

My murdering sword in her that gave me birth;

Since he could not revisit heaven's sweet light,

And I must suffer all these miseries.

But now unveil thy face and dry thy tears,

My sister, though afflictions press us sore:

And when thou seest me in these fitful moods,

Soothe my disordered sense, and let thy voice

Speak peace to my distraction; when the sigh

Swells in thy bosom, 'tis a brother's part

With tender sympathy to calm thy griefs;

These are the pleasing offices of friends.

But to thy chamber go, afflicted maid,

There seek repose, close thy long-sleepless eyes,

With food refresh thee, and th' enlivening bath.

Shouldst thou forsake me, or with too close tendance

Impair thy delicate and tender health,

Then were I lost indeed ; for thou alone,
Abandoned as I am, art all my comfort.

ELEC. Should I forsake thee ! No ; my choice is fixed ;
And I will die with thee, or with thee live,
Indifferent for myself ; for shouldst thou die,
What refuge shall a lonely virgin find,
Her brother lost, her father lost, her friends
All melted from her ?—Yet, if such thy wish,
I ought t' obey : recline thee on thy couch,
Nor let these visionary terrors fright thee ;
There rest ; though all be fancy's coinage wild,
Yet Nature sinks beneath the violent toil.

CHORUS.

Strophe.

Awful powers, whose rapid flight
Bears you from the realms of night
To hearts that groan, and eyes that weep,
Where you joyless orgies keep,
Ye gloomy powers, that shake the affrighted air,
And armed with your tremendous rod,
 Dealing terror, woe, despair,
 Punish murder, punish blood,
For Agamemnon's race this strain,
This supplicating strain, I pour ;
No more afflict his soul with pain,
Nor torture him with madness more :
 Breathe oblivion o'er his woes,
 Leave him, leave him to repose.
Unhappy youth, what toils are thine,
Since Phœbus from his central shrine
Bade thee unsheath th' avenging sword,
And Fate confirmed th' irrevocable word !

Antistrophe.

Hear us, king of gods, O hear,
 Where is soft-eyed Pity, where?
 Whence, to plunge thee thus in woes,
 Discord stained with gore arose?
 What vengeful Demon thus with footstep dread,
 Trampling the blood-polluted ground,
 Sternly cruel joys to spread
 Horror, rage, and madness round?
 Woe, woe is me! In man's frail state
 Nor height nor greatness firm abides:
 On the calm sea secure of fate,
 Her sails all spread, the vessel rides:
 Now th' impetuous whirlwinds sweep,
 Roars the storm, and swells the deep,
 Till with the furious tempest tost
 She sinks in surging billows lost.
 Yet firm their fate will I embrace,
 And still revere this heaven-descended race.

CHOR. But see, the royal Menelaus advances:
 That awe-commanding and majestic port
 Denotes him of the race of Tantalus.—
 Illustrious leader of a thousand ships,
 That bore to Asia's strand thy martial host,
 All hail! Good fortune guides thee, and the gods,
 Fav'ring thy vows, have blessed thy conq'ring arms.

MENELAUS, ORESTES, CHORUS.

MEN. From Troy returned, with pleasure I behold
 This royal house, with pleasure mixed with grief:
 For never saw I house encompassed round
 With such afflictions. Agamemnon's fate,
 How by his wife he perished, I long since
 At Malea learned, when rising from the waves
 Confessed to open view the sailors' prophet,

Unerring Glaucus, the dire bath disclosed,
 The wife, and each sad circumstance of blood ;
 A tale, that harrowed up my soul with grief,
 And wrung the tear from the stern veteran's eye.
 But to the Nauplian coast arrived, my wife
 First landed, when I hoped with joy to fold
 Orestes and his mother in my arms,
 As happy now, a wave-washed fisherman
 Told me that Clytemnestra is no more,
 Slain by th' unholy sword. But, virgins, say
 Where is Orestes, who these horrid ills
 Hath dared ? For when the war called me to Troy,
 An infant in his mother's arms I left him,
 That now, if seen, his form would be unknown.

ORES. He whom thou seekst am I : I am Orestes.
 To thee, O king, will I unfold my woes,
 And willingly : but first I grasp thy knees,
 And pour my plain unornamented prayer :
 Save me ; for thou 'midst my distress art come.

MEN. Ye powers of heaven, what do mine eyes behold ?
 One from the regions of the dead returned !

ORES. Well hast thou said : I view the light indeed,
 But do not live ; such are my miseries.

MEN. How wild, how horrid hangs thy matted hair !

ORES. The real, not th' apparent, racks my soul.

MEN. Thy shrunk and hollow eye glares dreadfully.

ORES. My whole frame wastes ; nought, save my name, is left.

MEN. Reason revolts at this thy squalid form.

ORES. Alas, I am the murderer of my mother.

MEN. I have heard it : spare mine ear the tale of woe.

ORES. I will : yet heaven is rich in woes to me.

MEN. What are thy sufferings ? What disease consumes thee ?

ORES. Conscience : the conscious guilt of horrid deeds.

MEN. How sayst thou ? Wisdom suffers when obscure.

ORES. A pining melancholy most consumes me.

MEN. Dreadful its power, but not immedicable.

ORES. And frenzy, fierce t' avenge my mother's blood.

MEN. When did its rage first seize thee ? What the day ?

ORES. The day I raised my hapless mother's tomb.

- MEN. What, in the house, or sitting at the pyre?
ORES. By night, as from rude hands I guard her bones.
MEN. Was any present, to support thy weakness?
ORES. My Pylades, who aided in her death.
MEN. What phantoms frighten thy disordered sense?
ORES. Three virgin forms I see gloomy as night.
MEN. Whom thy words mark I know, but will not name.
ORES. Awful they are : forbear irreverent words.
MEN. And do these haunt thee for thy mother's blood?
ORES. Ah wretched me, how dreadful their pursuit !
MEN. Thus dreadful sufferings dreadful deeds attend.
ORES. Yet have we where to charge our miseries.
MEN. Name not thy father's death ; that were unwise.
ORES. Phœbus, by whose command I slew my mother.
MEN. Of right and justice ignorant, I ween.
ORES. We to the gods submit, whate'er they are.
MEN. And doth not Phœbus in thine ills protect thee?
ORES. Not yet : delays attend the powsrs divine.
MEN. How long then since thy mother breathed her last ?
ORES. This the sixth day ; the funeral pile yet warm.
MEN. How soon thy mother's blood these powers avenge ?
ORES. Unwisely said : though true, unkind to friends.
MEN. What then avails to have avenged thy father ?
ORES. Nought yet. Delay is as a deed not done.
MEN. In what light does the city view thy deeds ?
ORES. They hate us, so that none hold conference with us.
MEN. Hast thou yet purified thy hands from blood ?
ORES. Where'er I go, each house is barred against me.
MEN. What citizens thus drive thee from the land ?
ORES. Cæax, through ranc'rous malice to my father.
MEN. On the avenging Palamedes' death ?
ORES. I wrought it not. But three pursue my ruin.
MEN. The others who ? Some of Ægisthus' friends ?
ORES. They hurt me most, whose power now sways the state.
MEN. Commit they not the sceptre to thy hands ?
ORES. They, who no longer suffer us to live !
MEN. How acting ? What thou art assured of speak.
ORES. Sentence against us will this day be given.
MEN. Of exile ? or to die ? or not to die ?

ORES. To die, with stones crushed by our citizens.

MEN. Why fliest thou not far from this country's bounds?

ORES. On every side we are enclosed with arms.

MEN. By private foes, or by the Argive state?

ORES. By the whole state: in brief, that I may die.

MEN. Wretch, thou hast reached misfortune's dire extreme.

ORES. In thee is all my hope, in thee my refuge:

Happy to us afflicted art thou come;

Share with thy friends that happiness, alone

Enjoy not all the good thou hast received;

In our afflictions bear a friendly part.

Think how my father loved thee, and requite

That love to us: it will become thee well:

They have the name of friends, but not the worth,

Who are not friends in our calamities.

CHOR. But see, the Spartan Tyndarus this way

Directs his aged feet, in sable weeds,

His locks, in grief for his dead daughter, shorn.

ORES. Ah me! He comes indeed, whose presence most
Fills me with shame for what I have misdone.

I was his darling once; my infant age

With tenderness he nursed, caressed me, bore

The child of Agamemnon in his arms,

And loved me like the twin-born sons of Jove:

Nor Leda less. And is it thus, my soul,

Thus, O my bleeding heart, that I requite

Their ill-paid love! Ah, cover me, ye shades,

Ye clouds, with friendly darkness wrap me round,

And hide me from the terrors of his eye!

TYNDARUS, MENELAUS, ORESTES, CHORUS.

TYND. Where shall I see my daughter's husband, where
Find Menelaus? At Clytemnestra's tomb,

Libations as I poured, I heard that he,

With Helen, after all these tedious years,

Is safely in the Nauplian port arrived.

O lead me; for I long to grasp his hand,

To feast mine eyes after this length of years,

And welcome to our shores the man I love.

MEN. Hail, reverend sharer of the bed with Jove!

TYND. With joy thy greeting I return, my son.

Ah, not to know the future, what an ill!

Hateful to me this murd'rous dragon here

Glares pestilential lightnings from his eyes.

Wilt thou hold conference with th' unhallowed wretch?

MEN. And wherefore not? His father was my friend.

TYND. From such a father sprung a son so vile?

MEN. He did; to be respected, though unhappy.

TYND. Barb'rous thy manners, 'mongst barbarians learned.

MEN. Nay, Greece enjoins respect to kindred blood.

TYND. And not to wish to be above the laws.

MEN. Necessity is to the wise a law.

TYND. Enjoy it thou; I will have none of it.

MEN. Wisdom approves not anger in thy years.

TYND. What! Is the contest then of wisdom with him?

If virtuous and dishonourable deeds

Are plain to all, who more unwise than he?

Deaf to the call of justice he infringed

The firm authority of the public laws:

For when beneath my daughter's murd'ring axe

Th' imperial Agamemnon bowed his head,

A horrid deed, which never shall I praise,

He ought t' have called the laws, the righteous laws,

T' avenge the blood, and by appeal to them

Have driven his mother from this royal house:

Thus 'midst his ills calm reason had borne rule,

Justice had held its course, and he been righteous.

But the same Fury, which had seized his mother,

Had now seized him; and with ungoverned rage,

Justly abhorrent of her impious deed,

He did a deed more impious, slew his mother.

For, let me ask thee, should the faithless wife

Bathe in the husband's blood her murd'rous hands,

And should th' avenging son the mother slay,

His son again retaliate blood for blood,

What bound shall the progressive mischief know?

The wisdom of our ancestors ordained

That he, who had the guilt of blood upon him,

Be not allowed the sight, the walks of men,
 By banishment atoning, not by death :
 Else one must always be to death devote,
 Who hath the last pollution on his hands.
 But these vile women doth my soul abhor,
 And her, my daughter, first, who slew her lord :
 Thy Helen too I never will commend,
 Never hold converse with her ; no, nor thee
 Can I approve, who for a worthless woman
 In toilsome march hast trod the fields of Troy.
 Yet to my power will I support the laws,
 And check this savage, blood-polluted rage,
 Which spreads wild havoc o'er th' unpeopled land.
 Hadst thou the feelings of humanity,
 Wretch, when thy mother cried to thee for mercy,
 And bared her breast to thy relentless view ?
 I saw it not, that scene of misery,
 Yet the soft tear melts from my aged eye.
 One thing confirms my words : the gods abhor,
 With madness scourge thee, and with terrors haunt,
 Vindictive of thy guilt. What need I hear
 From other witness what mine eyes behold ?
 Now, Menelaus, I warn thee, mark me well :
 Do not, protecting him, oppose the gods,
 But leave him to the vengeance of the state,
 Or never set thy foot on Sparta's shore.
 My daughter by her death hath rightly paid
 The debt to justice : but from him that death
 Was most unjust. Oh, happy had I been,
 Had I no daughters : there I am a wretch !

CHOR. Happy his state, who, in his children blest,
 Hath not there felt affliction's deepest wound.

ORES. In reverence to thy age I dread to speak
 What I well know must pierce thy heart with grief.
 I am unholy in my mother's death,
 But holy, as my father I avenged.
 The veneration due to those grey hairs
 Strikes me with awe : else I could urge my plea
 Freely and boldly ; but thy years dismay me.

What could I do? Let fact be weighed with fact.
My father was the author of my being ;
Thy daughter brought me forth : he gave me life,
Which she but fostered : to the higher cause
A higher reverence then I deemed was due.
Thy daughter, for I dare not call her mother,
Forsook her royal bed for a rank sty
Of secret and adulterous lust : on me
The word reflects disgrace, yet I must speak it.
Ægisthus was this private paramour :
Him first I slew, then sacrificed my mother :
An impious deed ; but I avenged my father.
Thou threatenst the just vengeance of the state :
Hear me : deserve I not the thanks of Greece ?
Should wives with ruffian boldness kill their husbands,
Then fly for refuge to their sons, and think,
Baring their breast, to captivate their pity,
These deeds would pass for nothing, as the mood,
For something or for nothing, shall incline them.
This complot have I broke, by doing what
Thy pompous language styles atrocious deeds.
My soul abhorred my mother, and I slew her,
Who, when her lord was absent, and in arms
To glorious conquest led the sons of Greece,
Betrayed him, with pollution stained his bed ;
And, conscious of her guilt, sought not t' atone it,
But, to escape his righteous vengeance, poured
Destruction on his head, and killed my father.
Now by the gods, though in a charge of blood
Ill it becomes me to invoke the gods,
Had I in silence tamely borne her deeds,
Would not the murdered, justly hating me,
Have roused the Furies to torment my soul ?
Or hath she only her assisting fiends,
And he no fav'ring power t' avenge his wrongs ?
Thou, when to that bad daughter thou gavst birth,
Didst give me ruin ; for through her bold crime
I lost my father, and my mother slew.
Seest thou Ulysses' wife ? Telemachus

Shed not her blood ; for she, unstained with vice,
 Guards her chaste bed with spotless sanctity.
 Seest thou Apollo, who to mortal ears
 Sounds from his central cave the voice of truth ?
 Him we obey in all that he commands :
 Obeying his commands, I slew my mother ;
 Drag him then to your bar, put him to death ;
 The guilt is his, not mine. What should I do ?
 The guilt on him transferred, is not the god
 Sufficient to absolve me ? Where shall man
 Find refuge, if the god, at whose command
 I did it, will not now save me from death ?
 Then say not that these deeds were done not well,
 But to the doers most unhappily.
 If well accorded, the connubial state
 From all its strings speaks perfect harmony ;
 If ill, at home, abroad, the harsh notes jar,
 And with rude discord wound the ear of Peace.

CHOR. That Peace to wound always our sex was born,
 Augmenting by our ills the ills of men.

TYND. What, dost thou brave me, and in proud defiance
 So answer, as to pierce my heart with grief ?
 This pride will fire me more to urge thy death.
 One honest task I'll add to that which drew me
 Hither, to grace my murdered daughter's tomb :
 This instant to th' assembled Argives go,
 And rouse the willing state, an easy task,
 To crush thee, and thy sister : she deserves,
 E'en more than thou, to die, whose accursed tongue
 Added new fierceness to thy fierce intents,
 Thine ears assailing with some bitter speech,
 That Agamemnon's shade haunted her dreams,
 That the tremendous powers below abhorred
 Th' adulterous bed, foul e'en to man's gross sense,
 Till all this house blazed in the flames she kindled.
 I tell thee, Menelaus, and I will do it,
 If thou regard my hate, or my alliance,
 Protect him not, by the just gods I charge thee,
 But leave him to the rigour of the laws,

Or never dare to tread on Spartan ground.
 Hear me, and mark me : league not with the vile,
 Nor scorn thy friends, whose breasts with virtue glow.
 Here, my attendants, lead me from this house.

ORESTES, MENELAUS, CHORUS.

ORES. Why get thee gone, that I may plead to him,
 Uninterrupted by thy wayward age.—
 Why dost thou bend that way, then backward turn,
 Thoughtful thy step, absorbed in anxious care ?

MEN. Forbear, and leave me to my thoughts, perplexed
 And unresolved which cause I should espouse.

ORES. Suspend awhile thy judgment ; hear me first,
 First hear my plea ; weigh it, and then resolve.

MEN. Speak ; thou hast reason. Wisdom sometimes loves
 To dwell with silence, sometimes woos the ear.

ORES. Then let me urge my plea ; and, oh ! forgive me
 If I seem tedious : grief is fond of words.

Give me not aught of thine, only return
 What from my father's grace thou hast received.

I ask not thy rich treasures, yet a treasure
 Richer than all thy stores : I ask my life.
 Is this unjust ? Let me from thee receive
 Something unjust : such Agamemnon was,
 Who led to Troy th' united arms of Greece :

Yet was the wrong not his ; but to avenge
 Thy wife's incontinent and foul offence.
 For all his dangers, all his toils in war,
 Borne as becomes a friend, in a friend's cause,
 Give me one day for his ten years in arms :

To vindicate thy honour, one short day
 Stand firm, my friend, the guardian of my life.
 For thee at Aulis my poor sister died ;

I am content, nor ask Hermione
 A sacrifice for me. In my distress
 Protect me, pity me ; I ask no more.
 To my unhappy father grant my life,
 And save my sister, save her virgin years.

The house of Agamemnon sinks with me.
 Impossible thou'lt say: "When danger threatens,
 The friend comes forth resolved, and shields his friend:
 In fortune's golden smiles what need of friends?
 Her fav'ring power wants no auxiliary.
 Greece sees thou lovst thy wife." I speak not this
 In flattery, to wind into thy bosom;
 But I conjure thee by that love—Ah me!
 How am I fall'n! Not for myself alone
 I pour my prayer, but for my father's house.
 Now by the kindred blood, whose royal tide
 Rolls in thy veins; by each endearing tie
 Of fond relation and fraternal love,
 Think that my murdered father's injured shade
 Burst from the realms of death, and hovers o'er thee;
 And think, oh, think the words I speak are his.
 'Tis for my life I plead, life's dear to all,
 With sighs, with groans, with tears: save me, oh, save me!

CHOR. Low at thy knees a woman joins her prayer;
 Oh, save them, save th' unhappy, for thou canst!

MEN. I hold thee dear, Orestes, and am willing
 To give my friendly aid in thy distress;
 Th' affinity of blood calls loudly on us
 To share its toils, if the gods grant the power,
 Nor shrink appalled at danger or at death;
 And much I wish the gods would grant this power:
 But with a thousand toils oppressed I come,
 And lift a single spear, whose glitt'ring point
 No squadrons follow wedged in firm array;
 Few my remaining friends, and small my force.
 With Argos then should we engage in arms,
 We could not conquer; but with gentle words
 Perchance we may: this way Hope smiles on us.
 Who would with feeble forces aim at deeds
 Of perilous proof? 'Twere folly to attempt it.
 When roused to rage the madd'ning populace storms,
 Their fury, like a rolling flame, bursts forth
 Unquenchable; but give its violence way,
 It spends itself, and as its force abates

Learns to obey, and yields it to your will :
 Their passions varying thus, now rough with rage,
 Now melting with soft pity, Wisdom marks
 The change, and turns it to a rich account.
 Thus Tyndarus I will move, and th' Argive state,
 To use their supreme power with gentleness.
 The gallant bark, that too much swells her sails,
 Oft is o'erset, but let her pride be lowered,
 She rides secure, and glories in the gale.
 Impetuous rage is hateful to the gods,
 Hateful to men : with cool unpassioned reason
 (Discretion guides my words) I must preserve thee,
 And not, as thou perchance mayst deem, by force ;
 Against the stronger what can force avail ?
 Its trophies can my single spear erect
 Victorious o'er the ills that now assault thee ?
 To be a suitor hath not been my use
 At Argos, but Necessity will teach us,
 If wise, submission to the power of Fortune.

ORESTES, CHORUS.

ORES. Thou doughty champion of thy wife, good else
 For nought, in thy friend's cause a coward base,
 Thus dost thou slight me, turn thee thus away ?
 Are Agamemnon's favours thus repaid ?
 Thou hadst no friend, my father, in thy ills.
 Ah me ! I am betrayed ; e'en Hope forsakes me,
 And leaves me unprotected to my fate,
 Who on his shelt'ring power alone relied.—
 But from his Phocians, see, with hasty step
 Here comes a friend indeed, my Pylades !
 A pleasing sight : for in distress a friend
 Comes like a calm to the tossed mariner.

PYLADES, ORESTES, CHORUS.

PYL. With swift pace speed I through the city, hearing
 Their counsels, and discerning their intents
 T' adjudge thee and thy sister to quick death.

But what ! How fares my friend ? What thy design ?
 Thou partner of my soul, companion dear,
 Friend, kinsman, brother : thou art all to me.

ORES. To speak my woes in brief then, we are lost.

PYL. Then in thy ruin is thy friend involved.

ORES. The Spartan views us with malignant eye.

PYL. A vile wife to a husband matched as vile.

ORES. To me no joy doth his arrival bring.

PYL. Is he indeed then at this land arrived ?

ORES. Late, but soon found unfaithful to his friends.

PYL. And brought he his disloyal wife with him ?

ORES. In truth he brought not her, but she brought him.

PYL. Where is this pest, that hath unpeopled Greece ?

ORES. Here in my house, if I may call it mine.

PYL. What to thy father's brother didst thou say ?

ORES. Not to see me and my poor sister slain.

PYL. Now, by the gods, what answer did he give ?

ORES. Timid and cautious, like a faithless friend.

PYL. With what excuses his denial cloked ?

ORES. The father of these female worthies came.

PYL. Incensed and chafing for his daughter's death ?

ORES. E'en so ; for him my father was disdained.

PYL. And wants he courage here t' assert thy cause ?

ORES. No warrior he, but among women brave.

PYL. Then have thy woes their full weight ; thou must die.

ORES. First the deciding vote must pass against us.

PYL. Deciding what ? I tremble as I ask.

ORES. Or life or death. Few words speak great events.

PYL. Fly then, and with thy sister leave this house.

ORES. Seest thou the guards that close their weapons round ?

PYL. Each street I saw, each pass secured with arms.

ORES. We are invested, like a sea-girt town.

PYL. Mine also is misfortune, ruin mine.

ORES. Ruin ! From whence ? Thy ills augment my woes.

PYL. My father in his rage hath banished me.

ORES. What, on some public, or a private charge ?

PYL. As impious, aiding in thy mother's death.

ORES. Unhappy, shalt thou suffer in my ills ?

PYL. I shall not, like the Spartan, shrink from them

ORES. Like mine, should Argos meditate thy death !

PYL. They have no right ; I am no subject here.

ORES. The many, when bad rulers prompt to ill,
Regard no rights.

PYL. But when good lead to good,
Their counsels well advised breathe temperate wisdom.

ORES. Well, be it so. But shall we now consult
Our common good ?

PYL. Propose th' important theme.

ORES. To urge my plea before them.

PYL. Vindicate
Thy deed as righteous ?

ORES. Righteous, as avenging
My father's blood.

PYL. Harshly, I fear, their brows
Will frown upon thee.

ORES. Should fear hold me mute,
And yield me tame to death ?

PYL. Unmanly that.

ORES. What should I do ?

PLY. Hast thou, remaining here,
Prospect of safety ?

ORES. Safety dwells not here.

PYL. In going hast thou hope ?

ORES. Should it take well,
It might succeed.

PYL. Attempt it boldly then ;
Go : if to die, 'tis nobler to die there.

ORES. My cause is just.

PYL. Would heaven they so may think !

ORES. Thus I avoid the charge of guilty fear.
Some one, indignant at my father's death,
Perchance may pity me.

PYL. I see it all,
And the bright lustre thy high birth throws round thee.

ORES. I will not stay, and like a coward slave
Die tamely here.

PYL. I praise thy noble spirit.

ORES. But to my sister shall we make this known ?

PYL. No, I conjure thee.

ORES. She would be all tears.

PYL. Avoid the omen then ; in silence go ;
Nor let her grief unseasonably detain thee.

ORES. Yet one distress afflicts me : should the Furies
Rouse all their terrors, and affright my soul.

PYL. My care shall watch around thee.

ORES. To attend
A man disordered thus, to guard, to hold him,
Is an displeasing office.

PYL. But for thee
Delightful to my love.

ORES. Yet have a care
Lest my contagious frenzy seize on thee.

PYL. No more of frenzy.

ORES. Wilt thou not be shocked
At this hard task ?

PYL. No office shocks a friend.

ORES. Be thou my pilot then.

PYL. A welcome charge.

ORES. And guide my footsteps to my father's tomb,
That I may pour my supplications there,
And move his shade to aid me.

PYL. Pious this,
And just.

ORES. But from my mother's lead me far :
Let me not see it.

PYL. All is hostile there.
But haste thee, ere the fatal vote be passed.
Lean on me, let me throw my arm around thee,
Thus hold thee, thus support thy feeble limbs,
And bear thee through the crowd of gazing eyes
Regardless. Where shall friendship show its faith,
If now in thy afflictions I forsake thee ?

ORES. This is to have a friend : compared to this
What are the ties of blood ? The man who melts
With social sympathy, though not allied,
Is than a thousand kinsmen of more worth.

CHORUS.

Strophe.

Th' exalted state, th' imperial power,
 Which spread o'er Greece its ample sway,
 And, girt with war, on the barbaric shore
 Taught the proud streams of Simois to obey,
 Withdraw their glories. Discord (as of old
 Fierce 'midst the sons of Tantalus she rose,
 And for the rich ram fleeced with gold
 Prepared the feast of horrid woes,
 Whence Vengeance bared the flaming sword,
 And blood for blood remorseless poured)
 Now through the house of Atreus lords it wide,
 And filled with carnage swells her sanguine pride.

Antistrophe.

Honour is honour now no more,
 Since with fierce rage he dared invade
 His parent's breast, and, his hand stained with gore,
 Waved to the golden sun his crimson blade.
 Ill actions are displeasing to the skies,
 And moon-eyed Folly marks them for her own.
 Heardst thou not Clytemnestra's cries,
 Her thrilling shrieks, her dying moan?
 "The mother by the son to bleed!
 Ah, dare not: 'tis an impious deed:
 Nor, in wild rev'rence to thy father's name,
 Blot with eternal infamy thy fame!"

Epode.

Is there in all heaven's angry store
 Misfortune, sorrow, sickness, pain,
 Is there an ill that racks, that tortures more
 Than by th' unpitiful son the parent slain?

Ah spare, unhappy youth, thy mother spare!—
 'Tis done : like vultures see the Furies rise,
 And rend his soul with wild despair :
 See how he rolls his haggard eyes !
 When from her gold-embroidered vest
 Suppliant she bared her heaving breast,
 Ah, couldst thou strike ?—He struck.—O deed abhorred !
 And ruthless in her bosom plunged the sword.

ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ELEC. Ye virgins, hath the poor Orestes, struck
 With madness from the gods, rushed from the house ?

CHOR. Not so ; but to th' assembled state of Argos
 He goes, resolved to strive in this hard contest,
 Where life to him and thee, or death's the prize.

ELEC. Ah me, what hath he done ? Who counselled this ?

CHOR. Pylades. But this messenger will tell thee
 All that hath passed touching thy brother there.

MESSENGER, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

MESS. Unhappy daughter of that mighty chief,
 Who led the powers of Greece, revered Electra,
 How shall my tongue disclose this tale of woe ?

ELEC. Ah me ! We are no more. Thy falt'ring voice
 In broken accents speaks the tragic tale.

MESS. E'en so : the fatal sentence is pronounced.
 This day thy brother and thyself must die.

ELEC. Long have my fears, presaging this event,
 With mournful expectation sunk my heart.
 But was there no debate ? Whose ruling voice
 Procured this sentence ? Tell me, good old man,
 Arm they their hands with stones ? Or by the sword
 Together sink we in one common death ?

MESS. I left my rural cottage, and the gates
 Of Argos entered, with fond wish to learn
 To thee and to Orestes what had chanced,
 Prompted by that high reverence which I bore

Thy father ; for his house supported me,
Though poor, yet not unfaithful. Soon I saw
The thronging people hurry to that height
Where, as they say, Ægyptus gave them seats
When Danaus was adjudged to punishment.
Astonished at the sight, I asked if war
New threat'ning roused the city thus : an Argive
Gave answer, " Seest thou not Orestes there ?
He goes to plead his cause ; and life or death
Hangs on his voice." I looked, and near me saw—
O piteous spectacle !—what least I hoped
To see, thy brother : as he walked, his eyes
Fixed on the ground, his fever-weakened limbs,
Supported by his friend, whose faithful care,
Touched with like grief, guided his feeble steps.
Soon as th' assembly sate, the herald's voice
Proclaimed free speech to all who willed to speak,
Whether Orestes for his mother slain
Should die, or not. Talthybius first arose,
Who with thy father stormed the towers of Troy ;
Double and dark his speech, as one who lives
The slave of greatness : to thy father high
Respect he paid, but to thy brother's praise
Silent, in honourable terms involved
His ill intent, as that he modelled laws
'Gainst parents not beseeming : but his eye
Always glanced cheerful on Ægisthus' friends :
For such their nature ; the warm shine of fortune
Allures them, vassals to the rich and great.
Next rose the royal Diomedé : his voice
Allowed not death, but exile, to atone
The deed. Discordant clamours echoed round,
As approbation prompted or dislike.
An Argive, not an Argive, next arose,
His birth barbaric, of licentious tongue,
Presumptuous, turbulent, and prompt to lead
With empty noise the populace to ill :
For the smooth tongue, that charms to mischief, bears
A pestilent power ; whilst Wisdom, aiming still

At virtue, brings its honourable thought,
Though late, to glorious issue. Her grave voice
Authority, that owes its best grace to it,
Should countenance, and check the factious tongue.
This wretch, suborned by Tyndarus, clamoured loud
For death, the harshest death, involving thee
In the same ruin. But another rose
Of different sentiment ; no slightly gaud,
But one in whose plain form the eye might note
A manly, free, direct integrity,
Tempered with prudence : one who rarely joined
The city circles, in his small domain,
Which his own culturing hand had taught to smile,
Passing in honest peace his blameless days.
His voice to Agamemnon's son decreed
A crown, his noble father who avenged
By slaying that abandoned impious woman,
Whose vile deeds checked the soldier's generous flame ;
For who in distant fields, at honour's call,
Would wield his martial arms, if in his absence
Pollution stain his wife, and his pure bed
Be made a foul sty of adulterous lust ?
The virtuous all approved. Orestes now,
Preventing further argument, advanced,
And thus addressed them : " Ye illustrious Argives,
Who from a line of ancient heroes draw
Your high-born race, to vindicate your honour,
Not less than to avenge my father's death,
I did this deed ! For should the husband's blood
Leave on the wife's hand no foul stain, full soon
The purple tide would flow, or you must sink—
O shame to manhood !—vile slaves to your wives.
Now she, that to my father's bed was false,
Hath died for it. If you require my life,
The law hath lost its force ; and who shall say
His own life is secure, as these bold deeds
From frequency draw force and mock at justice ?"
These truths were lost in air ; and that vile talker,
Whose malice called for death to both, prevailed.

Harsh was the sentence, and th' unhappy youth
 Scarce gained this sad indulgence, leave to die
 By his own hand this day. Thou too must die.
 Him from th' assembly Pylades with tears
 Leads this way, by a few, a faithful few,
 Accompanied, whose eyes, melting with pity,
 Rain bitter dew. He comes, a dismal sight,
 To pierce thy soul with grief. But haste, prepare
 The sword: thou too must die: thy high-born race
 Avails not, nor the Oracle of Phoebus,
 Whose fatal answer brings destruction on you.

CHOR. Why, miserable virgin, dost thou bend
 Thy clouded eye to th' earth? Why silent thus?
 Give thy griefs voice, and let thy sorrows flow.

ELECTRA.

Strophe.

Yes, I will let my sorrows flow,
 And give to grief the melancholy strain,
 And, as the mournful notes complain
 With all the heart-felt agony of woe,
 These hands my bleeding cheeks shall tear,
 And beat this head in wild despair,
 Devoted to the queen, that rules beneath
 The realms of darkness and of death.
 Daughters of Argos, with loud shrieks deplore
 The house of Atreus, now no more.
 Fall'n, by too severe a fate,
 From the proud glories of its splendid state.

Antistrophe.

Low, low they lie, th' imperial line,
 Th' imperial race of Pelops vanished, gone;
 No trace remains, no name, no son;
 Their vaunted honours in the dust decline.

From envious gods these ruins come,
 And the harsh city's bloody doom.
 Short is the day of life, each little hour
 With toils, with mis'ries clouded o'er ;
 Should bright'ning hope, to cheer the troubled day,
 Pour through the gloom a transient ray,
 Fate comes, and o'er the darkened scene
 Spreads the deep horrors of its dreary reign.

Epode.

Oh for an eagle's wing, whose rapid flight
 Might bear me to th' ethereal height,
 Where to Olympus fixed the golden chain
 Suspends the pond'rous, trembling mass :
 There should my woe-wild notes complain
 To the hoar author of my race.
 From Tantalus our lineage springs,
 A mighty race of sceptred kings :
 Great as they are, around them wait
 The vengeful ministers of fate ;
 Since Pelops, with impetuous force,
 Lashed his proud steeds, and urged their fiery course ;
 And as the bounding wheels they bore
 Along Geræstus' rock-rough shore,
 Saw Myrtilus extended there,
 Hurl'd headlong from the rapid car ;
 With gloomy joy he smiled, and gave
 The mangled limbs to stain the foaming wave.
 To Atreus thence pernicious came
 From Maia's son the fatal Ram,
 Who gave his golden fleece to shine
 Destructive, a destructive sign.
 Hence, Discord, hence thy horrid deeds
 Startled the sun's indignant steeds ;
 Back to the East they wing their way,
 And meet the Morn's affrighted ray ;
 The Pleiads, hast'ning to advance,
 Start back, and change their sevenfold dance.

Hence false Aërope in honeyed smiles
 Concealed her wanton, ruinous wiles ;
 Hence to Thyestes' horrid feast
 Came slaughter, a tremendous guest ;
 And, her hand reeking with my father's blood,
 Draws from my heart the purple flood.

CHOR. But see thy brother, by the Argive state
 Condemned to bleed, advances slow ; and with him
 The faithful Pylades, with a brother's love,
 Shares in his griefs, and guides his feeble steps.

ELECTRA, ORESTES, PYLADES, CHORUS.

ELEC. Ah me, my brother ! Whilst I yet behold thee
 Let me indulge my grief, ere yet the tomb,
 Yet ere the solemn pyre in its black shade
 Wraps our dead limbs, let me indulge my grief,
 My frenetic grief ; fix my fond eyes upon thee,
 That never, never must behold thee more.

ORES. Wilt thou not cease these womanish wailings, meet
 This harsh decree with silence, and abide,
 Firmly abide the rigour of our fate ?

ELEC. Can I be silent, when our eyes no more
 Shall see yon golden sun's irradiate light ?

ORES. Kill me not thou ; forbear ! Enough of death
 Have I already from the hands of Argos.

ELEC. Thy youth I mourn, and thy untimely death ;
 Life was thy due, when, ah ! thou art no more.

ORES. Now by the gods, throw not this softness round me,
 Nor make th' unmanly tear drop at our woes.

ELEC. We die ; and shall the tear not flow ? That dew
 Pity will shed o'er the lost joys of life.

ORES. This day must we needs die ; prepare we then
 The sword, or other instrument of death.

ELEC. My brother, do thou kill me ; let no Argive
 Touch with his rude hand Agamemnon's daughter.

ORES. No : in thy mother's blood I have enough ;
 I shed not thine ; but by thy own hand die.

ELEC. I will ; and not desert thy honest sword.
But let me throw my fond arms round thy neck.

ORES. Vain is the joy, if yet it be a joy,
In death to soothe thee with a last embrace.

ELEC. My brother ! O that dearest, best-loved name,
Dear to thy sister, partner of my soul !

ORES. Why wilt thou melt me thus ? And yet I wish,
Returning thy embrace, to fold thee close,
Close in my arms ; nor modesty forbids ;
It is my sister. Let me clasp thee then,
And press thee to my bosom, fondly press thee.
This sweet exchange of love is all our woes
Allow us for the names of wedded joys.

ELEC. Oh, may the same sword end us, the same tomb
Close in its cedar hearsement our cold limbs !

ORES. That would be joy ; but destitute of friends
Who shall inurn us in one common tomb ?

ELEC. Did Menelaus my father then betray ?
Did not the wretch plead earnest for thy life ?

ORES. He durst not show his false eye ; but, his hopes
Fixed on the sceptre, feared to save his friends.
But let us in our death give shining proof
Of our illustrious birth ; my hand shall show
My high nobility, and plunge the sword
Intrepid through my breast : dare thou the like.
Thou, Pylades, be umpire of our death ;
With decent care compose our breathless limbs,
And lay them in my father's sepulchre.
Farewell ! I go to execute the deed.

PYL. Yet stay ; one charge against thee must I bring,
Shouldst thou but hope I would survive thy death.

ORES. And what avails it that thou die with me ?

PYL. Without thy converse what can life avail ?

ORES. Thou hast not slain thy mother : I slew mine.

PYL. I shared the deed : the suffering I should share.

ORES. Oh, save thee for thy father ; die not with me :
Thou hast a country ; that name's lost to me :
Thou hast a father's house, hast greatness, wealth.
If this ill-fated maid, whom to thy arms,

The sanction of our friendship, I betrothed—
 If she be lost, some other nuptial bed
 Awaits to bless thee with a father's joys.
 Our dear relation is no more: my friend,
 Thou, whose sweet converse was my soul's delight,
 Farewell! For thee the joys of life remain;
 To us they wither in the shade of death.

PYL. Wide from my honest purpose dost thou stray.
 May not the fertile earth, nor the bright air
 Receive my blood, if ever I forsake thee,
 To spare myself if ever I forsake thee.
 Together I designed, together wrought
 Thy mother's death, which draws this fate on thee:
 Together will I die with thee, and her:
 Dear to my soul, affianced to my bed,
 I deem her as my wife. Should I return
 To Delphi, the high citadel of Phocis,
 Dare I name honour, if united thus
 Whilst fortune favoured your high state, but now
 The false friend shrink from your adversity?
 Not so: these things demand my deep regard.
 Yet, ere we die, some measures let us form
 T' afflict with grief the heart of Menelaus.

ORES. Let me see that, my friend, then let me die!

PYL. Be then advised, and let the keen sword wait.

ORES. Shall then my just revenge burst on his head?

PYL. No more: these women; I distrust their faith.

ORES. They are all truth, all friendship; fear them not.

PYL. Let us slay Helen: that would grieve his soul.

ORES. How? I approve it, be it nobly done.

PYL. Let the sword end her: in thy house she lurks.

ORES. She doth, and seals its treasures for her own.

PYL. Espoused to Pluto she will seal no more.

ORES. But how, around her that barbaric train?

PYL. What are they? For the Phrygians nought I dread.

ORES. Marshals of mirrors and cosmetic washes.

PYL. Brings she these Trojan gewgaws back to Greece?

ORES. Greece! 'Tis a paltry spot; she breathes not in it.

PYL. Well may the free disdain a host of slaves.

ORES. T' achieve this deed, twice would I die with joy.

PYL. Twice would I die, might I thy vengeance aid.

ORES. Disclose thy purpose, and accomplish it.

PYL. We enter, as in readiness to die.

ORES. Thus far I comprehend thee, but no more.

PYL. To her with loud laments bewail our fate.

ORES. T' extort the tear, though her heart bounds with joy.

PYL. This be her hour: the next may we enjoy.

ORES. How then to execute the destined deed?

PYL. Bear we our swords concealed beneath our vests.

ORES. But can destruction reach her 'midst her train?

PYL. Confined apart nought shall that crew avail.

ORES. And if one dares to clamour, let him die.

PYL. In that th' immediate exigence will guide us.

ORES. The death of Helen then, that is the word.

PYL. Agreed. That honour dictates this, now hear.

To draw the sword against a virtuous woman
 Would blot our names with infamy. Her blood
 All Greece demands, for sons, for fathers slain
 In her cursed cause, for the deep sigh that rends
 The widowed matron's desolated heart.
 Shouts of applause would rend the air, thick fires
 Blaze to the gods, and many a fervent prayer
 Draw blessings on our heads. No longer called
 The murderer of thy mother, thou shalt hear
 Th' applauding voice of Greece with triumph hail thee
 Revenger of the mischief-working Helen.
 What, shall the treacherous Menelaus then smile,
 Proud of his high success; and, whilst thy father,
 Thyself, thy sister fall, thy mother too,
 (But I forbear; for honour at her name
 Dims its pale fires,) seize thy rich-treasured house
 As his inheritance, and in amorous folds
 Clasp his fair wife, by Agamemnon's spear
 Recovered to his arms? Let me not live,
 If I not draw the gloomy sword against her.
 Failing in this, we'll set the house on flames,
 And nobly in the blazing ruins die.

One must succeed : the glory shall be ours
To die with honour, or with honour live.

CHOR. This guilty fair, a scandal to her sex,
Merits th' abhorrence of each virtuous dame.

ORES. Life hath no blessing like a prudent friend,
Than treasured wealth more precious, than the power
Of monarchs, and the people's loud applause.

Thou on Ægisthus guidedst my just rage,
Nor in my dangers wast thou absent : now
Thou givst me vengeance on mine enemies,
Nor shrinks thy firm foot back. But I forbear,
Nor with intemperate praise thine ear offend.

I will not tamely die, but in my fall
Pull ruin on my foes : they too shall weep,
The traitors ; they shall have their share of woe.

Th' illustrious Agamemnon was my sire,
Imperial chief of Greece ; no tyrant he,
But clothed with th' awful power of the just gods.

I will not blot his splendours, like a slave
Crouching to death ; but with a liberal pride
Throw life away, first glorying in revenge.

Whiche'er succeeds, we triumph : yet if thence
Despair force safety, if the sword should glance
From us and wound their breasts, I have my wish.
Transport is in the thought, and the light words,
Charged with no costly pleasure, soothe my soul.

ELEC. And this suggests a thought which lifts my mind
To hope success and safety to us all.

ORES. The prescience of a god inspires thy voice.
But how ? Oh say, for wisdom too is thine.

ELEC. Then hear ; and thou, my brother, mark my words.

ORES. Speak : there is pleasure in the hope of good.

ELEC. The daughter of this Helen dost thou know ?

ORES. The fair Hermione, our mother's charge ?

ELEC. She now is gone to Clytemnestra's tomb.

ORES. With what intent ? Thy words awaken hope.

ELEC. To pour libations for her mother there.

ORES. As means of safety dost thou tell me this ?

ELEC. Her, when she enters, as an hostage seize.

ORES. And what relief can thy thoughts hope from her ?

ELEC. If Menelaus shall for his slaughtered wife
Attempt revenge on thee, or me, or him
(For the close bond of friendship makes us one),
Tell him that thou wilt kill Hermione,
And hold the drawn sword to the virgin's breast :
If trembling for his daughter, when he sees
His wife all welt'ring in her blood, he saves
Thy life, the virgin give him back unhurt.
But should his wild ungovernable rage
Demand thy life, plunge deep th' unpitying steel.
Yet I am well assured his rage, though fierce
At first, will soften soon ; for Nature formed him
Nor bold, nor brave : this then I deem the fort
That guards our lives. You have what I advise.

ORES. Thou excellence, that to the form divine,
The sweet attractive charm of female grace,
Hast joined a manly spirit, shalt thou die ?
Shalt thou, my friend, deplore her loss, with whom,
Accomplished as she is, a life of love
Were happiness supreme ?

PYL. Would heaven indulge
My warm wish, tow'rd Phocis should receive her,
With golden Hymen smiling in our train.

ORES. When will Hermione return ? Our toils,
If we can take the young one, must succeed,
And gloriously entangle the old savage.

ELEC. Each moment, such the distance, I expect her.

ORES. 'Tis well. My sister, my Electra, wait
Here, and receive the virgin. Let thine eye
Keep wary watch ; if friend, or partisan,
Or e'en my father's brother to the house
Approach to hinder us, some signal give,
Or beat the door, or raise thy shrilling voice.
And now, my friend, still faithful to my toils,
Address we to this great emprise, and ent'ring
Each with the sword of justice arm our hands.
And thou, who in the gloomy house of night
Hast thy sad dwelling, father, royal shade,

Thy son, Orestes, calls thee ! At my prayers
Assistant come : for thee these sufferings fall
Unjustly on my head, for my just deeds.

Betrayed by thy base brother, 'gainst his wife
My stern intents are bent : aid our revenge.

ELEC. Father, if in the realms beneath thou hear
Thy children call, oh come ! For thee we die.

PYL. Spirit of Agamemnon, kindred shade,
Hear me too, hear thy suppliant : save thy children !

ORES. I slew my mother.

PYL. My hand touched the sword.

ELEC. And my bold counsels prompted to the deed.

ORES. T' avenge thee, father.

ELEC. Nor did I betray thee.

PYL. Hear this, indignant shade, and save thy children !

ORES. Accept th' oblation of these tears.

ELEC. Accept

These groans.

PYL. Now cease ; and haste we to the deed.

If to the realms beneath prayers wing their way,

He hears. Thou Jove, our great progenitor,

Awfully just, to him, to me, to her

Extend thy guardian power ; this trinal band

One cause, one safety, or one ruin joins :

We live together or together die.

ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ELEC. Virgins of high Pelasgian race,

Achaia's pride, Mycenæ's grace !

CHOR. Why, royal maid, these plaintive strains ?

That name, that title yet remains.

ELEC. Divide, divide ! With careful view

Watch you the street, the entrance you.

CHOR. And why to us this task assigned ?

Unfold, sweet friend, unfold thy mind.

ELEC. Lest any, standing near the gate,

Find in this scene of blood her fate.

1st SEMICHOR. Haste, to your stations quickly run :

My watch be towards the rising sun.

2nd SEMICHOR. Be mine with cautious care address
To where he sinks him in the west.

ELEC. Now here, now there, now far, now nigh,
Quick glancing dart th' observant eye.

1st SEMICHOR. With fond affection we obey,
Our eyes quick glancing ev'ry way.

ELEC. Glance through that length of hair, which flows
Light waving o'er your shaded brows.

1st SEMICHOR. This way a man comes hast'ning down ;
His garb bespeaks some simple clown.

ELEC. Undone, undone, should he disclose
These couched, armed lions to their foes.

1st SEMICHOR. He passes on, suppress thy fear,
And all this way again is clear.

ELECTRA, to 2nd SEMICHORUS.

And that way doth no footstep rude
Disturb the wished-for solitude ?

2nd SEMICHOR. This way no rude step beats the ground,
But all is still, all safe around.

ELEC. Patience exhausted bears no more :
Near will I listen at the door.

Favoured with silence, why so slow
To let the purple torrent flow ?

Blinded by beauty's dazzling ray

Do your charmed swords refuse t' obey ?

They hear not. Roused at these alarms

Some Argive soon will rush in arms ;

And in her aid vindictive spread

Horror and ruin on our head.

Watch, virgins, watch with strictest care,

Repose hath nothing to do here.

CHOR. With transverse watch our heedful eye
Each various way——

HEL. Io, Pelasgian Argos, I am slain !

[*Within.*

ELEC. Hark! Their bold hands are in the bloody act.

It was the cry of Helena, I deem.

CHOR. O Jove, eternal power, hear us, and ever
Protect our friends !

HEL. My dearest Menelaus,
I die ! Where art thou ? Fly, oh fly to save me !

ELEC. Kill, slay, strike, wound, dispatch, destroy :
With iron smiles of gloomy joy
Plunge deep the huge tempestuous blade,
For blood, for death, for carnage made,
Deep in her breast. She basely fled
Her father's house, her husband's bed :
Hence many a Greek in battle slain
Lies mould'ring on the Phrygian plain :
Hence, to call forth the bursting tear,
The arrowy shower, the hurtling spear,
And hence Scamander's silver flood
Whirls his swoln eddies stained with blood.

CHOR. Hark ! hark ! I hear the sound of feet :
The marble pavement now they beat.

ELEC. Whilst slaughter is at work, my virgin friends,
Hermione comes : cease we the measure then :
She walks into our toils, a goodly prize.
Silent resume your stations ; fixed your eye,
Let not your countenance betray the deed.
My eye shall take again its mournful cast,
As unacquainted with this havoc here.

HERMIONE, ELECTRA, CHORUS.

ELEC. From Clytemnestra's tomb comest thou, virgin
Thy hallowed offerings and libations paid ?

HERM. I have appeased her shade. But from this house
The voice of loud lament ere my approach
Struck my astonished ear : it makes me tremble.

ELEC. Well it beseems us : we have cause for cries.

HERM. Be thy voice tuned to good. Is there aught new ?

ELEC. Orestes and myself are doomed to die.

HERM. Be it not so, by blood to me allied !

ELEC. Necessity lays its iron yoke on us.

HERM. For this did these laments sound from the house ?

ELEC. Suppliant at Helen's feet he raised the cry.

HERM. Who ? For my knowledge on thy words depends.

ELEC. The poor Orestes, for his life and mine.

HERM. Just cause for lamentation hath this house.

ELEC. Can nature know a stronger? But come thou,
Join in the supplication of thy friends,
Fall at thy mother's knees—how blest her state!—
That Menelaus allow not that we die.
O thou, who from my mother's hand receivdst
Thy infant nurture, look with pity on us,
Our woes alleviate, to the trial go:
My foot shall lead, sweet prop of all our hopes!

HERM. And willingly I follow: if my voice,
My prayers, my power avail, ye shall not die.

ELEC. You there within the house, ye arméd friends,
Will you not seize your prey?

HERM. Ah, who are these
Terrible to mine eye!

ORES. No noise, no cry! [*Advancing*]
To us, not to thyself, thou bringest safety.

ELEC. Here, seize her, seize her! To her trembling breast
Point your keen swords, and awe her into silence.
Let Menelaus perceive he hath found men,
Not Phrygian slaves: men, whose bold spirits dare
Retort his foul wrongs on his own base head. [*They lead her off.*]
Now, my loved virgins, raise your voices high;
Before the house ring out the notes of woe,
That this bold deed spread no alarm, nor call
Th' astonished Argives to these royal gates,
Till I see Helen rolling in her blood,
Or from the slaves attending learn her fate.

CHOR. Justice unsheathed her awful sword,
And Vengeance snatched it from her hand:
From heaven her rapid flight she poured,
And plunged in Helen's breast the glitt'ring brand.
For this accursed, this fatal fair
Filled Greece with many a mournful tear,
Since the pernicious Phrygian boy
Enamoured bore her wanton charms to Troy.
Hush, hush! the palace door resounds; break off.
A Phrygian slave comes forth: learn we from him
What fate hath wrought within.

PHRYGIAN, CHORUS.

PHRY. The Grecian sword from death I fled,
 In these barbaric sandals was my flight,
 Climbing the pillar's sculptured head,
 And o'er the cedar rafter's height :
 For th' unkind earth refused to save
 A flying, a barbaric slave.
 Whither, ah, whither shall I fly?
 Oh say, ye virgin strangers, say,
 Mount the grey regions of the sky,
 Or through the foaming billows dash my way,
 Where, the firm globe encircling wide,
 Vexed Ocean rolls his roaring tide ?

CHOR. Servant of Helen, Phrygian, whence these cries ?

PHRY. O Ilium, Ilium ! Woe, woe, woe !
 Ye towers, the fertile Phrygia's stately boast !
 O sacred Ida's pine-crowned brow !
 I mourn, I mourn your glories lost :
 For you these doleful notes complain,
 A mournful, a barbaric strain.
 From Leda's egg, the Swan her sire,
 The beauteous, baleful Helen rose :
 Whose eye on heaven-built Troy glares fire,
 And the rich seat of Ganymede o'erthrows :
 Hence flows, for chiefs, for heroes slain,
 The mournful, the barbaric strain.

CHOR. No longer hold us in suspense ; relate
 Each circumstance : conjecture errs from truth.

PHRY. It is the song of death ; your pardon then
 That I indulged the melancholy strain.
 In Asia with barbaric voice we raise
 These notes of woe, when by the ruthless sword
 The blood of kings is shed upon the earth.
 But to my tale. Of lion port came in
 Two of your Grecians : father to the one
 Th' illustrious leader of your troops : and one
 The son of Strophius, of deep reserve,

And dang'rous, dark design ; such was the chief
 Of Ithaca, but faithful to his friends,
 In battle bold, and in the works of war
 Of sage experience ; as a dragon fierce.
 Perdition on his silence, which concealed
 Designs of death. Together they advanced
 To the bright queen whom Paris called his wife,
 Their eyes suffused with tears, humble their mien,
 And at her knees, on each side one, they fell
 Besieging her. Back start the slaves, back starts
 Each Phrygian minister, some fearing fraud,
 More unsuspecting some, whilst others thought
 This dragon, crimson with his mother's blood,
 The beauteous Spartan in his toils enclosed.

CHOR. Where then wast thou ? Hadst thou first fled through
 fear ?

PHRY. I then was standing, in our Phrygian mode
 Was standing near, and with the feathered fan
 Raised the soft gales to breathe upon her cheeks,
 In our barbaric mode, to bid their breath
 Sport in the ringlets of her waving hair.
 Her curious fingers guide the thread, the spoils
 Of Phrygia, whose rich texture formed the woof
 T' adorn the purple pall, a mournful present
 To Clytemnestra. With mild voice Orestes
 Entreats her to arise, and go with him
 To an age-honoured altar, in old times
 The seat of Pelops, his great ancestor,
 That she might hear his words. He led her, ah !
 He led her ! Unprophetic of her fate
 She followed. The vile Phocian, his compeer,
 Seized the occasion, and with stern command
 Bade us be gone ; then, dragged to separate cells,
 Confined us from our royal mistress far.

CHOR. What terrible event ensued ? Oh, say !

PHRY. Goddess of Ida, potent, potent queen !
 What scenes of blood, what impious deeds these eyes,
 These eyes amidst the royal rooms beheld !
 Each in his fierce hand grasped the sword concealed

Beneath their purple vests, his fiery glance,
 Heedful of interruption, darting round ;
 Then, like two mountain boars, before the queen
 They stood, and thundered, " Thou shalt die, shalt die ;
 Thy coward husband kills thee, who in Argos
 Betrays his brother's family to death."
 She shrieked aloud, and raising her white arm
 In miserable manner beat her head ;
 Then bent her golden-sandalled feet to flight.
 But, rushing fierce, Orestes in her hair
 Locked his rude hand, and bending to the left
 Her head, prepared to plunge th' impetuous sword
 Deep in her throat.

CHOR. Where were her Phrygians then ?
 They ran, belike, on all sides to her aid.

PHRY. Roused by her cries we burst the bars, and each
 From forth his separate cell rushed to her aid :
 Some in their hasty hands snatched stones, some seized
 The beamy spear, th' unwieldy falchion some :
 'Gainst us in dreadless rage the Phocian came,
 Fierce as the Trojan Hector, fierce as Ajax,
 Whose triple-crested helm I saw, I saw
 Dreadfully waving in the gates of Priam.
 Clashing our swords met his ; but then, oh then
 Was seen how weak, how spiritless our arms
 Opposed in fight against the force of Greece ;
 One hasty running, dying one, one gashed
 With wounds, wild with affright another bends
 Imploring mercy ; sheltering in the dark
 We fly, and all was terror, blood, and death.
 Just as th' uplifted sword threatened to shed
 Her mother's blood on th' earth, Hermione came ;
 Swift with unhallowed rage they dart on her,
 And seize their trembling prey ; then turn again
 To execute the work of death on Helen.
 Meanwhile, O heaven ! O earth ! O day ! O night !
 Forth from the chamber through the vestibule,
 Whether by some enchantment, by the power
 Of magic, or the stealth of fav'ring gods,

She vanished. What hath happened since I know not,
 Intent on hasty flight to save myself.
 For all his toils, all his distressful toils,
 Barren return hath Menelaus received,
 And led his beauteous wife from Troy in vain.

CHOR. Terror succeeds to terror ; for mine eyes
 Behold Orestes there before the house
 Walk with disordered pace, and grasp his sword.

ORESTES, PHRYGIAN, CHORUS.

ORES. Where is the slave, who this way fled my sword ?

PHRY. Low at thy feet, such our barbaric use,
 Thus prostrate I implore thy mercy, king.

ORES. This is not Ilium, but the land of Greece.

PHRY. In any land life to the wise is sweet.

ORES. Hast thou raised cries to call the Spartan's aid ?

PHRY. Thee rather would I aid : more worthy thou.

ORES. This Helen then, with justice did she die ?

PHRY. Most justly : had she three lives, she should lose them.

ORES. Thy servile fear smooths thy dissembling tongue.

PHRY. No. Should she live who wasted Greece and Troy ?

ORES. Swear, I will kill thee else, thou flatterest not.

PHRY. Now by my life I swear, sincerely swear.

ORES. Was the steel dreadful thus to all at Troy ?

PHRY. Keep thy sword off : near, it glares terror to me.

ORES. Freeze not to stone, as seen the Gorgon's head.

PHRY. Let me not die ; no Gorgon's head I know.

ORES. Fears a slave death, the end of all his ills ?

PHRY. To slave or free sweet is the light of heaven.

ORES. Well urged : thy wisdom saves thee : go thou in.

PHRY. Thou wilt not kill me then ?

ORES. In safety go.

PHRY. Thy words breathe music.

ORES. But I may retract

This lenity.

PHRY. No music breathes in that.

ORES. Fool, if thou thinkst thy blood shall stain my sword,
 Nor woman thou, nor in the scale of men.

To stop thy clamours came I : Argos soon
 Is roused at every noise. For Menelaus
 We fear him not : our swords shall welcome him :
 Let him then come, proud of his golden locks
 That wanton o'er his shoulders. Should he raise
 The men of Argos, and for Helen's death
 Lead them against this house, and menace me,
 My sister, and my friend, he shall behold
 His daughter, with his wife, welt'ring in blood.

CHORUS.

1st SEMICHOR. Other horrors, other woes

Rise this royal house t' enclose.

2nd SEMICHOR. Haste we then to spread th' alarm

Or keep silence, shunning harm ?

1st SEMICHOR. See the sudden smoke arise,

Waving tidings to the skies !

2nd SEMICHOR. From the torch that dusky wreath

Threatens ruin, flames, and death.

CHOR. What event the gods assign,

Mortal, to submit is thine.

Here some stern relentless power

Bade the horrid ruin roar,

When the blood-stained car beneath

Myrtilus lay rolled in death.

But see, with hasty step the Spartan comes,

Informed, belike, of these rough deeds of death.

Quick, quick, ye royal youths—make fast these gates,

Prevent the foe ; for to th' unfortunate,

Like thee, Orestes, dreadful are the wrongs

Of insolent and rude prosperity.

MENELAUS *below*, ORESTES, PYLADES, ELECTRA,

HERMIONE *above*, CHORUS.

MEN. I heard the horrid and atrocious deeds

Of these two lions, men I call them not ;

My wife not dead, I hear, but disappeared.

This idle rumour I received from one,

Bewildered with his fears ; the bitter scoff,
 The artifice of him that slew his mother.
 Open the gates here : slaves, I speak to you,
 Unbar the gates, that I at least may save
 My daughter from their bloody hands, and bear
 My poor lost wife away, whose murderers
 This vengeful hand should recompense with death.

ORES. Stand off ! forbear ! Spartan, I speak to thee
 Fow'ring in pride ! Dare but to touch the gate,
 I will rend down this ancient pinnacle
 That crowns the battlements, and crush thy head.
 The gates are shut, and barricadoed strong,
 To guard me from thy efforts and thy friends'.

MEN. Ha ! what is this ? What mean these blazing
 torches ?

Why on the battlements this station fixed ?

Why at my daughter's bosom points that sword ?

ORES. Is it thy will to question, or to hear me ?

MEN. Neither ; but by compulsion I must hear thee.

ORES. Be thou assured, thy daughter I will kill.

MEN. Thou hast killed Helen : wilt thou shed more blood ?

ORES. Would I had killed her, nor the gods beguiled me !

MEN. Her murder dost thou tauntingly deny ?

ORES. With sorrow I deny it : 'twas my wish.

MEN. What to have done ? Thy words excite my fear.

ORES. To sacrifice this baleful pest of Greece.

MEN. Give me the body, that I may entomb it.

ORES. Ask of the gods : but I will kill thy daughter.

MEN. The mother slain, wilt thou add blood to blood ?

ORES. T' avenge my father ; yet betrayed by thee.

MEN. Art thou not sated with thy mother's blood ?

ORES. Never, with punishing such impious women.

MEN. And art thou, Pylades, accomplice with him ?

ORES. His silence speaks : sufficient my reply.

MEN. But short thy joy, unless thou fly on wings.

ORES. We will not fly : but we will fire the house.

MEN. Thy father's royal seat in ruins sink !

ORES. That it may ne'er be thine : and at the flames
 Her will I sacrifice.

- MEN. Ay, kill her, do ;
 I will have vengeance, ample vengeance on thee.
- ORES. Thus then.
- MEN. Ah, stay thee ! do not, do not kill her !
- ORES. Be silent now, and with composure bear
 Th' afflictions, which with justice light on thee.
- MEN. What, is it justice then that thou shouldst live ?
- ORES. Live ! Ay, and reign.
- MEN. Where wouldst thou reign ?
- ORES. In Argos,
 Pelasgian Argos.
- MEN. At the sacred rites
 Well would those hands the cleansing lavers touch.
- ORES. And wherefore not ?
- MEN. And, ere the spear is raised,
 Offer the hallowed victim !
- ORES. Dost not thou ?
- MEN. And well : my hands are pure.
- ORES. But not thy heart.
- MEN. Who will hold converse with thee ?
- ORES. He that loves
 His father.
- MEN. He too, who reveres his mother ?
- ORES. Happy his state.
- MEN. Unhappy then is thine.
- ORES. Because such impious women I abhor.
- MEN. Take, from my daughter's bosom take thy sword.
- ORES. False are thy words.
- MEN. My daughter wilt thou kill ?
- ORES. Now thou speakst truth.
- MEN. Ah me, what shall I do ?
- ORES. Go to the Argives, and persuade them——
- MEN. What
 Shall I persuade them ?
- ORES. Ask the state to spare
 Our lives.
- MEN. Or you will kill my daughter ?
- ORES. Ay.
- MEN. Unhappy Helen !

ORES. Am not I unhappy ?

MEN. From Troy I brought thee to be butchered here.

ORES. Would it were so !

MEN. After a thousands toils——

ORES. But not for me.

MEN. These dreadful ills fall on me.

ORES. Thou hadst no will to serve me.

MEN. Thou hast caught me.

ORES. No : by thy baseness thou hast caught thyself.

But go, Electra, fire the house below :

And thou, my Pylades, my faithful friend,

Set from these battlements the roof on fire.

MEN. Arm, arm, ye sons of Greece ! ye warlike Argives,

Fly to my aid. Despair of life, and guilt

Stained with his mother's blood, prompt his bold hand

In one wide ruin to involve the city.

APOLLO.

Cease, Menelaus, forbear this fiery rage :

Apollo speaks : revere the present god.

And thou, Orestes, whose uplifted sword

Threatens that virgin's life, forbear, and hear.

Her whom thy rage, to work him woe, assailed,

This radiant form in tissued clouds enshrined,

Snatched from thy sword I saved ; such the command

Of heaven's high king : his beauteous progeny

Soars above mortal fate, and orb'd in heaven

Immortal 'midst her kindred stars she shines,

Beaming kind influence on the mariners.

Lead to thy royal house another wife ;

Since by her beauty the just gods awoke

'Twixt Greece and Troy the rage of war, to free

The groaning earth from impious multitudes.

Such is the fate of Helen. Thou, Orestes,

Quitting this country, in Parrhasia's plains

For one revolving year thy dwelling fix,

And give the place thy name ; that honour share

With Azan and with Arcas. Pass from thence

To Athens ; there against the Furies urge
 Thy plea, acquit thee of thy mother's blood :
 There in that awful court the gods shall sit
 Thy judges ; and thy just cause shall prevail.
 Her, at whose throat thy angry sword was pointed,
 The gods decree thy wife ; though Pyrrhus dreams
 Of nuptial joys, the Delphic sword awaits him ;
 My vengeance on Achilles this demands.
 To Pylades thy sister is betrothed ;
 Give him his bride : and happiness attends
 To pour her blessings on their future years.
 Thou, Menelaus, yield that Orestes reign
 At Argos : haste to Sparta, reign thou there,
 And wear that crown, the dowry of thy wife,
 The well-earned meed of all the toils she caused thee.
 It shall be mine t' appease the state to him,
 Compelled by my command to slay his mother.

ORES. Thou god of oracles, prophet of good,
 True are thy words, and faithful. Yet my soul
 Was struck with horror, lest some vengeful power
 Spoke this, which I misdeemed thy voice divine.
 But all is well. Obedient to thy word
 I drop the sword : and, if her father gives her,
 Wish to receive Hermione my bride.

MEN. Daughter of Jove, bright Helen, hail ! Thy state
 'Midst the blest mansions of th' immortal gods
 I reverence. Now, Orestes, give I thee
 My daughter, at the bidding of the god.
 Illustrious in thy race thou takest a wife
 Not less illustrious : blessings on thy hand
 That takes her, and on mine that gives her to thee.

APOL. Each now depart, as I commanded : cease
 Your strife.

MEN. T' obey is ours.

ORES. Such are my thoughts.
 Now, Menelaus, to all these evils past
 My soul speaks peace ; and to thy oracles.

APOL. Go then your ways, now go, and reverence Peace,
 Most beautiful of the gods. I will conduct

Th' immortal Helen to the house of Jove
 O'er yon star-spangled sky, to the bright seats
 Where, with majestic Juno, and the bloom
 Of Hebe ever young, Alcides' joy,
 A goddess she shall hear the vows of mortals ;
 And honoured with the twin-born sons of Jove
 Guide the tost mariners, and rule the sea.

CHOR. O victory, I revere thy sober triumphs :
 Thus ever guard, thus ever crown my life !

IPHIGENIA IN AULIS.

THE translator thought it not improper to arrange the tragedies of Euripides, as he had before arranged those of Æschylus, according to the historical series of their subjects. [Some variation has been made in this edition to secure equal interest for each of the volumes, but the relation of plays to each other has been kept in view.] The following tragedies have relation to the Trojan war and the events which arose from it: these are great and important, have a close connection, and reflect light on each other by being thus placed in regular succession. [The other plays of Euripides relating to the Trojan war will be included in the next of the three volumes which, in course of time, will secure a complete translation of that poet in the "Universal Library."]

The combined fleet of Greece was assembled at Aulis, and had been long detained there by contrary winds: the Oracle declared that they would not be permitted to sail, unless Iphigenia were sacrificed to Diana; but that, if the goddess were thus propitiated, they should reach the Phrygian shore, and lay the towers of Troy level with the ground. Upon this Agamemnon had been prevailed upon to send for his daughter under pretence of giving her in marriage to Achilles: the arguments of Ulysses, his affection for his brother, his desire of glory, his love of his country, and his reverence for the gods, had impelled him to this measure: but he had consented with reluctance, and felt all the fondness of a father. This conflict of his mind is finely described throughout the drama. At length paternal tenderness prevails over all other considerations:

he secretly forms measures to prevent her coming, is detected, and disappointed. Iphigenia arrives attended by her mother ; but instead of her nuptials with the most accomplished of all the Grecian princes, she soon learns that she is destined to bleed as a victim on the altar of Diana. Never did Euripides succeed better in painting scenes of distress ; never was he more powerful in exciting the softest emotions of pity. The characters of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra are admirably sustained ; Aristotle seems to have formed a different judgment concerning that of Iphigenia (Poetic, c. xv.). For the reader's satisfaction, the objection made by that critic and the defence of the poet are here subjoined. "Aristotle's words are : 'Iphigenia is an instance of the inconsistent character ; for there is no probable conformity between her fears and supplications at first, and her firmness and resolution afterwards.' But how doth this appear, independently of the name of the great critic ? Iphigenia is drawn indeed, at first, fearful and suppliant ; and surely with the greatest observance of nature. The account of her destination to the altar was sudden, and without the least preparation ; and, as Lucretius well observes, *Nubendi tempore in ipso* ; when her thoughts were employed, and, according to the simplicity of those times, confessed to be so, on her promised nuptials. The cause of such destination too, as appeared at first, was the private family interest of Menelaus. All this justifies, or rather demands, the strongest expression of female fear and weakness. 'But she afterwards recants, and voluntarily devotes herself to the altar.' And this with the same strict attention to probability. She had now informed herself of the importance of the case. Her devotement was the demand of Apollo, and the joint petition of all Greece. The glory of her country, the dignity and interest of her family, the life of the generous Achilles, and her own future fame, were all nearly concerned in it. All this considered, together with the high, heroic sentiments of those times, and the superior merit, as was believed, of voluntary devotement, Iphigenia's character must have been very unfit for the distress of a whole tragedy to turn upon, if she had not, in the end, discovered the readiest submission to her appointment. But, to show with what wonderful propriety the poet knew to sustain his characters,

we find her, after all, and notwithstanding the heroism of the change, in a strong and passionate apostrophe to her native Mycenæ, confessing some involuntary apprehensions and regrets, the remains of that instinctive abhorrence of death, which had before strongly possessed her.

'Once the bright star of Greece—
But I submit to die.'

This I take to be not only a full vindication of the consistency of Iphigenia's character, but as delicate a stroke of nature, as is, perhaps, to be found in any writer."—*Comment. on the Epistle to the Pisos.*

Happy Euripides in such an advocate! P. Brumoy has the same sentiments concerning the character of Iphigenia. The reasons he employs are nearly the same. "Only," to continue the words of the same critic, "he confirms them all by showing that the Iphigenia of Racine, which is modelled, not according to the practice of Euripides, but the comment of Aristotle, is, in all respects, so much the worse for it." The same must be said concerning the character of Achilles, as it is drawn by Racine: P. Brumoy, in the comparison, has well defended the Achilles of Euripides "on the sure principles of nature and common sense." Yet, with him, we ought to allow much to the different manners of different ages and different nations; and, in justice to the merit of the excellent Racine, we should reflect that he wrote for the French nation, Euripides for the Athenians. It is difficult to forbear pointing out the singular beauties of this fine drama; but "I have too much respect for the understanding of my readers to take that liberty."

The scene is at Aulis, before the house of Agamemnon.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

AGAMEMNON.

MENELAUS.

ACHILLES.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

IPHIGENIA.

ATTENDANT

MESSENGER.

CHORUS, FEMALES OF CHALCIS.

AGAMEMNON, ATTENDANT.

AGAM. Thou old and faithful servant, from the house
Come forth.

ATT. I come. What recent care disturbs
The royal Agamemnon ?

AGAM. Thou shalt know.

ATT. I haste : for not to sleep inclines my age,
Nor in these eyes is dull.

AGAM. What star is that
There sailing ?

ATT. Sirius, in his middle height
Near the seven Pleiads riding.

AGAM. Not the sound
Of birds is heard, nor of the sea ; the winds
Are hushed in silence on the Euripus.

ATT. Why doth the royal Agamemnon then
Rush from his tent ? Through Aulis quiet reigns,
And motionless the watch their station hold.
Let us go in.

AGAM. I envy thee, old man ;
I envy all, who pass their lives secure
From danger, to the world, to fame unknown :
But those to greatness raised I envy not.

ATT. The dignity of life in greatness lies.

AGAM. Yet is that dignity unsafe : the chase
Of glory is delightful, but when won
It brings disquiet. One while from the gods,
Their worship ill directed, ruin comes ;
One while the various and discordant views
Of men distract the mind, and wound its peace.

ATT. This I approve not in a potent chief.
Not to all good, without a taste of ill,
Did Atreus give thee birth : it must be thine
To joy, it likewise must be thine to grieve,
For thou art mortal born ; and though perchance
To thee not pleasing, thus the gods decree.
The blazing lamp didst thou display, and write

That letter, which thou holdest in thy hand
E'en now ; the writing didst thou blot ; then seal,
And open it again ; then on the floor
Cast it in grief, the warm tear from thine eye
Fast flowing, in thy thoughts distracted near,
As it should seem, to madness. What new care,
My royal lord, say what new care disturbs thee ?
Tell me, impart it to me : to a man
Honest and faithful wilt thou speak, a man
By Tyndarus of old sent to thy wife,
A nuptial present, to attend the bride,
One of tried faith, and to his office just.

AGAM. To Leda were three beauteous daughters born,
Phœbe, and Clytemnestra now my wife,
And Helena : to her the youths of Greece,
Those of the noblest rank, as woers came.
Each menaced high, on deeds of blood resolved,
Should he not win the virgin ; this was cause
To Tyndarus her father of much doubt,
To give, or not to give her, and how best
To make good fortune his ; at length this thought
Occurred, that each to each the woers give
Their oath, and plight their hands, and on the flames
Pour the libations, and with solemn vows
Bind their firm faith that him who should obtain
The virgin for his bride they all would aid ;
If any dared to seize and bear her off,
And drive by force her husband from her bed,
All would unite in arms, and lay his town,
Greek or Barbaric, level with the ground.
Their faith thus pledged, the aged Tyndarus
Beneath them well with cautious prudence wrought ;
He gave his daughter of her woers one
To choose, tow'rd's whom the gentle gales of love
Should waft her : and she chose (O had he ne'er
Obtained that envied favour !) Menelaus.
To Lacedemon now the Phrygian came,
The judge between the beauties of the sky,
So fame reports him : gorgeous was his dress,

Glitt'ring with gold and vermeil-tinctured dies,
Barbaric elegance. He loved, was loved,
And bore the beauteous Helena away
To Ida's pastoral groves ; for Menelaus
Was absent then. Deserted thus through Greece
He raved, the oaths attesting giv'n of old
To Tyndarus, conjuring all t' avenge
His wrongs. On this the Grecians rush to war,
And taking arms come hither to the straits
Of Aulis, furnished well with ships, with spears,
And num'rous chariots : me they chose their chief,
Doing a grace to Menelaus, for that
I am his brother. O that this high honour
Some other had received, not I ! The troops
Collected and embodied, here we sit
Unactive, and from Aulis wish to sail
In vain. The prophet Calchas, 'midst the gloom
That darkened on our minds, at length pronounced
That Iphigenia, my virgin daughter,
I to Diana, goddess of this land,
Must sacrifice : this victim giv'n, the winds
Shall swell our sails, and Troy beneath our arms
Be humbled in the dust ; but if denied,
These things are not to be. This when I heard,
I said that by the herald's voice the troops
Should be discharged, for never would I bear
To slay my daughter ; till my brother came,
And, urging many a plea, persuaded me
To bear these dreadful things. I wrote, I sealed
A letter to my wife, that she should send
Her daughter to Achilles as a bride
Affianced : of his worth I spoke in terms
Of amplest honour ; said he would not sail
With Greece, unless from us his nuptial bed
Was decked in Phthia : with my wife this found
Easy belief, the false tale that announced
Her daughter's destined marriage. Of the Greeks
None but Ulysses, Calchas, and my brother
To this are conscious. What I then resolved

Imprudently, I prudently retract,
 Committed to this letter, which thou sawst me
 This night, old man, unfold and fold again.
 Take then this letter, haste, to Argos go.
 That there is written, in its secret folds
 Enclosed. I will explain to thee; for thou
 Art faithful to my wife and to my house.

ATT. Read it, explain its purport, that my words
 May aptly with thy writing correspond.

AGAM. "Whate'er my former letter gave in charge, [Reads.
 Daughter of Leda, this I write to thee,
 That to Eubœa's winding way thou send not
 Thy daughter, nor to Aulis rising high
 Above the waves; for to some other time
 The nuptials of the virgin we defer."

ATT. Will not Achilles, frustrate of his bride,
 Be fired with rage 'gainst thee, and 'gainst thy wife?
 This might be dang'rous: is not such thy thought?

AGAM. His name indeed we used, but nothing more:
 Achilles knows not of the nuptials, knows
 Of our transactions nought, nor that I named
 My daughter his, as to his bed betrothed.

ATT. This, royal Agamemnon, is a deed
 Of perilous daring. So thy daughter, named
 A bride to him who from a goddess draws
 His birth, thou ledd'st a victim for the Grecians.

AGAM. Distraction's in the thought: unhappy me,
 My misery sinks me! But away! To age
 Remitting nothing, use thy utmost speed.

ATT. I hasten, king.

AGAM. Now sit not on the bank
 Of shaded fountain, nor indulge to sleep.

ATT. Think better of me.

AGAM. Take good heed, where'er
 The ways divide, observing that the car,
 Whose wheels swift-rolling bear my daughter hither
 Where rides the fleet of Greece, escape thee not.

ATT. I shall observe.

AGAM. Now haste thee from the tent.

Antistrophe 1.

Diana's hallowed grove I seek,
 Where to the goddess frequent victims bleed,
 And through it pass with speed,
 The warm blush kindling on my youthful cheek,
 Ardent my wish to view the guard of shields,
 The armed tents of Greece extended wide,
 Their horse in warlike muster o'er the fields,
 And all the glorious scene of martial pride.

There either Ajax struck my sight,
 One from Oileus draws his birth, and one
 From greater Telamon,
 Salamis glories in her hero's might.
 These sitting with Protesilaus I saw
 Delighted with the various-figured die.
 But Palamedes, proud his birth to draw
 From Neptune, with Tydides whirled on high.

The massy discus : Merion there
 Rejoiced the manly sport to share,
 Wondrous the hero's form and martial grace ;
 Ulysses there, whose island's craggy brow
 Frowns o'er the darkened waves below ;
 And Nireus, fairest of the Grecian race.

Epode 1.

Swift as the wingéd wing
 Achilles, whom the goddess Thetis bore,
 And gave to Chiron in his rigid lore -
 To train his infant mind,
 I saw : in all his arms arrayed,
 The cumbrous equipage of war,
 His speed he o'er the strand displayed,
 Contending with the harnessed car :
 High o'er the beam I saw Eumelus rise,
 I heard his animating cries,
 And marked each courser beauteous to behold,
 Their glitt'ring bits embossed with gold :
 Those in the midst, the yoke that bear.
 Dappled with silvery marks their hair ;

And each on either side
 That wind, obedient to the guiding rein,
 With equal swiftmess o'er the plain,
 Bright as the flaming gold, with pride
 On snow-white fetlocks bound :
 With rival speed I saw Pelides fly,
 In arms, the whirling chariot nigh,
 Light o'er the pebbled ground.

Strophe 2.

Hence to the numerous fleet I fly,
 A vast and glorious sight,
 To gratify my curious eye,
 A woman's dear delight.
 On the right wing from Phthia's strand
 The Myrmidons, a valiant band,
 In fifty gallant vessels ride ;
 And by the Nereids we behold,
 Bright on the prows in sculptured gold,
 Achilles' arms are signified.

Antistrophe 2.

The Argive ships of equal oars
 Next these their station hold ;
 The son of Talau's leads their powers,
 And Sthenelus the bold.
 In order next th' Athenian train
 In sixty vessels plough the main,
 Their host the son of Theseus leads :
 Adorning the Munychian prows
 In arms a sculptured Pallas glows,
 Inspiring high heroic deeds.

[*The second Epode is lost.*]

Strophe 3.

Bœotia's host I there surveyed,
 In fifty ships the warriors came :
 An imaged form each ship displayed,
 Proud argument of Theban fame ;

High on each sculptured prow their Cadmus stands,
 A golden dragon holding in his hands ;
 And Leïtus, who boasts his birth
 From those that sprung embattled from the earth,
 Commands their naval war.
 Those, who their race from Phocis draw,
 Ranged on the foaming flood I saw.
 Oïlean Ajax there,
 Equal his numbers, leads the Locrian train,
 Leaving illustrious Thronion's plain.

Antistrophe 3.

From high Mycenæ's rampired towers,
 Towers by the lab'ring Cyclops wrought,
 The son of Atreus leads his powers ;
 A hundred ships the monarch brought ;
 And faithful at his side, as friend with friend,
 These eyes beheld the injured chief attend ;
 That for the fair, her house who fled,
 Lightly preferring a barbaric bed,
 Greece with a gen'rous rage
 Might rise and vindicate his cause.
 His troops from Pylos Nestor draws,
 Reverend the warrior's age ;
 On his tall vessels sculptured Alpheus stands,
 A bull, and seems to spurn the sands.

Epode 3.

From Ænia's stormy coast
 By Geneus led twelve vessels plough the tide ;
 The chiefs of Elis anchor by their side ;
 These through th' extended host
 Are called the brave Epëan train,
 And Eurytus their force commands.
 Dashed by their oars the foaming main
 Whitens beneath the Taphian bands ;
 Meges their leader, from that dangerous shore,
 Where rough Echinæ's vext rocks roar.

The Salaminian Ajax to the right
 Stretches, the left wing to unite ;
 The last in station, o'er the deep
 His fleetest vessels circling sweep.

In all their gallant pride

I heard, I saw them stretch : to meet their war
 Should the barbaric slight barks dare,
 Shattered and sunk beneath the tide,
 They will return no more.

I heard, I saw ; and all the warlike train
 Faithful my memory shall retain,
 When reached my native shore.

ATTENDANT, MENELAUS, CHORUS.

ATT. This, Menelaus, is wrong ; thou shouldst not do it.

MEN. Go to : thou wouldst be faithful to thy lords !

ATT. That is an honour to me, no reproach.

MEN. Wouldst thou do what thou shouldst not, thou shalt
 rue it.

ATT. Thou shouldst not ope the letter which I bear.

MEN. Thou shouldst not bear what to all Greece is hurtful.

ATT. With others dispute that ; leave this to me.

MEN. I will not let it go.

ATT. Nor will I yield it.

MEN. Soon shall thy head this sceptre stain with blood.

ATT. Nay, it were glorious for my lords to die.

MEN. Let go : a slave presuming to dispute !

ATT. My royal master, we are wronged : by force
 Thy letter hath he wrested from my hands,
 To what behoves him paying no regard.

AGAMEMNON, MENELAUS, ATTENDANT, CHORUS.

AGAM. Why this indecent tumult at my doors ?

ATT. My words have greater right than his t' inform thee.

AGAM. Why, Menelaus, this strife with him, this force ?

MEN. Look, if thou darst, at me ; then will I speak.

AGAM. Fear I, from Atreus born, to raise mine eye ?

MEN. Dost thou see this, with basest orders charged ?

AGAM. I see it : from thy hand first give it back.

MEN. Not till I've shown all Greece what's written here.

AGAM. Knowst thou, this opened, what thou shouldst not know?

MEN. To wring thy heart, opening thy secret baseness.

AGAM. Where didst thou take it? Gods, hast thou no shame?

MEN. Watching from Argos if thy daughter comes.

AGAM. On my affairs a spy ! How shameless this !

MEN. Urged by my will : for I am not thy slave.

AGAM. Have I not leave in mine own house to rule ?

MEN. How wayward is thy mind, thy present thoughts

At variance with the past, and soon to change !

AGAM. Finely thy words are tuned : but know thou this,
The wily tongue is a detested ill.

MEN. The wav'ring mind is a base property,
And darkens to our friends : I will convince thee :
But if through pride thou turn thee from the truth,
Small share of praise shalt thou receive from me,
Thou knowest, when thy aim was to command
The troops of Greece at Troy, thy semblance formed
As if affecting nothing, but thy wish
Most ardent ; what humility was thine :
Pressing the hand of each, thy door to all
Was open, to the meanest, and thy speech
To all addressed in order, e'en to those
Who willed no converse with thee, seeking thus
By courteous manners thy ambitious wish
To purchase. The supreme command obtained,
Soon were thy manners changed, and to thy friends
Not friendly as before ; nor was access
Easy, oft too denied. Ill it becomes
An honest man, when raised to power, to change
His manners, but then most to be approved
Firm to his friends, when through his advanced state
He most can serve them : this I urge against thee
As my first charge, where first I found thee base.
But when thou camst to Aulis, with the troops
Of Greece in arms, to nothing didst thou sink,
Astonished at thy fortune, by the gods
Denied a gale to swell thy sails. The Greeks

Required thee to dismiss the ships, nor toil
 In vain at Aulis : how dejected then
 Thy visage, thy confusion then how great
 Not to command the thousand ships, and fill
 The fields of Priam with embattled hosts ?
 Me then didst thou address, "What shall I do,
 Or what expedient find, of this command,
 Of this high honour not to be deprived ?"
 When Calchas at the hallowed rites declared
 That to Diana thou must sacrifice
 Thy daughter, and the Grecians then should sail,
 With joy thy thoughts were heightened ; willingly
 The virgin as a victim didst thou promise
 And freely, not by force (urge not that plea),
 Dost thou despatch a message to thy wife
 To send thy daughter hither, the pretence
 Her nuptials with Achilles. But thy mind
 Was soon averse, and secretly devised
 Letters of diff'rent import ; now in sooth
 Thou wilt not be the murd'rer of thy daughter.
 This air is witness, which hath heard these things
 Of thee. To thousands this hath chanced in tasks
 Of arduous nature ; freely they engage,
 Then from the high attempt retreat with shame,
 Th' ill judgment of their countrymen in part,
 Justice in part the cause, for in the proof
 They feel their want of power to guard the state.
 But most I mourn th' unhappy fate of Greece,
 Who, prompt her noble vengeance to inflict
 On the barbarians, worthless as they are,
 Shall let them now go scoffing off, through thee,
 And through thy daughter. Never for his wealth
 Would I appoint a ruler o'er the state,
 Or chief in arms : wisdom should mark the man
 Who in his country bears the sov'reign sway :
 Every man sage in counsel is a leader.

CHOR. How dreadful, when 'twixt brothers words arise,
 And fierce disputings kindle into strife !

AGAM. For this I will rebuke thee ; but in brief,

Not raising high the eye of insolence,
 But with more temperance, because thou art
 My brother ; for a good man loves to act
 With modesty. But tell me, why with rage
 Dost thou thus swell ? why rolls thy blood-streaked eye ?
 Who injures thee ? of what art thou in want ?
 A rich connubial bed, is that thy wish ?
 This to procure thee is not in my power.
 Thou didst possess one, but ill governed it.
 Shall I, who with no fault have e'er been charged,
 Suffer for thy ill conduct ? Is thy heart
 Racked at my honours ? But a beauteous wife
 In thy fond arms it is thy wish to hold,
 Transgressing decency and reason : base
 Of a bad man the pleasures. But if I,
 Before ill-judging, have with sober thought
 My purpose changed, must I be therefore deemed
 Reft of my sense ? Thou rather, who hast lost
 A wife that brings thee shame, yet dost with warmth
 Wish to regain her, would the fav'ring god
 Grant thee that fortune. Of the nuptials eager
 The suitors pledged to Tyndarus their oath,
 Unwise : the hope, I ween, of the fair bride
 Effected this, more than thy grace or power :
 Take these, and march to war ; soon wilt thou find
 What oaths avail ill plighted, with slight thought,
 And by compulsion. But I will not slay
 My children : and thy wishes o'erleap justice,
 The punishment of thy flagitious wife.
 My nights, my days would pass away in tears,
 Should I with outrage and injustice wrong
 Those who from me derived their birth. These things
 Have I replied to thee in brief, with ease
 And plainness : but if thou wilt not be wise,
 What concerns me I rightly will appoint.

CHOR. These words are different from his former speech,
 And well the father's melting pity show.

MEN. Ah me unhappy ! I have then no friends.

AGAM. Yes, if thou wish not to destroy thy friends.

MEN. How wilt thou show one father gave us birth ?

AGAM. I would be wise, but not be mad with thee.

MEN. Friends with their friends in common ought to grieve.

AGAM. Be thy deeds friendly then, not painful to me.

MEN. And with all Greece shouldst thou not bear this pain ?

AGAM. All Greece, and thee, hath heaven-sent frenzy seized.

MEN. Thou gloriest in thy sceptre, and betray'st

Thy brother. But to other means I turn,

And other friends.

AGAMEMNON, MENELAUS, MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MESS. I come, imperial lord

Of Greece, thy daughter leading, in thine house

Named Iphigenia by thee ; and thy wife

Attends her, Clytemnestra, with thy son

Orestes, sight delightful to thine eyes

After this tedious absence from thy home.

But wearied with this length of way, beside

A beauteous-flowing fountain they repose,

Themselves refreshing, and their steeds, unyoked

To taste the fresh grass of the verdant mead.

I run to bring thee notice, that prepared

Thou mayst receive them : this the troops have heard

For through the camp swift the report was spread

That Iphigenia is arrived, and all

Haste to the sight desirous to behold

Thy daughter ; for to every eye the great

Appear illustrious, with high splendour graced,

Is this her bridal day, some ask, or what

Intended ? Or through fond desire to see

His daughter did th' imperial Agamemnon

Send for the virgin ? Others mightst thou hear,

The princess to Diana, queen of Aulis,

Will they present ? Who shall receive her hand ?

But haste, begin the rites, and crown thy head.

And thou too, royal Menelaus, prepare

The hymeneals ; let the joyful house

Re-echo to the pipe and festive dance :

For happy to the virgin comes this day.

AGAM. 'Tis well: thou hast my thanks. But go thou in;
 All things, if fortune favours, shall be well.—
 Ah me, unhappy me! What shall I say,
 And whence begin? In what a chain of fate
 Am I enfolded? Fortune, wiser far
 Than all my vain designs, hath closely wrought
 Beneath me. What advantages attend
 Ignoble birth? They are allowed to weep
 And utter sad complaints; but to the noble
 'This is denied. Led by the pride of rank,
 Which rules us, to the people we are slaves.
 I am indeed ashamed to drop the tear,
 And not to drop the tear I am ashamed,
 Fall'n as I am on these great miseries.
 Well, let it be. But how shall I address
 My wife, or how receive her? with what eye
 Look on her? For to all my former ills
 Coming unbidden, she hath added weight
 Of new distress: yet decency required
 Her presence with her daughter, to attend
 Her nuptials, and present the dearest gifts:
 There will she find me false. But thee, O thee,
 Unhappy bride (bride call I thee! how soon
 To Pluto to be wedded!), how I pity!
 Methinks I hear her suppliant voice thus speak,
 "My father, wilt thou kill me? Mayst thou make
 Thyself such nuptials, and whoe'er to thee
 Is dear." Orestes, standing near, shall cry
 In accents inarticulate, his speech,
 As yet unformed, articulate to me.
 Unhappy me! what ruin hath the son
 Of Priam brought on me! This Paris caused
 When he espoused the faithless Helena.

CHOR. I, as a woman and a stranger ought,
 Am moved with pity at a monarch's woes.

MEN. Give me thy hand, my brother, let me clasp it.

AGAM. I give it: thou art conqueror, I a wretch.

MEN. By Pelops, called the father of thy father
 And mine: by Atreus, whence we draw our birth,

I swear, that what I now shall say to thee
Comes from my heart, nought feigned, but what I think.
When from thine eye I saw thee drop the tear,
I pitied thee, and sympathizing dropped
Myself a tear : its former reas'nings now
My soul foregoes, no more unkind to thee,
But, as thou feelest, feels : nay, I exhort thee
Neither to slay thy daughter, nor to rank
What concerns me most high : it is not just
That grief should rend thy heart, whilst my affairs
Go pleasantly ; that any of thy house
Should die, whilst mine behold the light. For what
Can be my purpose ? Might I not contract
Other illustrious nuptials, if my wish
Were other nuptials ? But at such a price,
My brother's ruin, which behoves me least,
Should I recover Helena, an ill
Dear with a blessing purchased ? Folly ruled
Before, and youth : but on a nearer view
I see what 'tis to yield a child to death.
Besides th' unhappy virgin, near allied
By ties of consanguinity, excites
My pity, destined for a nuptial bed
To fall a victim : what hath she to do,
The virgin daughter, with my Helena ?
Discharged from Aulis let the troops depart.
And thou, my brother, cease to dew thine eyes
With tears, which cause the drops to start in mine.
Touching thy daughter hast thou oracles
Which respect me ; no more be that respect ;
My part I cede to thee. My thoughts are changed
From cruel, and I feel what I should feel :
Nature returns, and all a brother's love
Warm in my heart revives : of no bad man
The manners these, to follow still the best.

CHOR. Generous thy words, and worthy Tantalus
The son of Jove : thou dost not shame thy birth.

AGAM. Now I applaud thee ; for beyond my thought
Rightly thy words conclude, and worthy thee.

MEN. For love and for ambition variance oft
Rises 'twixt brothers : but my soul abhors
This mutual harshness of unnatural strife.

AGAM. But dire necessity compels me now
My daughter's bloody slaughter to complete.

MEN. Who shall compel thee to destroy thy child?

AGAM. The whole assembled host of Greece in arms.

MEN. Not if to Argos her thou send again.

AGAM. That might be secret : this must be revealed.

MEN. What? Of the people have not too great dread.

AGAM. The oracle will Calchas sound to all.

MEN. Not if ere that he die : an easy thing.

AGAM. Vainglorious is the whole prophetic breed.

MEN. And of no use when present, of no good.

AGAM. But seest thou not what enters now my thought?

MEN. Can I conjecture what thou dost not speak?

AGAM. He of the race of Sisyphus knows all.

MEN. Nor thee, nor me, will e'er Ulysses harm.

AGAM. Artful, the people as he wills he leads.

MEN. With vanity, a mighty ill, possessed.

AGAM. Think then thou seest him stand amidst the troops,
Declaring to them all the oracle

Announced by Calchas : how this sacrifice

I promised to Diana, then refused.

Soon will he lead the Grecians, and excite them,

Me in their fury having slain, and thee,

To sacrifice the virgin. Should I fly

To Argos, marching thither they will raze

Her rampires by the Cyclops raised, and spread

Destruction o'er the land. Unhappy me !

Such ills are mine, to this severe distress

Brought by the gods ! Yet one thing make thy care :

Take heed, as through the host thy steps return,

These tidings reach not Clytemnestra's ear,

Till I the virgin to th' infernal king

Shall have presented, that I may abide

With as few tears as may be my hard fate.

Silence, ye female strangers, be your part.

CHORUS.

Strophe.

How blest their golden days, who prove
 The gentle joys of temp'rate love,
 When modest Venus on the couch attends.
 Pleased with tranquillity to dwell !
 But high the madd'ning passions swell,
 When both his bows the bright-haired tyrant bends ;
 One, by the Graces strung, imparts
 Pure joys that brighten in our hearts ;
 And one, life's wild tumultuous war.
 Far, beauteous Queen, from us may this be far ;
 Mine be Love's pure and temp'rate grace,
 The holy flame of chaste desire,
 Mild Venus, in my breast inspire ;
 There never have ungoverned passion place !

Antistrophe.

Nature in man we diff'ring find,
 And diff'rent manners mark his mind :
 When good, they give each excellence to spring,
 And education's sage control
 To every virtue forms the soul :
 Meek modesty then Wisdom loves to bring,
 She loves to bring each various grace,
 Which shows where Duty hath its place,
 Whence Glory beams divinely bright,
 And pours on life unfailing streams of light.
 Virtues in woman fairest shine
 That silent guard Love's holy flame ;
 Man's various worth ascends to fame
 Most, when t' exalt the state his great design.

Epode.

Thence, Paris, didst thou come,
 Where, on Ida's pastured brow
 Trained the snowy herds among,
 Thine was the barbaric song,
 Thine to bid the sweet notes flow,

Whilst thy Phrygian pipe breathes measures,
 Caught from those harmonious treasures
 Which Olympus taught his reed.
 Unmilked herds around thee feed,
 Whilst the contending beauties of the skies
 From thee expect the prize.
 Hence camest thou to the Grecian shore,
 The ivory-cinctured house before :
 Thy eyes the flames of love inspire,
 And Helen, as she gazed, received the fire :
 Her charms too rushed upon thy soul,
 And madness reigned without control.
 Hence discord, discord calls to war :
 With many a ship, with many a spear
 Greece rushes on, impetuous to destroy
 The rampired walls of Troy.
 How splendid are the fortunes of the great !
 See, Iphigenia, daughter of the king,
 And Clytemnestra, sprung from Tyndarus,
 My queen ! From noble ancestors they draw
 Their birth, and are to fortune's highest state
 Exalted : to th' inferior ranks of life
 The powerful and the wealthy are as gods.
 Daughters of Chalcis, near them let us stand,
 And courteous in our hands receive the queen,
 As from her car she to the ground descends,
 With duteous zeal, that she may tread secure ;
 And that th' illustrious daughter of the king
 On her arrival nothing may disturb :
 For, strangers as we are, let us not cause
 These Argive strangers trouble or affright.

CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, ATTENDANTS, CHORUS.

CLYT. This as a prosp'rous omen I accept,
 Thy courtesy and gentleness of speech :
 And hence conceive I hope that I am come
 To happy nuptials leading her a bride.
 But from the chariot take the dow'ral gifts
 Brought with me for the virgin ; to the house

Bear them with faithful care. My daughter, quit
 The harnessed chariot, and thy delicate foot
 Place on the ground. Ye females, in your arms
 Receive her ; she is weak ; and from the car
 Conduct her down : stretch one of you your hand,
 Supporting me, that may I leave this seat
 In seemly manner. Some before the yoke
 Stand nigh the horses, for their eye is quick,
 Soon startled, and unruly : now receive
 This child, Orestes, Agamemnon's son,
 For he is yet an infant. Dost thou sleep,
 My son ? The rolling chariot hath subdued thee :
 Wake to thy sister's marriage happily ;
 Th' alliance of a noble youth, thyself
 Noble, shalt thou receive, the godlike son
 Of Thetis. Come, my daughter, near me stand,
 Stand near thy mother, Iphigenia, show
 These strangers how supremely I am blest
 In thee ; and here address thee to thy father.

IPH. Would it offend my mother, should I run
 And throw myself into my father's arms ?

AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

CLYT. Imperial chief of Greece, my honoured lord,
 To thy commands obedient we are come.

IPH. My father, to thy arms I wish to run,
 Clasped to thy bosom ; dear to me thy sight
 After such absence : be not angry with me.

AGAM. Enjoy thy wish : of all my children thou
 Hast of thy father always been most fond.

IPH. Absent so long, with joy I look on thee.

AGAM. And I on thee : so this is mutual joy.

IPH. Well hast thou done to bring me to thy presence.

AGAM. If well, or not well done, I cannot say.

IPH. A gloom hangs on thee 'midst thy joy to see me.

AGAM. A king and chief hath many anxious cares.

IPH. But let me have thee now : think not of cares.

AGAM. Thou hast me all : each thought is bent on thee.

IPH. Smooth then thy brow, and look with fondness on me.

AGAM. To see thee gives me joy, such joy as mine.

IPH. Yet from thy melting eye thou pourst the tear.

AGAM. Long, very long the absence to ensue.

IPH. I know not, dearest father, what this means.

AGAM. Thy prudent speech makes me more pity thee.

IPH. Might it divert thee, idly will I talk.

AGAM. Can I be silent? O, thou hast my thanks.

IPH. At home, my father, with thy children stay.

AGAM. I wish it: but, that wish denied, I grieve.

IPH. A mischief on the war, and Sparta's wrongs!

AGAM. Others will feel the mischief: I have felt it.

IPH. How long thy absence in the bay of Aulis!

AGAM. Something detains me yet, detains the host.

IPH. Where, father, do they say the Phrygians dwell?

AGAM. Where O that Priam's Paris ne'er had lived!

IPH. And when thou leavst me is the voyage long?

AGAM. To the same place thou with thy father goest.

IPH. O that with honour I might sail with thee!

AGAM. Thou shalt, where thou thy father shalt remember.

IPH. Go I alone, or sails my mother with me?

AGAM. Alone: nor father there, nor mother goes.

IPH. Dost thou then place me in some other house?

AGAM. Ask not: for virgins should not know these things.

IPH. Haste to me then from Troy, victorious there.

AGAM. Here first I must present a sacrifice.

IPH. Those rites thou with the priests must well prepare.

AGAM. Thou shalt be witness, nigh the lavers placed.

IPH. Shall we then round the altar raise the song?

AGAM. Thee happier than myself in this I deem,

That thou art ignorant. But go thou in,

Present thee to the virgins. O, that kiss,

That dear embrace, how painful from a child,

Who from a father must so long be absent!

Ah me, that breast, those cheeks, those golden tresses!

What piercing sorrows hath the Phrygian state

And Helen caused us! But I check my words;

For when I touch thee, in my melting eyes

The sudden moisture rises. Go thou in.—

Daughter of Leda, if with pity touched

I feel my grief too strong, for that I soon
 Shall to Achilles my dear child consign,
 Forgive me : happy is it so to place
 A daughter, yet it pains a father's heart
 When he delivers to another house
 A child, the object of his tender care.

CLYT. Nor is my heart insensible. I feel,
 Be thou assured, an equal grief, nor want
 From thee monitions, when I lead the virgin
 With hymeneal rites ; but custom, joined
 With time, will check it. Well : his name I know
 To whom thou hast betrothed thy daughter ; more
 I wish to know, his lineage whence he draws.

AGAM. Ægina was the daughter of Asopus.

CLYT. With her what mortal wedded, or what god ?

AGAM. Jove, sire of Æacus, CEnone's chief.

CLYT. What son of Æacus possessed his house ?

AGAM. Peleus ; the daughter he of Nereus weds.

CLYT. By force, or by the god's consent obtained ?

AGAM. Her father gave her, first by Jove betrothed.

CLYT. Where did he wed her ? In the ocean waves ?

AGAM. Where Chiron dwells, on Pelion's awful heights.

CLYT. The Centaur race, they say, inhabit there.

AGAM. The gods there present graced his nuptial feast.

CLYT. Achilles did the sire or Thetis train ?

AGAM. Chiron, that from bad men he might not learn.

CLYT. Wise he who took, wise they who gave the charge.

AGAM. Such is the man who shall thy daughter wed.

CLYT. Not disapproved ; but where in Greece his seat ?

AGAM. Where flows Apidanus through Pthia's bounds.

CLYT. Thine and my daughter thither will he lead ?

AGAM. When he obtains her, this will be his care.

CLYT. Blest may they be ! But when the bridal day ?

AGAM. Soon as the moon's propitious circle fills.

CLYT. Is for the bride the previous victim slain ?

AGAM. Soon shall it : this employs my present thought.

CLYT. And wilt thou next the nuptial feast prepare ?

AGAM. When I have offered what the gods require.

CLYT. Where for the females shall we deck the feast ?

AGAM. Here, where the gallant fleet at anchor rides.

CLYT. Amply supply then what th' occasion claims.

AGAM. Knowst thou what now I wish thee do? Obey me.

CLYT. In what? Thou long hast trained me to obey.

AGAM. We in the place where now the bridegroom is——

CLYT. Without the mother! What to me belongs——

AGAM. Will give thy daughter 'midst th' assembled Greeks.

CLYT. And where, whilst this is doing, shall I be?

AGAM. To Argos go, thy charge the virgins there.

CLYT. And leave my daughter? Who shall raise the torch?

AGAM. The light, to deck the nuptials, I will hold.

CLYT. Custom forbids: nor wouldst thou deem it seemly.

AGAM. Nor decent that thou mix with martial troops.

CLYT. But decent that the mother give the daughter.

AGAM. Nor leave the younger in the house alone.

CLYT. In close apartments they are guarded well.

AGAM. Let me persuade thee.

CLYT. By the potent queen,

Goddess of Argos, no. Of things abroad

Take thou the charge: within the house my care

Shall deck the virgin's nuptials as is meet.

[*She goes in.*]

AGAM. Unhappy me! In vain I came, my hopes

Are vanished; out of sight it was my wish

To send my wife: thus I devise, thus form

My wily purpose, studious to beguile

Those dearest to my soul, in all my aims

Confounded. Hence to Calchas will I go

The Seer, inquiring what the goddess wills,

To me unfortunate, a grief to Greece.

A wise man in his house should find a wife

Gentle and courteous, or no wife at all.

CHORUS.

Strophe.

To Simois, and his silver tide

In eddies whirling through the plain,

The fleet of Greece in gallant pride

Vengeful shall bear this martial train;

To Ilion's rampired towers shall bear,
 And Troy, by Phœbus loved, the war.
 Cassandra there, when on her soul
 The gods prophetic transports roll,
 Her brows with verdant laurel loves to bind,
 Her yellow tresses streaming to the wind.

Antistrophe.

The Trojans high on Ilium's towers,
 And round the walls of Troy shall stand ;
 When Mars to Simois leads his powers,
 And furious ploughs the hostile strand ;
 From Priam's ruined house to bear
 Again to Greece the fatal fair,
 Whose brothers, sons of Jove, on high
 Twin stars adorn the spangled sky,
 Rushing to war his brazen shield he rears,
 And glitt'ring round him blaze the Grecian spears.

Epode.

Phrygian Pergamus around,
 Walls of rock with turrets crowned,
 Mars the furious war shall lead :
 Blood his flaming sword shall stain,
 As from the trunk he hews the warrior's head,
 And to the dust shakes Troy's proud walls again.
 Virgins with their woes opprest,
 And Priam's queen their fall lament ;
 Jove-born Helen beats her breast,
 In anguish, from her lover rent.
 From me, from mine be far the fate
 Which Lydia's gorgeous dames with sighs,
 Whilst Troy's sad matrons wipe their dewy eyes,
 In mutual converse o'er the web relate,
 " Who will not rend her crispéd hair,
 Who will not pour the gushing tear,
 Low sunk in dust our ruined walls ?
 Bright daughter of the bird, whose neck
 Arched in proud state the white plumes deck,
 For thee in dust our country falls :

If true the fame that mighty Jove
 Changed to a swan sought Leda's love :
 Or fabling poets from Pieria's spring
 Their wanton and indecent legends bring."

ACHILLES, CHORUS.

ACH. Where is the leader of the Grecian host ?
 Who of th' attendants tells him that Achilles,
 The son of Peleus, seeks him at the gate ?—
 Different our state, who nigh the Euripus
 Wait here : unwedded some, their houses left
 In solitude, here sit upon the shore ;
 And childless others leave their nuptial beds ;
 Such ardour, not without the gods, through Greece
 Flames for this war. What touches me to speak
 Is mine : let others what their need requires
 Themselves explain. Thessalia's pleasant fields
 And Peleus leaving, at the narrow surge
 Of Euripus I wait, the Myrmidons
 Restraining : with impatient instance oft
 They urge me, " Why, Achilles, stay we here ?
 What tedious length of time is yet to pass
 To Ilium ere we sail ? Wouldst thou do aught ?
 Do it, or lead us home ; nor here await
 The sons of Atreus, and their cold delays."

CLYTEMNESTRA, ACHILLES, CHORUS.

CLYT. Son of the goddess Thetis, in the house
 Hearing thy words I come without the gates.

ACH. O revered Modesty, whom do mine eyes
 Behold ? Her form bears dignity and grace.

CLYT. Not strange thou knowst us not, before not seen ;
 But thy regard to Modesty I praise.

ACH. Who art thou ? To the Grecian camp why come,
 A woman 'midst a host of men in arms ?

CLYT. Daughter of Leda, Clytemnestra named,
 Am I, the royal Agamemnon's wife.

ACH. Well hast thou answered, and in brief : but shame
 Were mine with wedded dames to hold discourse.

CLYT. Stay : wherefore dost thou fly me? With my hand
Join thy right hand, pledge of thy happy nuptials.

ACH. My hand with thine ! To Agamemnon this
Were wrong, if, what I have no right, I touch.

CLYT. Son of the sea-born Nereid, thou hast right,
Much right, since thou my daughter soon wilt wed.

ACH. Wed, dost thou say? Amazement chains my tongue :
What secret purpose hath thy strange discourse ?

CLYT. 'Tis ever thus : the modest, 'midst new friends,
At mention of their nuptials are ashamed.

ACH. Ne'er did I woo thy daughter ; ne'er did word
Of nuptials from th' Atridæ reach my ear.

CLYT. What may this mean ? Thou wonderst at my words,
And equal wonder thine excite in me.

ACH. All is conjecture, common to us both,
Both haply are by words alike deceived.

CLYT. I am abused, according nuptials here
Never designed, it seems ; I blush at this.

ACH. Some one perchance 'gainst thee and me hath framed
This mock. Regard it not ; light let it pass.

CLYT. Farewell ! I cannot look upon thy face,
Basely abused, and made a liar thus.

ACH. Thee too I bid farewell : within the house
Inquiries from thy husband will I make.

ATTENDANT, CLYTEMNESTRA, ACHILLES, CHORUS.

ATT. Stay, stranger of the race of Æacus,
Stay, goddess-born : daughter of Leda, stay.

ACH. Who from the gates calls with his earnest voice ?

ATT. A slave : in that I boast not : no proud vaunt
My fortune will admit.

ACH. Whose slave ? Not mine :
For I with Agamemnon have no share.

ATT. Hers, who stands here before the house, the gift
Of Tyndarus her father.

ACH. Well, we stay ;
What wouldst thou ? why hast thou detained me ? Speak.

ATT. Are you alone before this royal house ?

ACH. Speak as to us alone : come from the gates.

ATT. O fortune, and my provident caution, save
Those whom I wish to save!

ACH. Thy words portend
Something not brief, and seem of import high.

CLYT. Delay not for my hand : speak what thou wouldst.

ATT. Dost thou then know me, who I am, to thee
And to thy children how benevolent ?

CLYT. I know thee, an old servant of my house.

ATT. And to the royal Agamemnon given
Part of thy dowry.

CLYT. With us didst thou come
To Argos, and hast there been always mine.

ATT. So is it : hence to thee I bear goodwill,
But to thy husband less.

CLYT. Well then, to me,
Whate'er thy wish to speak, at length disclose.

ATT. Thy daughter will her father slay, her father
With his own hand.

CLYT. How ! I abhor thy words,
Old man : thou art not in thy perfect sense.

ATT. Striking her white neck with the ruthless sword.

CLYT. Unhappy me ! Hath madness seized his mind ?

ATT. No : save to thee and to thy daughter, sound
His sense : in this he errs from reason wide.

CLYT. What cause ? What Fury fires him to the deed ?

ATT. The Oracles, and Calchas, that the troops
May sail.

CLYT. Sail whither ? Wretched me ! She too
How wretched, whom her father will destroy !

ATT. To the proud seats of Troy, thence to bring back
Helen, the Spartan's wife.

CLYT. Of her return
Is Iphigenia doomed the fatal price ?

ATT. E'en so : thy daughter will her father slay
A victim to Diana.

CLYT. From my home
To win me were these nuptials then devised

ATT. Thy daughter that with pleasure thou mightst lead
To wed Achilles.

CLYT. To perdition then
Thou comst, my daughter, and thy mother with thee.

ATT. Piteous of both the suff'rings, and th' attempt
Of Agamemnon dreadful.

CLYT. With my woes
I sink, mine eye no longer holds the tear.

ATT. Painful the tear that falls for children lost.

CLYT. But whence, old man, knowst thou, or heardst thou
this?

ATT. I took my way, charged with a letter to thee,
Since that which had been sent.

CLYT. Its purport what?
Forbidding, or exhorting me to bring
My daughter to her death?

ATT. This not to bring her
Gave charge: for wise were then thy husband's thoughts.

CLYT. Charged with this letter to me, why to me
Didst thou not give it?

ATT. Menelaus by force
Took it away, the author of these ills.

CLYT. Son of the sea-born Nereid, son of Peleus,
Dost thou hear this?

ACH. What makes thee wretched, lady,
I hear: and ill what touches me I brook.

CLYT. My daughter they will slay, the false pretence
Thy nuptials.

ACH. On thy husband I too charge
Much blame, nor light doth my resentment rise.

CLYT. Low at thy knees I will not blush to fall,
Of mortal birth to one of heavenly race.

Why should I now be proud? Or what demands,
More than a daughter's life, my anxious care?

Protect, O goddess-born, a wretched mother;

Protect a virgin called thy bride: her head

With garlands—ah, in vain!—yet did I crown,

And led her as by thee to be espoused;

Now to be slain I bring her: but on thee,

If thou protect her not, reproach will fall;

For, though not joined in marriage, thou wast called

The husband of the virgin. By this cheek,
 By this right hand, by her that gave thee birth
 (For me thy name hath ruined, and from thee
 I therefore claim protection), I have now
 No altar, but thy knee, to which to fly,
 I have no friend but thee: the fell designs
 Of Agamemnon's ruthless heart thou hearest;
 And I, a woman, as thou seest, am come
 To this unruly camp, in mischiefs bold,
 Of use but when they list. If thou shalt dare
 Stretch forth thine hand to aid me, I shall find
 Safety: if not, then am I lost indeed.

CHOR. To be a mother is the amplest source
 Of nature's dear affections: this to all
 Is common, for their children anxious thought.

ACH. To noblest thoughts my tow'ring soul is raised,
 Which at the woes of others knows to melt,
 And bear with moderation fortune's smiles.

CHOR. These are the men, who, trained in reason's lore,
 As wisdom guides them, form their life aright.

ACH. There is a time, when not to build too much
 On our own wisdom is agreeable:
 But then there is a time, when to exert
 Our judgment is of use. By Chiron trained,
 Of mortals the most righteous, I have learned
 Simplicity of manners. To the sons
 Of Atreus, when their high commands are stamped
 With honour, my obedience shall be paid:
 Where honour bids not, I shall not obey:
 But my free nature here, and when at Troy,
 Preserved, my spear shall to my utmost power
 Add glory to the war. But thee, oppressed
 With miseries, and by those most dear to thee,
 Far as a young man may, so strong I feel
 The touch of pity, thee will I protect;
 And never shall thy daughter, who was called
 Mine, by her father's hand be slain; to weave
 His wily trains thy husband ne'er shall make
Me his pretext; for so my name would slay

Thy daughter, though it lifted not the sword.
The cause indeed thy husband ; yet not pure
My person, if through me, and through my nuptials,
The virgin perish, suffering dreadful things
And wrongs, at which astonished nature starts.
I were the basest of the Greeks, a thing
Nought worth (and Menelaus might well be ranked
'Mongst men), no more the son of Peleus deemed,
But of some cruel demon, should my name,
Pleaded to screen thy husband's purpose, kill her.
By Nereus, who beneath the wat'ry waves
Was trained, the sire of Thetis, whence my birth,
The royal Agememnon shall not touch
Thy daughter, with his finger shall not touch her,
Nor e'en her robes : else Sipylus, a mean
Barbaric town, from whence our chiefs derive
Their race, shall be illustrious, and my realm,
Phthia, be slighted as unknown to fame.
His lustral lavers and his salted cakes
With sorrow shall the prophet Calchas bear
Away. The prophet ! What is he ? A man
Who speaks 'mongst many falsehoods but few truths,
Whene'er chance leads him to speak true ; when false,
The prophet is no more. With nuptial rites
Why should I say how many virgins sue
To be united to me ? But of that
No more. The royal Agememnon wrongs me,
Greatly he wrongs me : ought he not from me,
Would he betroth his daughter, ask my name ?
Th' assent of Clytemnestra then with ease
Had I obtained to give her daughter to me.
I to the Greeks had given her, if to Troy
For this their course were checked ; the public good
Of those with whom I join my arms t' exalt
I should not have refused : but with the chiefs
I now am nothing, held of no esteem
To act, or not to act, in glory's cause.
But soon this sword shall know whom, ere to Troy
I come, with drops of blood I shall distain,

Whoe'er he be that shall attempt to take
 Thy daughter from me. Rest thou then in peace ;
 I, as a guardian god, am come to thee :
 Great is the contest, yet it shall be proved.

CHOR. Worthy, O son of Peleus, of thyself,
 Worthy the sea-born goddess, are thy words.

CLYT. How shall I praise thee, that due bounds my words
 Exceed not, nor beneath thy merit sink,
 Thy grace impairing : for the good, when praised,
 Feel something of disgust, if to excess
 Commended. But I blush at words that raise
 Pity at private woes, whilst of my ills
 No share is thine : yet lovely is the sight,
 When, stranger though he be, to the distressed
 A good man gives assistance. Pity me ;
 My sufferings call for pity : when I thought
 To have thee for a son, I fondly fed
 A false and flatt'ring hope. To thee perchance,
 And to thy future nuptials, this might be
 An omen, should my daughter die ; 'gainst this
 Behoves thee guard. Well did thy words begin,
 And well they ended : be it then thy will
 My daughter shall be saved. Wilt thou she fall
 A suppliant at thy knees ? This ill becomes
 A virgin ; yet, if such thy will, with all
 Her blushes shall she come, and in her eye
 Ingenuous modesty : or the same grace
 Shall I, if absent she, obtain from thee ?

ACH. Let her remain within : for Modesty
 With her own modest dignity is pleased.

CLYT. Yet must we sue to thee with earnest prayer.

ACH. Nor bring thy daughter, lady, to our sight,
 Nor ours be rude reproach. Th' assembled host,
 At leisure from their own domestic cares,
 Loves the malignant jest and sland'rous tale.
 Suppliant or not, alike shall you obtain
 From me this grace : the contest shall be mine,
 Great as it is, to free you from your ills.
 Of one thing be assured, ne'er shall my tongue

Utter a falsehood : if I speak untruth,
 And mock thee with vain promise, let me die :
 But as I save thy daughter may I live.

CLYT. O be thou blest, thus aiding the unhappy !

ACH. Now hear me, how success may best be ours.

CLYT. What wouldst thou ? My attention thou mayst claim.

ACH. The father's purpose let persuasion change.

CLYT. He, void of spirit, too much fears the host.

ACH. Yet reason o'er the spiritless prevails.

CLYT. Small are my hopes : yet, say, what must I do ?

ACH. First, be a suppliant to him not to slay

His children : if rejected, come to me.

If thy entreaties win him, of my aid

There is no need : thy daughter's life is saved,

I with my friend shall be on better terms,

And nought of blame the army to my charge

Can then impute, if I by reason wish

T' effect my purpose, not by violence.

Well to thy warmest wish may this succeed,

And to thy friends', accomplished without me.

CLYT. How wise thy words ! Whate'er to thee seems right
 Shall be attempted. Should I not effect

The things I wish, where shall I see thee next,

Or whither bend my wretched steps to find

Thy hand, my firm protector 'gainst these ills ?

ACH. Far as occasion shall require, myself

Will be thy guard. But with disordered step

Let no one see thee hurrying through the throng

Of Grecians, nor disgrace thy father's house :

On Tyndarus unmerited would fall

Aught of ill fame, for he is great in Greece.

CLYT. It shall be so. Lead thou ; on thee to wait

Me it behoves. If there are gods, on thee,

Just as thou art, their blessings must attend :

If not, to what effect is all our toil ?

CHORUS.

Strophe.

What were the strains that Hymen gave to swell,
 The Lybian pipe its warbles sweet
 Attemp'ring to the chorded shell,
 That loves to guide the mazy-winding feet,
 Whilst the whisp'ring reed around
 Breathes a soft responsive sound,
 When to the feast of gods on Pelion's brow
 The golden-sandalled Muses took their way,
 Loose to the gale their beauteous tresses flow,
 Thee, Peleus, gracing, and thy bridal day,
 As they pierce the tangled grove,
 O'er the mountain as they rove
 Where the Centaur race reside,
 Peleus and his lovely bride
 They hail, and those wild scenes among
 Pour the mellifluous song.
 The Phrygian Ganymede of form divine,
 A royal youth of Dardan race,
 Advanced the feast of Jove to grace,
 Poured from the glowing bowls the sparkling wine.
 Fifty nymphs the white sands o'er,
 Daughters they of Nereus hoar,
 To the nuptials light advance,
 And weave the circling dance.

Antistrophe.

The Centaurs waving high their spears of pine,
 Their heads with grassy garlands crowned,
 Came to the bowls, the feast divine,
 Their hoofs swift-bounding o'er the rattling ground.
 There the nymphs of Thessaly
 Raised their tuneful voices high ;
 The prophet Phœbus joined the solemn strain,
 And Chiron skilled to trace the Fates' decree.
 " Daughter of Nereus," sung the raptured train,
 " A son, bright beam of beauty, shall from thee

Draw his birth, who will advance,
 Dreadful with his flaming lance,
 With his Myrmidons that wield
 Fierce in fight the spear and shield,
 To th' illustrious realms of Troy,
 And her proud towers destroy :
 His manly limbs refulgent arms enfold ;
 Vulcan, at the mother's prayer,
 Shall the glorious gift prepare,
 And all the hero blaze in burnished gold."
 Thus when Peleus won his bride,
 Of the Nereid train the pride,
 Came the gods in bright array
 To grace their nuptial day.

Epode.

But thee, unhappy maid, thy head
 With flow'ry garlands Greece shall crown ;
 As from the mountain cave's cool shade
 Some beauteous heifer coming down,
 Her neck no rude yoke knows, decreed
 A victim at some shrine to bleed.
 But now a human neck must bow,
 And now the virgin's blood must flow,
 Not trained the sylvan wilds among
 To rustic pipe or pastoral song ;
 Her the fond mother decked with pride
 As to some Grecian chief a bride.
 The lovely form, the beauteous face,
 And modest virtue's blushing grace
 Avail no more : in evil hour
 Impiety hath seized the power ;
 A slighted outcast Virtue fails,
 Injustice o'er the laws prevails :
 The common danger none descries,
 Th' impending vengeance of the skies.

CLYTEMNESTRA, CHORUS.

CLYT. I am come forth, if haply I may see
 My husband ; long his absence since he left
 The house. In tears is my unhappy daughter,
 And heaves the frequent sigh, since she hath heard
 The death to which her father destines her.
 I spoke of one that is approaching nigh,
 This Agamemnon, who will soon be found
 Daring against his children impious deeds.

AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA, CHORUS.

AGAM. Daughter of Leda, to my wish I find thee
 Before the house, that from my daughter's ear
 Apart I may speak words, which ill beseems
 A virgin, soon to be a bride, to hear.

CLYT. What is it? Let not the occasion pass.

AGAM. Send now thy daughter to her father's charge
 Committed ; for the lavers ready stand,
 The salted cakes, which o'er the lustral fire
 The hand must cast, the heifers too, whose blood
 Must in black streams, before the nuptials, flow
 To the chaste queen Diana, are prepared.

CLYT. Thy words indeed are gracious, but thy deeds
 I know not, should I name them, how to praise.
 Yet come thou forth, my daughter, for to thee
 Are all thy father's purposes well known :
 And bring thy brother, bring Orestes, wrapt
 Close in thy vests, my child.—See, she is here
 In prompt obedience to thee : what for her,
 What for myself is meet, that shall I speak.

AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

AGAM. Why weeps my daughter? cheerful now no more
 Thy look, nor pleasant : wherefore is thine eye
 Fixed on the ground, thy robe before it held ?

IPH. Ah me! Whence first shall I begin to speak

My ills? For all in ills have found a first,
A last, a middle, and successive train.

AGAM. Why is it that you all are drawn together,
With terror and confusion in your looks?

CLYT. Answer to what I ask with honest truth.

AGAM. Speak freely : to be questioned is my wish.

CLYT. Thine and my daughter art thou bent to slay?

AGAM. Ah, what a question! What suspicion this!

CLYT. To this without evasion answer first.

AGAM. Ask what is meet, thou what is meet shalt hear.

CLYT. I ask this only ; to this only speak.

AGAM. O fate! O fortune! O my awful doom!

CLYT. And mine, and hers, one to us wretched three!

AGAM. In what have I done wrong?

CLYT. Canst thou ask this
Of me? Thy purpose is unwise and ill.

AGAM. I am undone : my secrets are betrayed.

CLYT. I have heard all, know all, which thou wouldst do
Against me : e'en thy silence and thy sighs
Confess it ; labour not to give it words.

AGAM. Lo, I am silent ; for to misery
I should add shamelessness by speaking false.

CLYT. Now hear me, for my thoughts will I unfold
In no obscure and coloured mode of speech.

First then, for first with this will I upbraid thee,

Me didst thou wed against my will, and seize

By force ; my former husband Tantalus

By thee was slain. By thee my infant son,

Torn from my breast by violence, was whirled

And dashed against the ground. The sons of Jove,

My brothers, glitt'ring on their steeds in arms

Advanced against thee ; but old Tyndarus,

My father, saved thee, at his knees become

A supplicant ; and hence didst thou obtain

My bed. To thee and to thy house my thoughts

Thus reconciled, thou shalt thyself attest

How irreproachable a wife I was,

How chaste, with what attention I increased

The splendour of thy house, that ent'ring there

Thou hadst delight, and going out, with thee
 Went happiness along. A wife like this
 Is a rare prize; the worthless are not rare.
 Three daughters have I borne thee, and this son.
 Of one of these wilt thou—O piercing grief!—
 Deprive me. Should one ask thee, for what cause
 Thy daughter wilt thou kill, what wouldst thou say?
 Speak; or I must speak for thee! E'en for this,
 That Menelaus may regain Helena.
 Well would it be, if, for his wanton wife
 Our children made the price, what most we hate
 With what is dearest to us we redeem.
 But if thou lead the forces, leaving me
 At Argos, should thy absence then be long,
 Think what my heart must feel, when in the house
 I see the seats all vacant of my child,
 And her apartment vacant: I shall sit
 Alone, in tears, thus ever wailing her:
 "Thy father, O my child, hath slain thee; he
 That gave thee birth, hath killed thee, not another,
 Nor by another hand; this is the prize
 He left his house." But do not, by the gods,
 Do not compel me to be aught but good
 To thee, nor be thou aught but good to me;
 Since there will want a slight pretence alone
 For me, and for my daughters left at home,
 To welcome, as becomes us, thy return.
 Well, thou wilt sacrifice thy child: what vows
 Wilt thou then form? what blessing wilt thou ask
 To wait thee, thou, who dost thy daughter slay—
 Thou, who with shame to this unlucky war
 Art marching? Is it just that I should pray
 For aught of good to thee? Should I not deem
 The gods unwise, if they their favours shower
 On those who stain their willing hands with blood?
 Wilt thou, to Argos when returned, embrace
 Thy children? But thou hast no right: thy face
 Which of thy children will behold, if one
 With cool deliberate purpose thou shalt kill?

Now to this point I come : if thee alone
 To bear the sceptre, thee to lead the troops
 Th' occasion called, shouldst thou not thus have urged
 Thy just appeal to Greece: "Is it your will,
 Ye Grecians, to the Phrygian shores to sail?
 Cast then the lot whose daughter must be slain."
 This had at least been equal ; nor hadst thou
 Been singled out from all to give thy child
 A victim for the Greeks. Or Menelaus,
 Whose cause this is, should for the mother slay
 Hermione : but I, who to thy bed
 Am faithful, of my child shall be deprived,
 And she, that hath misdome, at her return
 To Sparta her young daughter shall bear back,
 And thus be happy. Aught if I have said
 Amiss, reply to that : but if my words
 Speak nought but sober reason, do not slay
 Thy child, and mine : and thus thou wilt be wise.

CHOR. Be thou persuaded : reason bids preserve
 Our children : this no mortal can gainsay.

IPH. Had I, my father, the persuasive voice
 Of Orpheus, and his skill to charm the rocks
 To follow me, and soothe whome'er I please
 With winning words, I would make trial of it ;
 But I have nothing to present thee now
 Save tears, my only eloquence ; and those
 I can present thee. On thy knees I hang,
 A suppliant wreath, this body, which she bore
 To thee. Ah ! kill me not in youth's fresh prime.
 Sweet is the light of heaven ; compel me not
 What is beneath to view. I was the first
 To call thee father, me thou first didst call
 Thy child ; I was the first that on thy knees
 Fondly caressed thee, and from thee received
 The fond caress ; this was thy speech to me :
 "Shall I, my child, e'er see thee in some house
 Of splendour, happy in thy husband, live,
 And flourish, as becomes my dignity ?"
 My speech to thee was, leaning 'gainst thy cheek,

Which with my hand I now caress : " And what
 Shall I then do for thee? Shall I receive
 My father when grown old, and in my house
 Cheer him with each fond office, to repay
 The careful nurture which he gave my youth? "
 These words are on my memory deep impressed ;
 Thou hast forgot them, and wilt kill thy child.
 By Pelops I entreat thee, by thy sire
 Atreus, by this my mother, who before
 Suffered for me the pangs of childbirth, now
 These pangs again to suffer, do not kill me.
 If Paris be enamoured of his bride,
 His Helen, what concerns it me? and how
 Comes he to my destruction? Look upon me,
 Give me a smile, give me a kiss, my father,
 That, if my words persuade thee not, in death
 I may have this memorial of thy love.
 My brother, small assistance canst thou give
 Thy friends, yet for thy sister with thy tears
 Implore thy father that she may not die :
 E'en infants have a sense of ills : and see,
 My father, silent though he be, he sues
 To thee : be gentle to me, on my life
 Have pity. Thy two children by this beard
 Entreat thee, thy dear children : one is yet
 An infant, one to riper years arrived.
 I will sum all in this, which shall contain
 More than long speech : To view the light of life
 To mortals is most sweet, but all beneath
 Is nothing : of his senses is he reft
 Who hath a wish to die ; for life, though ill,
 Excels whate'er there is of good in death.

CHOR. For thee, unhappy Helen, and thy love,
 A contest dreadful, and surcharged with woes,
 To the Atridæ and their children comes.

AGAM. What calls for pity, and what not, I know :
 I love my children, else I should be void
 Of reason : to dare this is dreadful to me,
 And not to dare is dreadful. I perforce

Must do it. What a naval camp is here
 You see, how many kings of Greece arrayed
 In glitt'ring arms : to Ilium's towers are these
 Denied t' advance, unless I offer thee
 A victim, thus the prophet Calchas speaks,
 Denied from her foundations to o'erturn
 Illustrious Troy ; and through the Grecian host
 Maddens the fierce desire to sail with speed
 'Gainst the Barbarians' land, and check their rage
 For Grecian dames. My daughters these will slay
 At Argos, you too will they slay, and me,
 Should I, the goddess not revering, make
 Of none effect her oracle. To this
 Not Menelaus, my child, hath wrought my soul,
 Nor to his will am I a slave ; but Greece,
 For which will I, or will I not, perforce
 Thee I must sacrifice : my weakness here
 I feel, and must submit. In thee, my child,
 What lies, and what in me, Greece should be free,
 Nor should her sons beneath Barbarians bend,
 Their nuptial beds to ruffian force a prey.

CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

CLYT. Alas, my child ! O strangers ! Wretched me,
 How wretched in thy death ! Thy father flies thee ;
 He flies, but dooms thee to the realms beneath.

IPH. My mother, O my mother ! Wretched me !

For both our fortunes, full of woe,
 One strain, one mournful strain shall flow.

No more the gladsome light of day,
 No more the bright sun's golden ray
 Shall shine, ah me ! to cheer my child.

Ah me ! Ye Phrygian forests wild,
 Ye snow-clad mountains, rude that rise,

Mountains of Ida to the skies ;

Where Priam once his son unblest,

Far severed from his mother's breast,

Exposed, this Paris to destroy ;

Idæus thence they called the boy ;

The boy they called Idæus, known
 So named through all the Phrygian town.
 O that his son he ne'er had laid
 Where with their herds the herdsmen strayed,
 The fountains of the nymphs among,
 Where roll the lucid streams along,
 And the green mead profusely pours
 The blushing glow of roseate flowers,
 With hyacinths of dusky hue,
 For goddesses which lovely grew.

Once Pallas came to those sweet glades,
 And Juno deigned to grace their shades,
 And Venus fraught with wanton wiles,
 Resistless with enchanting smiles,
 And Hermes, messenger of Jove.

Venus in all the sweets of love
 Rejoicing, Pallas in her spear,
 And proud the bed of Jove to share,
 Juno's bright form, imperial dame,
 Once to the odious judgment came :
 For beauty and for beauty's prize
 This contest drew them from the skies,
 But death on me : yet Greece shall own
 My death assures her high renown.

CHOR. Diana hath accepted thee the first
 Of victims, that our arms may sail to Troy.

IPH. But he, to whom my birth I owe,
 Betrays and flies me 'midst my woe.
 My mother ! Ah my cruel fate !
 He flies, and leaves me desolate.
 Ill-omened Helena, thy love
 Fatal, will fatal to me prove :
 I die, I perish, I am slain,
 My blood th' unhallowed sword shall stain ;
 Unhallowed is my father's hand,
 That pours it on th' empurpled sand.
 O, had the ships ne'er ploughed their way
 To Aulis, to this winding bay !
 O, had Jove given the fleet to bear

To Troy's proud shores the wafted war ;
 Not adverse winds, that sullen sweep
 Across Eubœa's angry deep !
 To some he grants the fav'ring gales
 That wanton in their flying sails ;
 Necessity to some and pain ;
 To some to cut the azure main ;
 These quit the port with gallant pride,
 Reluctant those at anchor ride.
 To suff'rings born the human race,
 In suff'rings pass life's little space :
 Why since misfortunes 'round them wait,
 Should men invite their cruel fate ?

CHOR. Alas, what woes, what miseries hath thou brought,
 Daughter of Tyndarus, on Greece ! But thee,
 Unhappy virgin, by this flood of ills
 O'erwhelmed I wail. Ah, were this fate not thine !

IPH. My mother, what a crowd of men I see
 Advance !

CLYT. The son of Thetis with them comes,
 For whom, my child, I led thee to this strand.

IPH. Open the doors to me, ye female train,
 That I may hide myself.

CLYT. Whom dost thou fly ?

IPH. Achilles, whom I blush to see.

CLYT. And why ?

IPH. These ill-starred nuptials cover me with shame.

CLYT. Nothing of pleasure doth thy state present.
 Yet stay : this is no time for grave reserve.

ACHILLES, CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

ACH. Daughter of Leda, O unhappy queen !

CLYT. Thy voice speaks nothing false.

ACH. Among the Greeks
 Dreadful the clamour.

CLYT. What the clamour ? Say.

ACH. Touching thy daughter.

CLYT. Thou hast said what bears
 No happy omen.

- ACH. That she must be slain
A victim.
- CLYT. And doth none against this speak?
ACH. I was with outrage threatened.
- CLYT. Stranger, how?
ACH. To be o'erwhelmed with stones.
- CLYT. Whilst thou wouldst save
My child?
ACH. E'en so.
- CLYT. Who dared to touch thee?
ACH. All
The Grecians.
- CLYT. Were thy troops of Myrmidons
Not present to thee?
ACH. They were first in rage.
- CLYT. Then are we lost, my child.
ACH. They cried aloud
That I was vanquished by a woman.
- CLYT. Aught
Didst thou reply?
ACH. That her, who was to be
My bride, they should not slay.
- CLYT. With justice urged.
ACH. Named by her father mine.
- CLYT. From Argos brought
By his command.
ACH. In vain : I was o'erpowered
By their rude cries.
- CLYT. The many are indeed
A dreadful ill.
ACH. Yet I will give thee aid.
- CLYT. Wilt thou alone fight with a host?
ACH. Thou seest
These bearing arms.
- CLYT. May thy designs succeed!
ACH. They shall succeed.
- CLYT. Shall not my child be slain?
ACH. Never by my permission.
- CLYT. Will none come
To lay rude hands upon the virgin?

ACH. Many:
Ulysses with them ; he will lead her.

CLYT. What,
He of the race of Sisyphus ?

ACH. The same.

CLYT. Comes he of his free will, or by the host
Appointed ?

ACH. Chosen, by his own consent.

CLYT. Bad choice, to be with blood polluted.

ACH. Him
Will I keep from her.

CLYT. Would he drag her hence
Against her will ?

ACH. E'en by her golden locks.

CLYT. What now behoves me do ?

ACH. Be firm, and hold
Thy daughter back.

CLYT. And shall she not be slain
For that ?

ACH. But he will surely come for this.

IPH. My mother, hear ye now my words : for thee
Offended with thy husband I behold.

Vain anger ! for where force will take its way,

To struggle is not easy. Our warm thanks

Are to this stranger for his prompt goodwill

Most justly due : yet, it behoves thee, see

Thou art not by the army charged with blame ;

Nothing the more should we avail, on him

Mischief would fall. Hear then what to my mind

Deliberate thought presents. It is decreed

For me to die : this then I wish, to die

With glory, all reluctance banished far.

My mother, weigh this well, that what I speak

Is honour's dictate. All the powers of Greece

Have now their eyes on me ; on me depends

The sailing of the fleet, the fall of Troy,

And not to suffer, should a new attempt

Be dared, the rude Barbarians from blest Greece

To bear in future times her dames by force,

This ruin bursting on them for the loss
 Of Helena, whom Paris bore away.
 By dying all these things shall I achieve,
 And blest, for that I have delivered Greece,
 Shall be my fame. To be too fond of life
 Becomes not me ; nor for thyself alone,
 But to all Greece a blessing, didst thou bear me.
 Shall thousands, when their country's injured, lift
 Their shields, shall thousands grasp the oar, and dare,
 Advancing bravely 'gainst the foe, to die
 For Greece? And shall my life, my single life,
 Obstruct all this? Would this be just? What word
 Can we reply? Nay more ; it is not right
 That he with all the Grecians should contend
 In fight, should die, and for a woman. No ;
 More than a thousand women is one man
 Worthy to see the light of life. If me
 The chaste Diana wills t' accept, shall I,
 A mortal, dare oppose her heavenly will?
 Vain the attempt : for Greece I give my life.
 Slay me, demolish Troy ; for these shall be
 Long time my monuments, my children these,
 My nuptials, and my glory. It is meet
 That Greece should o'er Barbarians bear the sway,
 Not that Barbarians lord it over Greece :
 Nature hath formed them slaves, the Grecians free.

CHOR. Thine, royal virgin, is a generous part :
 But harsh what Fortune and the Goddess wills.

ACH. Daughter of Agamemnon, highly blest
 Some god would make me, if I might attain
 Thy nuptials. Greece in thee I happy deem,
 And thee in Greece. This hast thou nobly spoken,
 And worthy of thy country : to contend
 Against a goddess of superior power
 Desisting, thou hast judged the public good
 A better, nay, a necessary part.
 For this more ardent my desire to gain thee
 My bride, this disposition when I see,
 For it is generous. But consider well :

To do thee good, to lead thee to my house,
 Is my warm wish; and much I should be grieved,
 Be witness Thetis, if I save thee not
 In arms against the Grecians. In thy thought
 Revolve this well : death is a dreadful thing.

IPH. Reflecting not on any this I speak,
 Enough of wars and slaughters from the charms
 Of Helen rise : but die not thou for me,
 O stranger, nor distain thy sword with blood ;
 But let me save my country, if I may.

ACH. O glorious spirit ! Nought have I 'gainst this
 To urge, since such thy will ; for what thou sayst
 Is generous : why should not the truth be spoken ?
 But of thy purpose thou mayst yet repent.
 Know then my resolution : I will go,
 And nigh the altar place these arms, thy death
 Preventing, not permitting : thou perchance
 Mayst soon approve my purpose, nigh thy throat
 When thou shalt see the sword : and for that cause
 I will not, for a rash unweighed resolve,
 Abandon thee to die ; but with these arms
 Wait near Diana's temple till thou come.

CLYTEMNESTRA, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

IPH. Why, mother, dost thou shed these silent tears ?

CLYT. I have a cruel cause, that rends my heart.

IPH. Forbear, nor sink my spirit. Grant me this.

CLYT. Say what : by me my child shall ne'er be wronged.

IPH. Clip not those crispéd tresses from thine head,
 Nor robe thee in the sable garb of woe.

CLYT. What hast thou said, my child ? When thou art
 lost——

IPH. Not lost, but saved : through me thou shalt be famed.

CLYT. What, for thy death shall I not mourn, my child ?

IPH. No, since for me a tomb shall not be raised.

CLYT. To die then, is not that to be entombed ?

IPH. The altar of the goddess is my tomb.

CLYT. Well dost thou speak, my child : I will comply.

IPH. And deem me blest, as working good to Greece.

CLYT. What message to thy sisters shall I bear ?

IPH. Them too array not in the garbs of woe.

CLYT. What greetings to the virgins dost thou send ?

IPH. My last farewell. To manhood train Orestes.

CLYT. Embrace him, for thou ne'er shalt see him more.

IPH. Far as thou couldst, thou didst assist thy friends.

[*To Orestes.*]

CLYT. At Argos can I do aught pleasing to thee ?

IPH. My father, and thy husband, do not hate.

CLYT. For thy dear sake fierce contests must he bear.

IPH. For Greece, reluctant, me to death he yields.

CLYT. Basely, with guile, unworthy Atreus' son.

IPH. Who goes with me, and leads me, by the hair

Ere I am dragged ?

CLYT. I will go with thee.

IPH. No :

That were unseemly.

CLYT. Hanging on thy robes.

IPH. Let me prevail, my mother ; stay. To me

As more becoming this, and more to thee.

Let one of these, th' attendants of my father,

Conduct me to Diana's hallowed mead,

Where I shall fall a victim.

CLYT. O my child,

Dost thou then go ?

IPH. And never to return.

CLYT. And wilt thou leave thy mother ?

IPH. As thou seest,

Not as I merit.

CLYT. Stay, forsake me not.

IPH. I suffer not a tear to fall. But you,

Ye virgins, to my fate attune the hymn,

"Diana, daughter of almighty Jove."

With fav'ring omens sing "Success to Greece."

Come, with the basket one begin the rites,

One with the purifying cakes the flames

Enkindle ; let my father his right hand

Place on the altar ; for I come to give

Safety to Greece, and conquest to her arms.

Lead me : mine the glorious fate
 To o'erturn the Phrygian state ;
 Ilium's towers their head shall bow.
 With the garlands bind my brow,
 Bring them, be these tresses crowned.
 Round the shrine, the altar round
 Bear the lavers, which you fill
 From the pure translucent rill.
 High your choral voices raise,
 Tuned to hymn Diana's praise,
 Blest Diana, royal maid.
 Since the fates demand my aid,
 I fulfil their awful power
 By my slaughter, by my gore.

CHOR. Reverenced, reverenced mother, now
 Thus for thee our tears shall flow :
 For unhallowed would a tear
 'Midst the solemn rites appear.

IPH. Swell the notes, ye virgin train,
 To Diana swell the strain,
 Queen of Chalcis, adverse land,
 Queen of Aulis, on whose strand,
 Winding to a narrow bay,
 Fierce to take its angry way
 Waits the war, and calls on me
 Its retarded force to free.
 O my country, where these eyes
 Opened on Pelasgic skies !
 O ye virgins, once my pride,
 In Mycenæ who reside !

CHOR. Why of Perseus name the town,
 Which Cyclopean rampires crown ?

IPH. Me you reared a beam of light :
 Freely now I sink in night.

CHOR. And for this immortal fame,
 Virgin, shall attend thy name.

IPH. Ah, thou beaming lamp of day,
 Jove-born, bright, ethereal ray,
 Other regions me await,
 Other life, and other fate !

Farewell, beauteous lamp of day,
Farewell, bright ethereal ray!

CHOR. See, she goes : her glorious fate
To o'erturn the Phrygian state ;
Soon the wreaths shall bind her brow ;
Soon the lustral waters flow ;
Soon that beauteous neck shall feel
Piercing deep the fatal steel,
And the ruthless altar o'er
Sprinkle drops of gushing gore.
By thy father's dread command
There the cleansing lavers stand ;
There in arms the Grecian powers
Burn to march 'gainst Ilium's towers.
But our voices let us raise,
Tuned to hymn Diana's praise,
Virgin daughter she of Jove,
Queen among the gods above.
That with conquest and renown
She the arms of Greece may crown.
To thee, dread power, we make our vows,
Pleased when the blood of human victims flows.

To Phrygia's hostile strand,
Where rise perfidious Ilium's hated towers,
Waft, O waft the Grecian powers,
And aid this martial band !
On Agamemnon's honoured head,
Whilst wide the spears of Greece their terrors spread,
Th' immortal crown let conquest place,
With glory's brightest grace.

MESSENGER, CLYTEMNESTRA, CHORUS.

MESS. O royal Clytemnestra, from the house
Hither advance, that thou mayst hear my words.

CLYT. Hearing thy voice I come, but with affright
And terror trembling, lest thy coming bring
Tidings of other woes, beyond what now
Afflict me.

MESS. Of thy daughter have I things
Astonishing and awful to relate.

CLYT. Delay not then, but speak them instantly.

MESS. Yes, honoured lady, thou shalt hear them all
Distinct from first to last, if that my sense
Disordered be not faithless to my tongue.
When to Diana's grove and flow'ry meads
We came, where stood th' assembled host of Greece,
Leading thy daughter, straight in close array
Was formed the band of Argives; but the chief
Imperial Agamemnon, when he saw
His daughter as a victim to the grove
Advancing, groaned, and bursting into tears
Turned from the sight his head, before his eyes
Holding his robe. The virgin near him stood,
And thus addressed him: "Father, I to thee
Am present: for my country, and for all
The land of Greece, I freely give myself
A victim: to the altar let them lead me,
Since such the oracle. If aught on me
Depends, be happy, and attain the prize
Of glorious conquest, and revisit safe
Your country: of the Grecians for this cause
Let no one touch me; with intrepid spirit
Silent will I present my neck." She spoke,
And all that heard admired the noble soul
And virtue of the virgin. In the midst
Talthybius standing, such his charge, proclaimed
Silence to all the host: and Chalcas now,
The prophet, in the golden basket placed
Drawn from its sheath the sharp-edged sword, and bound
The sacred garlands round the virgin's head.
The son of Peleus, holding in his hands
The basket and the laver, circled round
The altar of the goddess, and thus spoke:
"Daughter of Jove, Diana, in the chase
Of savage beasts delighting, through the night
Who rollest thy resplendent orb, accept
This victim, which th' associate troops of Greece,
And Agamemnon, our imperial chief,
Present to thee, the unpolluted blood

Now from this beauteous virgin's neck to flow.
Grant that secure our fleets may plough the main,
And that our arms may lay the rampired walls
Of Troy in dust." The sons of Atreus stood,
And all the host fixed on the ground their eyes.
The priest then took the sword, preferred his prayer,
And with his eye marked where to give the blow.
My heart with grief sunk in me, on the earth
Mine eyes were cast; when sudden to the view
A wonder! For the stroke each clearly heard,
But where the virgin was none knew. Aloud
The priest exclaims, and all the host with shouts
Rifted the air, beholding from some god
A prodigy, which struck their wond'ring eyes,
Surpassing faith when seen: for on the ground
Panting was laid a hind of largest bulk,
In form excelling; with its spouting blood
Much was the altar of the goddess dewed.
Calchas at this, think with what joy, exclaimed:
"Ye leaders of th' united host of Greece,
See you this victim, by the goddess brought,
And at her altar laid, a mountain hind?
This, rather than the virgin, she accepts,
Not with the rich stream of her noble blood
To stain the altar; this she hath received
Of her free grace, and gives a fav'ring gale
To swell our sails, and bear th' invading war
To Ilium: therefore rouse, ye naval train,
Your courage. To your ships! for we this day,
Leaving the deep recesses of this shore,
Must pass th' Ægean sea." Soon as the flames
The victim had consumed, he poured a prayer,
That o'er the waves the host might plough their way.
Me Agamemnon sends, that I should bear
To thee these tidings, and declare what fate
The gods assign him, and through Greece t' obtain
Immortal glory. What I now relate
I saw, for I was present; to the gods
Thy daughter, be thou well assured, is fled.

Therefore lament no more, no more retain
 Thy anger 'gainst thy lord : to mortal men
 Things unexpected oft the gods dispense,
 And whom they love they save : this day hath seen
 Thy daughter dead, seen her alive again.

CHOR. His tidings with what transport do I hear !
 Thy daughter lives, and lives among the gods.

CLYT. And have the gods, my daughter, borne thee hence ?
 How then shall I address thee ? Or of this
 How deem ! Vain words, perchance, to comfort me
 And soothe to peace the anguish of my soul.

MESS. But Agamemnon comes, and will confirm
 Each circumstance which thou hast heard from me.

AGAM. Lady, we have much cause to think ourselves,
 Touching our daughter, blest : for 'mongst the gods
 Commercing she in truth resides. But thee
 Behoves it with thine infant son return
 To Argos, for the troops with ardour haste
 To sail. And now farewell ! My greetings to thee
 From Troy will be unfrequent, and at times
 Of distant interval : mayst thou be blest !

CHOR. With joy, Atrides, reach the Phrygian shore ;
 With joy return to Greece, and bring with thee
 Bright conquest, and the glorious spoils of Troy !

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS.

THE reader will doubtless be pleased at renewing his acquaintance with the amiable but unhappy Iphigenia : from the altar of Diana at Aulis she was removed by that goddess to her temple in the Tauric Chersonese, a great Peninsula in the Black Sea on the Mæotic Lake, now called Crim Tartary, where she presided as priestess over the cruel and bloody rites there established.

Diódorus Siculus, lib. iv., informs us, “ that it was the custom of the Barbarians who inhabited that country to sacrifice such strangers as were driven on that shore to the Tauric Diana. Iphigenia, they say, was in after times appointed the priestess of this goddess, and sacrificed such strangers as were taken. In tracing the history of these sacrifices we find that the Sun was father of Æetes and Perses : Æetes reigned at Colchis, Perses in the Tauric Chersonese, both remarkable for their savage cruelty. Hecate was the daughter of Perses, and exceeded her father in daring and atrocious actions : she took great delight in hunting, and when she failed of success in the chase, transfixing men with her arrows, instead of beasts. She was fond of preparing compositions of a poisonous nature, to try the force of which she mixed them with the food given to strangers. Having acquired great experience in these things, she destroyed her father with poison, and took possession of his kingdom : she then built the temple of Diana, and appointed that the strangers who arrived there should be sacrificed to the goddess : hence her name became terrible for her barbarity. She afterwards married Æetes, and was by him the mother of

Circe and Medea." Iphigenia had for some years, reluctantly indeed, but through necessity, presided over these inhuman rites, when Orestes, with his friend Pylades, arrived on this inhospitable coast, in obedience to the oracle of Apollo: they were seized, and carried to the king, who sent them in chains to the priestess as victims to the goddess: their death now seemed inevitable. The drama is conducted with exquisite skill, and the circumstances arise out of each other so naturally, that, as P. Brumoy well observes, the piece has such an air of truth, that the spectator is persuaded that the event really passed as it is presented to him, and that it could not have passed in any other manner.

The translator feels himself in a very unpleasant situation with regard to this tragedy: the justly approved translation of the late excellent Mr. West rendered his attempt unnecessary: he had no ambition to rival that gentleman, nor has he the vanity to hope for any superiority in the execution of the work: but the respect due to his subscribers and to the public obliged him to present them with *all* the tragedies of Euripides, though at the hazard of his reputation in this particular instance, where *non vinci opimus est triumphus*.

The scene is in the Court of the Temple of Diana.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

IPHIGENIA.
 ORESTES.
 PYLADES.
 THOAS.
 HERDSMAN.

MESSENGER.
 CHORUS OF GRECIAN WOMEN,
 CAPTIVES, ATTENDANTS ON
 IPHIGENIA IN THE TEMPLE.

IPHIGENIA.

To Pisa by the fleetest coursers borne
 Comes Pelops, son of Tantalus, and weds
 The virgin daughter of Œnomaus:
 From her sprung Atreus; Menelaus from him,

And Agamemnon ; I from him derive
My birth, his Iphigenia, by his queen
Daughter of Tyndarus. Where frequent winds
Swell the vext Euripus with eddying blasts,
And roll the dark'ning waves, my father slew me
A victim to Diana, so he thought,
For Helen's sake, its bay where Aulis winds
To fame well known, for there his thousand ships,
Th' armament of Greece, th' imperial chief
Convened, desirous that his Greeks should snatch
The glorious crown of victory from Troy,
And punish the base insult to the bed
Of Helen, vengeance grateful to the soul
Of Menelaus. But 'gainst his ships the sea
Long barred, and not one fav'ring breeze to swell
His flagging sails, the hallowed flames the chief
Consults, and Calchas thus disclosed the fates :
"Imperial leader of the Grecian host,
Hence shalt thou not unmoor thy vessels ere
Diana as a victim shall receive
Thy daughter Iphigenia. What the year
Most beauteous should produce, thou to the queen
Dispensing light didst vow to sacrifice :
A daughter Clytemnestra in thy house
Then bore (the peerless grace of beauty thus
To me assigning) : her must thou devote
The victim." Then Ulysses by his arts
Me, to Achilles as designed a bride,
Won from my mother. My unhappy fate
To Aulis brought me ; on the altar there
High was I placed, and o'er me gleamed the sword
Aiming the fatal wound : but from the stroke
Diana snatched me, in exchange a hind
Giving the Grecians ; through the lucid air
Me she conveyed to Tauris, here to dwell,
Where o'er barbarians a barbaric king
Holds his rude sway, named Thoas, whose swift foot
Equals the rapid wing : me he appoints
The priestess of this temple, where such rites

Are pleasing to Diana, that the name
Alone claims honour ; for I sacrifice
(Such, ere I came, the custom of the state)
Whatever Grecian to this savage shore
Is driven. The previous rites are mine ; the deed
Of blood, too horrid to be told, devolves
On others in the temple ; but the rest,
In reverence to the goddess, I forbear.
But the strange visions, which the night now past
Brought with it, to the air, if that may soothe
My troubled thought, I will relate. I seemed,
As I lay sleeping, from this land removed
To dwell at Argos, resting on my couch
'Midst the apartments of the virgin train.
Sudden the firm earth shook ; I fled, and stood
Without ; the battlements I saw, and all
The rocking roof fall from its lofty height
In ruins to the ground ; of all the house,
My father's house, one pillar, as I thought,
Alone was left, which from its cornice waved
A length of auburn-locks, and human voice
Assumed. The bloody office, which is mine
To strangers here, respecting, I to death,
Sprinkling the lustral drops, devoted it
With many tears. My dream I thus expound.
Orestes, whom I hallowed by my rites,
Is dead : for sons are pillars of the house,
They, whom my lustral lavers sprinkle, die.
I cannot to my friends apply my dream,
For Strophius, when I perished, had no son.
Now to my brother, absent though he be,
Libations will I offer ; this at least,
With the attendants given me by the king,
Virgins of Greece, I can : but what the cause
They yet attend me not within the house,
The temple of the goddess where I dwell ?

ORESTES, PYLADES.

ORES. Keep careful watch, lest some one come this way.

PYL. I watch, and turn mine eye to every part.

ORES. And dost thou, Pylades, imagine this

The temple of the goddess which we seek,
Our sails from Argos sweeping o'er the main?

PYL. Orestes, such my thought, and must be thine.

ORES. And this the altar wet with Grecian blood?

PYL. Crimsoned with gore behold its sculptured wreaths.

ORES. See, from the battlements what trophies hang!

PYL. The spoils of strangers that have here been slain.

ORES. Behoves us then to watch with careful eye.

O Phœbus, by thy oracles again

Why hast thou led me to these toils? E'er since

In vengeance for my father's blood I slew

My mother, ceaseless by the Furies driven,

Vagrant, an outcast, many a bending course

My feet have trod: to thee I came, of thee

Inquired this whirling frenzy by what means,

And by what means my labours I might end.

Thy voice commanded me to speed my course

To this wild coast of Tauris, where a shrine

Thy sister hath, Diana; thence to take

The statue of the goddess, which from heaven,

So say the natives, to this temple fell:

This image or by fraud or fortune won,

The dangerous toil achieved, to place the prize

In the Athenian land: no more was said;

But that performing this I should obtain

Rest from my toils. Obedient to thy words

On this unknown, unhospitable coast

Am I arrived. Now, Pylades, for thou

Art my associate in this dangerous task,

Of thee I ask, What shall we do? for high

The walls, thou seest, which fence the temple round!

Shall we ascend their height? But how escape

Observing eyes? Or burst the brazen bars?

Of these we nothing know. In the attempt

To force the gates, or meditating means
To enter, if detected, we shall die.

Shall we then, ere we die, by flight regain
The ship, in which we hither ploughed the sea?

PYL. Of flight we brook no thought, nor such hath been
Our wont; nor may the god's commanding voice
Be disobeyed: but from the temple now
Retiring, in some cave, which the black sea
Beats with its billows, we may lie concealed
At distance from our bark, lest some, whose eyes
May note it, bear the tidings to the king,
And we be seized by force. But when the eye
Of night comes darkling on, then must we dare,
And take the polished image from the shrine,
Attempting all things: and the vacant space
Between the triglyphs, mark it well, enough
Is open to admit us; by that way
Attempt we to descend. In toils the brave
Are daring; of no worth the abject soul.

ORES. This length of sea we ploughed not from this coast,
Nothing effected, to return: but well
Hast thou advised; the god must be obeyed.
Retire we then where we may lie concealed:
For never from the god will come the cause
That what his sacred voice commands should fall
Effectless. We must dare. No toil to youth
Excuse, which justifies inaction, brings.

IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

IPH. You, who your savage dwellings hold
Nigh this inhospitable main,
'Gainst clashing rocks with fury rolled,
From all but hallowed words abstain.
Virgin queen, Latona's grace,
Joying in the mountain chase,
To thy court, thy rich domain,
To thy beauteous-pillared fane,
Where our wond'ring eyes behold
Battlements that blaze with gold,

Thus my virgin steps I bend,
 Holy, the holy to attend,
 Servant, virgin queen, to thee,
 Power, who bearest life's golden key,
 Far from Greece for steeds renowned,
 From her walls with towers crowned,
 From the beauteous-planted meads
 Where his train Eurotas leads,
 Visiting the loved retreats
 Once my royal father's seats.

CHOR. I come. What cares disturb thy rest?
 Why hast thou brought me to the shrine?
 Doth some fresh grief afflict thy breast?
 Why bring me to this seat divine?
 Thou daughter of that chief, whose powers
 Ploughed with a thousand keels the strand,
 And ranged in arms shook Troy's proud towers
 Beneath th' Atridæ's great command!

IPH. O ye attendant train,
 How is my heart oppressed with woe!
 What notes, save notes of grief, can flow,
 A harsh and unmelodious strain?
 My soul domestic ills oppress with dread,
 And bid me mourn a brother dead.
 What visions did my sleeping sense appal
 In the past dark and midnight hour?
 'Tis ruin, ruin all.
 My father's house—it is no more;
 No more is his illustrious line.
 What dreadful deeds hath Argos known!
 One only brother, Fate, was mine;
 And dost thou rend him from me? Is he gone
 To Pluto's dreary realms below?
 For him, as dead, with pious care
 This goblet I prepare;
 And on the bosom of the earth shall flow
 Streams from the heifer mountain-bred,
 The grape's rich juice, and mixed with these
 The labour of the yellow bees,
 Libations soothing to the dead.

Give me th' oblation ; let me hold
The foaming goblet's hallowed gold.

O thou, the earth beneath,
Who didst from Agamemnon spring,
To thee deprived of vital breath
I these libations bring.
Accept them : to thy honoured tomb
Never, ah ! never shall I come ;
Never these golden tresses bear
To place them there, there shed the tear :
For from my country far, a hind
There deemed as slain, my wild abode I find.

CHOR. To thee thy faithful train
The Asiatic hymn will raise,
A doleful, a barbaric strain,
Responsive to thy lays,
And steep in tears the mournful song,
Notes which to the dead belong,
Dismal notes attuned to woe
By Pluto in the realms below :
No sprightly air shall we employ
To cheer the soul, and wake the sense of joy.

IPH. Th' Atridæ are no more :
Extinct their sceptre's golden light ;
My father's house from its proud height
Is fall'n : its ruins I deplore.
Who of her kings at Argos holds his reign,
Her kings once blest ? But Sorrow's train
Rolls on impetuous for the rapid steeds
Which o'er the strand with Pelops fly.
From what atrocious deeds
Starts the sun back, his sacred eye
Of brightness, loathing, turned aside ?
And fatal to their house arose
From the rich Ram, Thessalia's golden pride,
Slaughter on slaughter, woes on woes.
Thence from the dead of ages past
Vengeance came rushing on its prey,

And swept the race of Tantalus away :
Fatal to thee its ruthless haste ;
To me too fatal from the hour
My mother wedded, from the night
She gave me to life's opening light,
Nursed by affliction's cruel power.
Early to me the fates unkind
To know what sorrow is assigned ;
Me, Leda's daughter, hapless dame,
First blooming offspring of her bed
(A father's conduct here I blame),
A joyless victim bred ;
When o'er the strand of Aulis, in the pride
Of beauty kindling flames of love,
High on my splendid car I move,
Betrothed to Thetis' son a bride :
Ah hapless bride, to all the train
Of Grecian fair preferred in vain !
But now a stranger on this strand,
'Gainst which the wild waves beat,
I hold my dreary, joyless seat,
Far distant from my native land ;
Nor nuptial bed is mine, nor child, nor friend.
At Argos now no more I raise
The festal song in Juno's praise ;
Nor o'er the loom sweet-sounding bend,
As the creative shuttle flies,
Give forms of Titans fierce to rise,
And dreadful with her purple spear
Image Athenian Pallas there.
But on this barb'rous shore
Th' unhappy stranger's fate I moan,
The ruthless altar stained with gore,
His deep and dying groan :
And for each tear that weeps his woes,
From me a tear of pity flows.
Of these the sad remembrance now must sleep :
A brother dead, ah me ! I weep :
At Argos him by fate oppress

I left an infant at the breast.
 A beauteous bud, whose opening charms
 Then blossomed in his mother's arms,
 Orestes, born to high command,
 Th' imperial sceptre of the Argive land.

CHOR. Leaving the sea-washed shore a herdsman comes
 Speeding, with some fresh tidings to thee fraught.

HERDSMAN, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

HERD. Daughter of Agamemnon, and bright gem
 Of Clytemnestra, hear strange things from me.

IPH. And what of terror doth thy tale import?

HERD. Two youths, swift-rowing 'twixt the clashing rocks
 Of our wild sea, are landed on the beach;
 A grateful offering at Diana's shrine,
 And victims to the goddess. Haste, prepare
 The sacred lavers and the previous rites.

IPH. Whence are the strangers? from what country named?

HERD. From Greece: this only, nothing more, I know.

IPH. Didst thou not hear what names the strangers bear?

HERD. One by the other was called Pylades.

IPH. How is the stranger, his companion, named?

HERD. This none of us can tell: we heard it not.

IPH. How saw you them? how seized them? by what chance?

HERD. 'Midst the rude cliffs that o'er the Euxine hang——

IPH. And what concern have herdsmen with the sea?

HERD. To wash our herds in the salt wave we came.

IPH. To what I asked return: how seized you them?
 Tell me the manner; this I wish to know.

For slow the victims come, nor hath some while

The altar of the goddess, as was wont,

Been crimsoned with the streams of Grecian blood.

HERD. Our herds, which in the forests feed, we drove
 Amidst the tide that rushes to the shore

'Twixt the Symplegades: it was the place

Where in the rifted rock the chafing surge

Hath hollowed a rude cave, the haunt of those

Whose quest is purple. Of our number there

A herdsman saw two youths, and back returned

With soft and silent step; then pointing said,
‘Do you not see them? These are deities
That sit there.’ One, who with religious awe
Revered the gods, with hands uplifted prayed,
His eyes fixed on them: “Son of the sea-nymph
Leucothoe, guardian of the lab’ring bark,
Our Lord Palæmon, be propitious to us!
Or sit you on our shores, bright sons of Jove,
Castor and Pollux! Or the glorious boast
Of Nereus, father of the noble choir
Of fifty Nereids?” One, whose untaught mind
Audacious folly hardened ’gainst the sense
Of holy awe, scoffed at his prayers, and said:
“These are wrecked mariners, that take their seat
In the cleft rock through fear, as they have heard
Our prescribed rite, that here we sacrifice
The stranger.” To the greater part he seemed
Well to have spoken, and we judged it meet
To seize the victims, by our country’s law
Due to the goddess. Of the stranger youths
One at this instant started from the rock;
Awhile he stood, and wildly tossed his head,
And groaned, his loose arms trembling all their length,
Convulsed with madness: as a hunter loud
Then cried: “Dost thou behold her, Pylades,
Dost thou not see this dragon fierce from hell
Rushing to kill me, and against me rousing
Her horrid vipers? See this other here,
Emitting fire and slaughter from her vests,
Sails on her wings, my mother in her arms
Bearing, to hurl this mass of rock upon me!
Ah, she will kill me! Whither shall I fly?”
His visage might we see no more the same,
And his voice varied, now the roar of bulls,
The howl of dogs now uttering, mimic sounds
Sent by the madd’ning Furies, as they say.
Together thronging, as of death assured,
We sit in silence: but he drew his sword,
And like a lion rushing ’midst our herds

Plunged in their sides the weapon, weening thus
To drive the Furies, till the briny wave
Foamed with their blood. But when among our herds
We saw this havoc made, we all 'gan rouse
To arms, and blew our sounding shells t' alarm
The neighb'ring peasants; for we thought in fight
Rude herdsmen to these youthful strangers, trained
To arms, ill matched; and forthwith to our aid
Flocked numbers. But, his frenzy of its force
Abating, on the earth the stranger falls,
Foam bursting from his mouth? But when we saw
Th' advantage, each adventured on, and hurled
What might annoy him fall'n: the other youth
Wiped off the foam, took of his person care,
His fine-wrought robe spread over him, with heed
The flying stones observing warded off
The wounds, and each kind office to his friend
Attentively performed. His sense returned,
The stranger started up, and soon perceived
The tide of foes that rolled impetuous on,
The danger and distress that closed them round.
He heaved a sigh An unremitting storm
Of stones we poured, and each incited each.
Then we his dreadful exhortation heard:
"Pylades, we shall die; but let us die
With glory; draw thy sword, and follow me."
But when we saw the enemies advance
With brandished swords, the steep heights crowned with wood,
We fill in flight: but others, if one flies,
Press on them; if again they drive these back,
What before fled turns, with a storm of stones
Assaulting them; but, what exceeds belief,
Hurled by a thousand hands not one could hit
The victims of the goddess: scarce at length,
Not by brave daring seized we them, but 'round
We closed upon them, and their swords with stones
Beat, wily, from their hands, for on their knees
They through fatigue had sunk upon the ground.
We bare them to the monarch of this land:

He viewed them, and without delay to thee
Sent them, devoted to the cleansing vase
And to the altar. Victims such as these,
O virgin, wish to find ; for if such youths
Thou offer, for thy slaughter Greece will pay,
Her wrongs to thee at Aulis well avenged.

CHOR. These things are wonderful, which thou hast told
Of him, whoe'er he be, the youth from Greece
Arrived on this unhospitable shore.

IPH. 'Tis well. Go thou, and bring the strangers hither.
What here is to be done shall be our care.

O my unhappy heart ! before this hour
To strangers thou wast gentle, always touched
With pity, and with tears their tears repaid,
When Grecians, natives of my country, came
Into my hands : but from the dreams, which prompt
To deeds ungentle, showing that no more
Orestes views the sun's fair light, whoe'er
Ye are that hither come, me will you find
Relentless now. This is the truth, my friends :
My heart is rent ; and never will the wretch,
Who feels affliction's cruel tortures, bear
Goodwill to those that are more fortunate.
Never came gale from Jove, nor flying bark,
Which 'twixt the dang'rous rocks of th' Euxine sea
Brought Helen hither, who my ruin wrought,
Nor Menelaus ; that on them my foul wrongs
I might repay, and with an Aulis here
Requite the Aulis there, where I was seized,
And, as a heifer, by the Grecians slain.
My father too, who gave me birth, was priest.
Ah me ! the sad remembrance of those ills
Yet lives : how often did I stroke thy cheek,
And, hanging on thy knees, address thee thus :
Alas, my father ! I by thee am led
A bride to bridal rites unblest and base :
Them, whilst by thee I bleed, my mother hymns,
And th' Argive dames, with hymeneal strains,
And with the jocund pipe the house resounds :

But at the altar I by thee am slain ;
 For Pluto was th' Achilles, not the son
 Of Peleus, whom to me thou didst announce
 Th' affianced bridegroom, and by guile didst bring
 To bloody nuptials in the rolling car.
 But, o'er mine eyes the veil's fine texture spread,
 This brother in my hands, who now is lost,
 I clasped not, though his sister, did not press
 My lips to his through virgin modesty,
 As going to the house of Peleus : then
 Each fond embrace I to another time
 Deferred, as soon to Argos to return.
 If, O unhappy brother, thou art dead,
 From what a state, thy father's envied height
 Of glory, loved Orestes, art thou torn !—
 These false rules of the goddess much I blame :
 Whoe'er of mortals is with slaughter stained,
 Or hath at childbirth given assisting hands,
 Or chanced to touch aught dead, she as impure
 Drives from her altars ; yet herself delights
 In human victims bleeding at her shrine.
 Ne'er did Latona, from th' embrace of Jove,
 Bring forth such inconsistency : I then deem
 The feast of Tantalus, where gods were guests,
 Unworthy of belief, as that they fed
 On his son's flesh delighted : and I think
 These people, who themselves have a wild joy
 In shedding human blood, their savage guilt
 Charge on the goddess : for this truth I hold,
 None of the gods is evil or doth wrong.

CHORUS.

Strophe 1.

Ye rocks, ye clashing rocks, whose brow
 Frowns o'er the darkened deeps below,
 Whose wild inhospitable wave,
 From Argos flying and her native spring,
 The virgin once was known to brave,
 Tormented with the Bryze's madd'ning sting,

From Europe when the rude sea o'er
 She passed to Asia's adverse shore ;
 Who are these hapless youths, that dare to land,
 Leaving those soft irriguous meads,
 Where, his green margin fringed with reeds,
 Eurotas rolls his ample tide,
 Or Dirce's hallowed waters glide,
 And touch this barb'rous, stranger-hating strand,
 The altars where a virgin dew,
 And blood the pillared shrine imbrues ?

Strophe 2.

Did they with oars impetuous sweep,
 Rank answering rank, the foamy deep,
 And wing their bark with flying sails,
 To raise their humble fortune their desire,
 Eager to catch the rising gales,
 Their bosoms with the love of gain on fire ?
 For sweet is Hope, to man's fond breast,
 The hope of gain, insatiate guest,
 Though on her oft attends Misfortune's train ;
 For daring man she tempts to brave
 The dangers of the boist'rous wave,
 And leads him heedless of his fate
 Through many a distant, barb'rous state ;
 Vain his opinions, his pursuits are vain !
 Boundless o'er some her power is shown,
 But some her temp'rate influence own.

Antistrophe 1.

How did they pass the dang'rous rocks,
 Clashing with rude, tremendous shocks ?
 How pass the savage-howling shore
 Where once th' unhappy Phineus held his reign,
 And sleep affrighted flies its roar,
 Steering their rough course o'er this boist'rous main,
 Formed in a ring beneath whose waves
 The Nereid train in high-arched caves

Weave the light dance, and raise the sprightly song,
 Whilst whisp'ring in their swelling sails
 Soft Zephyrs breathe, or southern gales
 Piping amidst their tackling play,
 As their bark ploughs its wat'ry way
 Those hoary cliffs, the haunts of birds, along,
 To that wild strand, the rapid race
 Where once Achilles deigned to grace?

Antistrophe 2.

Oh that from Troy some chance would bear
 Leda's loved daughter, fatal fair
 (The royal virgin's vows are mine),
 That her bright tresses rolled in crimson dew,
 Her warm blood flowing at this shrine,
 The altar of the goddess might imbrue,
 And Vengeance, righteous to repay
 Her former mischiefs, seize her prey !
 But with what rapture should I hear his voice,
 If one this shore should reach from Greece,
 And bid the toils of slav'ry cease !
 Or might I in the hour of rest
 With pleasing dreams of Greece be blest,
 So in my house, my native land rejoice,
 In sleep enjoy the pleasing strain
 For happiness restored again !

IPH. But the two youths, their hands fast bound in chains,
 The late-seized victims to the goddess, come.
 Silence, my friends : for destined at the shrine
 To bleed the Grecian strangers near approach,
 And no false tidings did the herdsman bring.

CHOR. Goddess revered, if grateful to thy soul
 This state presents such sacrifice, accept
 The victims, which the custom of this land
 Gives thee, but deemed unholy by the Greeks.

IPHIGENIA, ORESTES, PYLADES, CHORUS.

IPH. No more ; that to the goddess each due rite
 Be well performed shall be my care. Unchain
 The strangers' hands, that, hallowed as they are,
 They may no more be bound. Go you, prepare
 Within the temple what the rites require.
 Unhappy youths, what mother brought you forth ?
 Your father who ? Your sister, if perchance
 Ye have a sister, of what youths deprived ?
 For brother she shall have no more. Who knows
 Whom such misfortunes may attend ? For dark
 What the gods will creeps on ; and none can tell
 The ills to come : this fortune from the sight
 Obscures. But, O unhappy strangers, say
 Whence came you ? Sailed you long since for this land ?
 But long will be your absence from your homes,
 For ever, in the dreary realms below.

ORES. Lady, whoe'er thou art, why for these things
 Dost thou lament ? Why mourn for ills, which soon
 Will fall on us ? Him I esteem unwise,
 Who, when he sees death near, tries to o'ercome
 Its terrors with bewailings, without hope
 Of safety : ill he adds to ill, and makes
 His folly known, yet dies. We must give way
 To fortune : therefore mourn not thou for us :
 We know, we are acquainted with your rites.

IPH. Which of you by the name of Pylades
 Is called ? This first it is my wish to know.

ORES. If aught of pleasure that may give thee, he.

IPH. A native of what Grecian state, declare.

ORES. What profit, knowing this, wouldst thou obtain ?

IPH. And are you brothers, of one mother born ?

ORES. Brothers by friendship, lady, not by birth.

IPH. To thee what name was by thy father given ?

ORES. With just cause I Unhappy might be called.

IPH. I ask not that ; to fortune that ascribe.

ORES. Dying unknown rude scoffs I shall avoid.

IPH. Wilt thou refuse ? Why are thy thoughts so high ?

- ORES. My body thou mayst kill, but not my name.
 IPH. Wilt thou not say a native of what state?
 ORES. The question nought avails, since I must die.
 IPH. What hinders thee from granting me this grace?
 ORES. Th' illustrious Argos I my country boast.
 IPH. By the gods, stranger, is thy birth from thence?
 ORES. My birth is from Mycenæ, once the blest.
 IPH. Dost thou an exile fly, or by what fate?
 ORES. Of my free will, in part not free, I fly.
 IPH. Wilt thou then tell me what I wish to know?
 ORES. What'er is foreign to my private griefs.
 IPH. To my dear wish from Argos art thou come.
 ORES. Not to my wish : but if to thine, enjoy it.
 IPH. Troy, whose fame spreads so wide, perchance thou knowst.
 ORES. Oh that I ne'er had known her, e'en in dreams !
 IPH. They say she is no more, by war destroyed.
 ORES. It is so : you have heard no false reports.
 IPH. Is Helena with Menelaus returned?
 ORES. She is : and one I love her coming rües.
 IPH. Where is she? Me too she of old hath wronged.
 ORES. At Sparta with her former lord she dwells.
 IPH. By Greece, and not by me alone, abhorred !
 ORES. I from her nuptials have my share of grief.
 IPH. And are the Greeks, as fame reports, returned?
 ORES. How briefly all things dost thou ask at once?
 IPH. This favour, ere thou die, I wish t' obtain.
 ORES. Ask then : since such thy wish, I will inform thee.
 IPH. Calchas, a prophet, came he back from Troy?
 ORES. He perished : at Mycenæ such the fame.
 IPH. Goddess revered ! But doth Ulysses live?
 ORES. He lives they say ; but is not yet returned.
 IPH. Perish the wretch, nor see his country more !
 ORES. Wish him not ill, for all with him is ill.
 IPH. But doth the son of sea-born Thetis live?
 ORES. He lives not : vain his nuptial rites at Aulis.
 IPH. That all was fraud, as those, who felt it, say.
 ORES. But who art thou, inquiring thus of Greece?
 IPH. I am from thence, in early youth undone.

ORES. Thou hast a right t' inquire what there hath passed.

IPH. What knowst thou of the chief, men call the blest?

ORES. Who? Of the blest was not the chief I knew.

IPH. The royal Agememnon, son of Atreus.

ORES. Of him I know not, lady; cease to ask.

IPH. Nay, by the gods, tell me, and cheer my soul.

ORES. He's dead, th' unhappy chief; no single ill.

IPH. Dead! By what adverse fate? Oh wretched me!

ORES. Why mourn for this? How doth it touch thy breast?

IPH. The glories of his former state I mourn.

ORES. Dreadfully murdered by a woman's hand.

IPH. How wretched she that slew him, he thus slain!

ORES. Now then forbear: of him inquire no more.

IPH. This only; lives th' unhappy monarch's wife?

ORES. She, lady, is no more, slain by her son.

IPH. Alas, the ruined house! What his intent?

ORES. T' avenge on her his noble father slain.

IPH. An ill, but righteous deed, how justly done!

ORES. Though righteous, by the gods he is not blest.

IPH. Hath Agememnon other offspring left?

ORES. He left one virgin daughter, named Electra.

IPH. Of her, that died a victim, is aught said?

ORES. This only, dead she sees the light no more.

IPH. Unhappy she! the father too, who slew her!

ORES. For a bad woman she unseemly died.

IPH. At Argos lives the murdered father's son?

ORES. Nowhere he lives, poor wretch, and everywhere.

IPH. False dreams, farewell: for nothing you import.

ORES. Nor are those gods, that have the name of wise,

Less false than fleeting dreams. In things divine,

And in things human, great confusion reigns.

One thing is left; that, not unwise of soul,

Obedient to the prophet's voice he perished;

For that he perished they, who know, report.

CHOR. What shall we know, what of our parents know?
If yet they live, or not, who can inform us?

IPH. Hear me: this converse prompts a thought, which
gives

Promise of good, ye youths of Greece, to you,

To these, and me ; thus may it well be done,
 If willing to my purpose all assent.
 Wilt thou, if I shall save thee, go for me
 A messenger to Argos, to my friends
 Charged with a letter, which a captive wrote,
 Who pitied me, nor murd'rous thought my hand,
 But that he died beneath the law, these rites
 The goddess deeming just? For from that hour
 I have not found who might to Argos bear
 Himself my message, back with life returned,
 Or send to any of my friends my letter.
 Thou therefore, since it seems thou dost not bear
 Ill will to me, and dost Mycenæ know,
 And those I wish t' address, be safe, and live,
 No base reward for a light letter life
 Receiving : and let him, since thus the state
 Requires, without thee to the goddess bleed.

ORES. Virgin unknown, well hast thou said in all
 Save this, that to the goddess he should bleed
 A victim ; that were heavy grief indeed.
 I steered the vessel to these ills, he sailed
 Attendant on my toils : to gain thy grace
 By his destruction, and withdraw myself
 From sufferings, were unjust. Thus let it be :
 Give him the letter ; to fulfil thy wish
 To Argos he will bear it : me let him,
 Who claims that office, slay. Base is his soul,
 Who in calamities involves his friends,
 And saves himself : this is a friend, whose life,
 Dear to me as my own, I would preserve.

IPH. Excellent spirit ! From some noble root
 It shows thee sprung, and to thy friends a friend
 Sincere : of those that share my blood if one
 Remains, such may he be ; for I am not
 Without a brother, strangers, from my sight
 Though distant now. Since then thy wish is such,
 Him will I send to Argos : he shall bear
 My letter, thou shalt die ; for this desire
 Hath strong possession of thy noble soul.

ORES. Who then shall do the dreadful deed, and slay me ?

IPH. I : to atone the goddess is my charge.

ORES. A charge unenvied, virgin, and unblest.

IPH. Necessity constrains : I must obey.

ORES. Wilt thou, a woman, plunge the sword in men ?

IPH. No : but thy locks to sprinkle round is mine.

ORES. Whose then, if I may ask, the bloody deed ?

IPH. To some within the temple this belongs.

ORES. What tomb is destined to receive my corse ?

IPH. The hallowed fire within, and a dark cave.

ORES. Oh that a sister's hand might wrap these limbs !

IPH. Vain wish, unhappy youth, whoe'er thou art,

Hast thou conceived ; for from this barbarous land

Far is her dwelling. Yet of what my power

Permits, since thou from Argos drawst thy birth,

No grace will I omit ; for in thy tomb

I will place much of ornament, and pour

The dulcet labour of the yellow bee,

From mountain flowers extracted, on thy pyre.

But I will go, and from the temple bring

The letter : yet 'gainst me no hostile thought

Conceive. You that attend here, guard them well,

But without chains. To one, whom most I love

Of all my friends, to Argos I shall send

Tidings perchance unlooked for ; and this letter,

Declaring those, whom he thought dead, alive,

Shall bear him an assured and solid joy.

PYLADES, ORESTES, CHORUS.

CHOR. Thee, o'er whose limbs the bloody drops shall soon
Be from the lavers sprinkled, I lament.

ORES. This asks no pity, strangers : but farewell.

CHOR. Thee, for thy happy fate we reverence, youth,
Who to thy country shalt again return.

PYL. To friends unwished, who leave their friends to die.

CHOR. Painful dismissal ! Which shall I esteem

Most lost, alas, alas ! which most undone !

For doubts my wav'ring judgment yet divide,

If chief for thee my sighs should swell, or thee.

ORES. By the gods, Pylades, is thy mind touched
In manner like as mine ?

PYL. I cannot tell ;
Nor to thy question have I to reply.

ORES. Who is this virgin ? With what zeal for Greece
Made she inquiries of us what the toils
At Troy, if yet the Grecians were returned,
And Calchas, from the flight of birds who formed
Presages of the future ? And she named
Achilles : with what tenderness bewailed
Th' unhappy Agamemnon ! Of his wife
She asked me, of his children : thence her race
This unknown virgin draws, an Argive ; else
Ne'er would she send this letter, nor have wished
To know these things, as if she bore a share,
If Argos flourish, in its prosperous state.

PYL. Such were my thoughts (but thou hast given them
words,
Preventing me), of every circumstance,
Save one : the fate of kings all know, whose state
Holds aught of rank. But pass to other thoughts.

ORES. What ? Share them ; so thou best mayst be in-
formed.

PYL. That thou shouldst die, and I behold this light ;
Were base : with thee I sailed, with thee to die
Becomes me ; else shall I obtain the name
Of a vile coward through the Argive state,
And the deep vales of Phocis. Most will think,
For most think ill, that by betraying thee
I saved myself, home to return alone :
Or haply that I slew thee, and thy death
Contrived, that in the ruin of thy house
Thy empire I might grasp, to me devolved
As wedded to thy sister, now sole heir.
These things I fear, and hold them infamous.
Behoves me then with thee to die, with thee
To bleed a victim, on the pyre with thine
To give my body to the flames ; for this
Becomes me as thy friend, who dread reproach.

ORES. Speak more auspicious words: 'tis mine to bear
Ills that are mine : and single when the woe,
I would not bear it double. What thou sayst
Is vile and infamous, would light on me,
Should I cause thee to die, who in my toils
Hast borne a share : to me, who from the gods
Suffer afflictions which I suffer, death
Is not unwelcome : thou art happy, thine
An unpolluted and a prosperous house ;
Mine impious and unblest. If thou art saved,
And from my sister, whom I gave to thee
Betrothed thy bride, art blessed with sons, my name
May yet remain, nor all my father's house
In total ruin sink. Go then, and live ;
Dwell in the mansion of thy ancestors.
And when thou comst to Greece, to Argos famed
For warrior-steeds, by this right hand I charge thee
Raise a sepulchral mound, and on its place
A monument to me ; and to my tomb
Her tears, her tresses let my sister give :
And say that by an Argive woman's hand
I perished, to the altar's bloody rites
A hallowed victim. Never let thy soul
Betray my sister, for thou seest her state
Of friends how destitute, her father's house
How desolate. Farewell ! Of all my friends
Thee have I found most friendly, from my youth
Trained up with me, in all my sylvan sports
Thou dear associate, and through many toils
Thou faithful partner of my miseries.
Me Phœbus, though a prophet, hath deceived,
And meditating guile hath driven me far
From Greece, of former oracles ashamed ;
To him resigned, obedient to his words,
I slew my mother, and my meed is death.

PYL. Yes, I will raise thy tomb : thy sister's bed
I never will betray, unhappy youth,
For I will hold thee dearer when thou'rt dead,
Than while thou livest ; nor hath yet the voice

Of Phœbus quite destroyed thee, though thou stand
To slaughter nigh : but sometimes mighty woes
Yield mighty changes, so when fortune wills.

ORES. Forbear : the words of Phœbus nought avail me ;
For passing from the shrine the virgin comes.

IPHIGENIA, ORESTES, PYLADES, CHORUS.

IPH. Go you away [*to the Guards*], and in the shrine prepare
What those, who o'er the rites preside, require.—
Here, strangers, is the letter folded close.
What I would further, hear : the mind of man
In dangers, and again from fear relieved
Of safety when assured, is not the same :
I therefore fear lest he, who should convey
To Argos this epistle, when returned
Safe to his native country will neglect
My letter, as a thing of little worth.

ORES. What wouldst thou then ? What is thy anxious
thought ?

IPH. This ; let him give an oath that he will bear
To Argos this epistle to those friends
To whom it is my ardent wish to send it.

ORES. And wilt thou in return give him thy oath ?

IPH. That I will do, or will not do, say what.

ORES. To send him from this barbarous shore alive.

IPH. That's just ; how should he bear my letter else ?

ORES. But will the monarch to these things assent ?

IPH. By me induced. Him I will see embarked.

ORES. Swear then ; and thou propose the righteous oath.

IPH. This, let him say, he to my friends will give.

PYL. Well ; to thy friends this letter I will give.

IPH. Thee will I send safe through the dark'ning rocks.

PYL. What god dost thou invoke t' attest thy oath ?

IPH. Diana, at whose shrine high charge I hold.

PYL. And I heaven's potent king, the awful Jove.

IPH. But if thou slight thy oath, and do me wrong ?

PYL. Never may I return. But if thou fail,
And save me not ?

IPH. Then never whilst I live
May I revisit my loved Argos more.

PYL. One thing, not mentioned, thy attention claims.

IPH. If honour owns it, this will touch us both.

PYL. Let me in this be pardoned, if the bark
Be lost, and with it in the surging waves
Thy letter perish, and I naked gain
The shore, no longer binding be the oath.

IPH. Knowst thou what I will do? For various ills
Arise to those that plough the dangerous deep.
What in this letter is contained, what here
Is written, all I will repeat to thee,
That thou mayst bear my message to my friends.
'Gainst danger thus I guard : if thou preserve
The letter, that though silent will declare
My purport : if it perish in the sea
Saving thyself my words too thou wilt save.

PYL. Well hast thou said touching the gods and me.
Say then, to whom at Argos shall I bear
This letter? What relate as heard from thee?

IPH. This message to Orestes, to the son
Of Agamemnon bear : "She, who was slain
At Aulis, Iphigenia, sends thee this :
She lives, but not to those who then were there."

ORES. Where is she? From the dead returned to life?

IPH. She whom thou seest ; but interrupt me not.
To Argos, O my brother, ere I die
Bear me from this barbaric land, and far
Remove me from this altar's bloody rites,
At which to slay the stranger is my charge.

ORES. What shall I say? Where are we, Pylades?

IPH. Or on thy house for vengeance will I call,
Orestes.—Twice repeated, learn the name.

ORES. Ye gods!

IPH. In my cause why invoke the gods?

ORES. Nothing ; proceed. My thoughts were wand'ring
wide.

Strange things of thee unasked I soon shall learn.

IPH. Tell him the goddess saved me, in exchange

A hind presenting, which my father slew
 A victim, deeming that he plunged his sword
 Deep in my breast ; me in this land she placed.
 Thou hast my charge ; and this my letter speaks.

PYL. Oh thou hast bound me with an easy oath ;
 What I have sworn with honest purpose, long
 Defer I not, but thus discharge mine oath.
 To thee a letter from thy sister, lo,
 I bear, Orestes ; and I give it thee.

ORES. I do receive it, but forbear t' uncloset
 Its foldings, greater pleasure first t' enjoy
 Than words can give. My sister, O most dear,
 Astonished e'en to disbelief I throw
 Mine arms around thee with a fond embrace,
 In transport at the wond'rous things I hear.

CHOR. Stranger, thou dost not well with hands profane
 Thus to pollute the priestess of the shrine,
 Grasping her garments hallowed from the touch.

ORES. My sister, my dear sister, from one sire,
 From Agamemnon sprung, turn not away,
 Holding thy brother thus beyond all hope.

IPH. My brother ! Thou my brother ! Wilt thou not
 Unsay these words ? At Argos far he dwells.

ORES. Thy brother, O unhappy ! is not there.

IPH. Thee did the Spartan Tyndarus bring forth ?

ORES. And from the son of Pelops' son I sprung.

IPH. What sayst thou ? Canst thou give me proof of
 this ?

ORES. I can : ask something of my father's house.

IPH. Nay, it is thine to speak, mine to attend.

ORES. First let me mention things which I have heard
 Electra speak : to thee is known the strife
 Which fierce 'twixt Atreus and Thyestes rose.

IPH. Yes, I have heard it ; for the golden ram.

ORES. In the rich texture didst thou not inweave it ?

IPH. O thou most dear ! Thou windest near my heart.

ORES. And image in the web th' averted sun ?

IPH. In the fine threads that figure did I work.

ORES. For Aulis did thy mother bathe thy limbs ?

IPH. I know it, to unlucky spousals led.

ORES. Why to thy mother didst thou send thy locks?

IPH. Devoted for my body to the tomb.

ORES. What I myself have seen I now as proofs
Will mention. In thy father's house hung high
Within thy virgin chambers the old spear
Of Pelops, which he brandished when he slew
Enomaus, and won his beauteous bride,
The virgin Hippodamia, Pisa's boast.

IPH. O thou most dear, for thou art he, most dear
Acknowledged, thee, Orestes, do I hold,
From Argos, from thy country distant far?

ORES. And hold I thee, my sister, long deemed dead?
Grief mixed with joy, and tears, not taught by woe
To rise, stand melting in thy eyes and mine.

IPH. Thee yet an infant in thy nurse's arms
I left, a babe I left thee in the house.
Thou art more happy, O my soul, than speech
Knows to express. What shall I say? 'Tis all
Surpassing wonder and the power of words.

ORES. May we together from this hour be blest!

IPH. An unexpected pleasure, O my friends,
Have I received; yet fear I from my hands
Lest to the air it fly. O sacred hearths
Raised by the Cyclops! O my country, loved
Mycenæ! Now that thou didst give me birth
I thank thee; now I thank thee that my youth
Thou trainedst, since my brother thou hast trained,
A beam of light, the glory of his house.

ORES. We in our race are happy; but our life,
My sister, by misfortunes is unhappy.

IPH. I was, I know, unhappy when the sword
My father, frenetic, pointed at my neck.

ORES. Ah me! methinks e'en now I see thee there.

IPH. When to Achilles, brother, not a bride
I to the sacrifice by guile was led,
And tears and groans the altar compassed round.

ORES. Alas the lovers there!

IPH. I mourned the deed

My father dared ; unlike a father's love,
Cruel, unlike a father's love, to me.

ORES. Ill deeds succeed to ill ; if thou hadst slain
Thy brother, by some god impelled, what griefs
Must have been thine at such a dreadful deed !

IPH. Dreadful, my brother, oh how dreadful ! Scarce
Hast thou escaped a foul, unhallowed death,
Slain by my hands. But how will these things end ?
What fortune will assist me ? What safe means
Shall I devise to send thee from this state,
From slaughter, to thy native land, to Argos,
Ere with thy blood the cruel sword be stained ?
This to devise, O my unhappy soul !

This to devise is thine. Wilt thou by land,
Thy bark deserted, speed thy flight on foot ?
Perils await thee 'midst these barbarous tribes
Through pathless wilds. And 'twixt the clashing rocks
Narrow the passage for the flying bark,
And long. Unhappy, ah unhappy me !
What god, what mortal, what unlooked-for chance
Will expedite our dangerous way, and show
Two sprung from Atreus a release from ills ?

CHOR. What having seen and heard I shall relate
Is marvellous, and passes fabling tales.

PYL. When after absence long, Orestes, friend
Meets friend, embraces will express their joy.
Behoves us now, bidding farewell to grief
And heedful to obtain the glorious name
Of safety, from this barbarous land to fly.
The wise, of fortune not regardless, seize
Th' occasion, and to happiness advance.

ORES. Well hast thou said ; and Fortune here, I ween,
Will aid us : to the firm and strenuous mind
More potent works the influence divine.

IPH. Nothing shall check, nothing restrain my speech :
First will I question thee what fortune waits
Electra : this to know would yield me joy.

ORES. With him she dwells, and happy is her life.

IPH. Whence then is he ? and from what father sprung ?

ORES. From Phocis : Strophius is his father named.

IPH. By Atreus' daughter to my blood allied ?

ORES. Nearly allied : my only faithful friend.

IPH. He was not then, me when my father slew.

ORES. Childless was Strophius for some length of time.

IPH. O thou, the husband of my sister, hail !

ORES. More than relation, my preserver too.

IPH. But to thy mother why that dreadful deed ?

ORES. Of that no more : t' avenge my father's death.

IPH. But for what cause did she her husband slay ?

ORES. Of her inquire not : thou wouldst blush to hear.

IPH. The eyes of Argos now are raised to thee.

ORES. There Menelaus is lord ; I, outcast, fly.

IPH. Hath he then wronged his brother's ruined house ?

ORES. Not so : the Furies fright me from the land.

IPH. The madness this, which seized thee on the shore ?

ORES. I was not first beheld unhappy there.

IPH. Stern powers ; they haunt thee for thy mother's blood.

ORES. And ruthless make me champ the bloody bit.

IPH. Why to this region hast thou steered thy course ?

ORES. Commanded by Apollo's voice I come.

IPH. With that intent ? if that may be disclosed.

ORES. I will inform thee, though to length of speech

This leads. When vengeance from my hands o'ertook

My mother's deed, foul deeds which let me pass

In silence, by the Furies' fierce assaults

To flight I was impelled : to Athens then

Apollo sent me, that, my cause there heard,

I might appease the vengeful powers, whose names

May not be uttered. The tribunal there

Is holy, which for Mars when stained with blood

Jove in old times established. There arrived

None willingly received me, by the gods

As one abhorred ; and they, who felt the touch

Of shame, the hospitable board alone

Yielded, and though one common roof beneath,

Their silence showing they disdained to hold

Converse with me, I took from them apart

A lone repast ; to each was placed a bowl
Of the same measure ; this they filled with wine,
And bathed their spirits in delight. Unmeet
I deemed it to express offence at those
Who entertained me, but in silence grieved,
Showing a cheer as though I marked it not,
And sighed for that I shed my mother's blood.
A feast, I hear, at Athens is ordained
From this my evil plight, e'en yet observed,
In which the equal-measured bowl then used
Is by that people held in honour high.
But when to the tribunal on the mount
Of Mars I came, one stand I took, and one
The eldest of the Furies opposite :
The cause was heard touching my mother's blood,
And Phœbus saved me by his evidence ;
Equal, by Pallas numbered, were the votes,
And I from doom of blood victorious freed.
Such of the Furies as there sate, appeased
By the just sentence, nigh the court resolved
To fix their seat ; but others, whom the law
Appeased not, with relentless tortures still
Pursued me, till I reached the hallowed soil
Of Phœbus. Stretched before his shrine I swore
Foodless to waste my wretched life away,
Unless the god, by whom I was undone,
Would save me. From the golden tripod burst
The voice divine, and sent me to this shore,
Commanding me to bear the image hence,
Which fell from Jove, and in th' Athenian land
To fix it. What th' oracular voice assigned
My safety, do thou aid. If we obtain
The statue of the goddess, I no more
With madness shall be tortured, but this arm
Shall place thee in my bark, which ploughs the waves
With many an oar, and to Mycenæ safe
Bear thee again. Show then a sister's love,
O thou most dear, preserve thy father's house,
Preserve me too ; for me destruction waits,

And all the race of Pelops, it we bear not
This heaven-descended image from the shrine.

CHOR. The anger of the gods hath raged severe,
And plunged the race of Tantalus in woes.

IPH. Ere thy arrival here, a fond desire
To be again at Argos, and to see
Thee, my loved brother, filled my soul. Thy wish
Is my warm wish, to free thee from thy toils,
And from its ruins raise my father's house ;
Nor harbour I 'gainst him, that slew me, thought
Of harsh resentment : from thy blood my hands
Would I keep pure, thy house I would preserve.
But from the goddess how may this be hid ?
The tyrant too I fear, when he shall find
The statue on its marble base no more.
What then from death will save me ? What excuse
Shall I devise ? Yet by one daring deed
Might these things be achieved, couldst thou bear hence
The image, me too in thy gallant bark
Placing secure, how glorious were th' attempt !
Me if thou join not with thee, I am lost
Indeed ; but thou, with prudent measures formed,
Return. I fly no danger, not e'en death,
Be death required, to save thee. No : the man
Dying is mourned as to his house a loss ;
But woman's weakness is of light esteem.

ORES. I would not be the murderer of my mother,
And of thee too ; sufficient is her blood.
No ; I will share thy fortune, live with thee,
Or with thee die : to Argos I will lead thee,
If here I perish not ; or dying here
Remain with thee. But what my mind suggests
Hear : if Diana were averse to this,
How could the voice of Phœbus from his shrine
Declare that to the state of Pallas hence
The statue of the goddess I should bear,
And see thy face ? All this together weighed
Gives hope of fair success, and our return.

IPH. But how effect it, that we neither die,

And what we wish achieve? For our return
 On this depends : this claims deliberate thought.

ORES. Have we not means to work the tyrant's death?
 IPH. For strangers full of peril were th' attempt.
 ORES. Thee would it save and me, it must be dared.
 IPH. I could not : yet thy promptness I approve.
 ORES. What if thou lodge me in the shrine concealed?
 IPH. That in the shades of night we may escape?
 ORES. Night is a friend to frauds, the light to truth.
 IPH. Within are sacred guards ; we 'scape not them.
 ORES. Ruin then waits us : how can we be saved?
 IPH. I think I have some new and safe device.
 ORES. What is it? Let me know : impart thy thought.
 IPH. Thy sufferings for my purpose I will use.
 ORES. To form devices quick is woman's wit.
 IPH. And say, thy mother slain thou fledst from Argos.
 ORES. If to aught good, avail thee of my ills.
 IPH. Unmeet then at this shrine to offer thee.
 ORES. What cause alleged? I reach not thine intent.
 IPH. As now impure : when hallowed, I will slay thee.
 ORES. How is the image thus more promptly gained?
 IPH. Thee I will hallow in the ocean waves.
 ORES. The statue we would gain is in the temple.
 IPH. That, by thy touch polluted, I would cleanse.
 ORES. Where? On the wat'ry margin of the main?
 IPH. Where thy tall bark secured with cables rides.
 ORES. And who shall bear the image in his hands?
 IPH. Myself : profaned by any touch but mine.
 ORES. What of this blood shall on my friend be charged?
 IPH. His hands it shall be said, like thine are stained.
 ORES. In secret this, or to the king disclosed?
 IPH. With his assent ; I cannot hide it from him.
 ORES. My bark with ready oars attends thee near.
 IPH. That all be well appointed be thy charge.
 ORES. One thing alone remains, that these conceal
 Our purpose : but address them, teach thy tongue
 Persuasive words : a woman hath the power
 To melt the heart to pity : thus perchance
 All things may to our warmest wish succeed.

IPH. Ye train of females, to my soul most dear,
 On you mine eyes are turned, on you depends
 My fate: with prosperous fortune to be blest,
 Or to be nothing, to my country lost,
 Of a dear kinsman and a much loved brother
 Deprived. This plea I first would urge, that we
 Are women, and have hearts by nature formed
 To love each other, of our mutual trusts
 Most firm preservers. Touching our design
 Be silent, and assist our flight; nought claims
 More honour than the faithful tongue. You see
 How the same fortune links us three, most dear
 Each to the other, to revisit safe
 Our country, or to die. If I am saved,
 That thou mayst share my fortune, I to Greece
 Will bring thee safe: but thee by this right hand,
 Thee I conjure, and thee; by this loved cheek
 Thee, by thy knees, by all that in your house
 Is dearest to you, father, mother, child,
 If you have children. What do you reply?
 Which of you speaks assent? Or which dissents?
 But be you all assenting: for my plea
 If you approve not, ruin falls on me,
 And my unhappy brother too must die.

CHOR. Be confident, loved lady, and consult
 Only thy safety: all thou givst in charge,
 Be witness, mighty Jove, I will conceal.

IPH. Oh for this generous promise be you blest!
 To enter now the temple be thy part,
 And thine: for soon the monarch of the land
 Will come, inquiring if the strangers yet
 Have bowed their necks as victims at the shrine.—
 Goddess revered, who in the dreadful bay
 Of Aulis from my father's slaughtering hand
 Didst save me, save me now, and these; through thee
 Else will the voice of Phœbus be no more
 Held true by mortals: from this barbarous land
 To Athens go propitious; here to dwell
 Beseems thee not: thine be a polished state!

CHORUS.

Strophe 1.

O bird, that round each craggy height
 Projecting o'er the sea below,
 Wheelest thy melancholy flight,
 Thy song attuned to notes of woe ;
 The wise thy tender sorrows own,
 Which thy lost lord unceasing moan :
 Like thine, sad Halcyon, be my strain,
 A bird that have no wings to fly :
 With fond desire for Greece I sigh,
 And for my much loved social train ;
 Sigh for Diana, pitying maid,
 Who joys to rove o'er Cynthus' heights,
 Or in the branching laurel's shade,
 Or in the soft-haired palm delights,
 Or the hoar olive's sacred boughs,
 Lenient of sad Latona's woes,
 Or in the lake that rolls its wave
 Where swans their plumage love to lave,
 Then to the Muses soaring high,
 The homage pay of melody.

Antistrophe 1.

Ye tears, what frequent-falling showers
 Rolled down these cheeks in streams of woe,
 When in the dust my country's towers
 Lay levelled by the conquering foe ;
 And, to their spears a prey, their oars
 Brought me to these barbaric shores !
 For gold exchanged, a traffic base,
 No vulgar slave, the task is mine
 Here at Diana's awful shrine,
 Who loves the woodland hind to chase,
 The virgin priestess to attend,
 Daughter of rich Mycenæ's lord ;
 At other shrines her wish to bend,
 Where bleeds the victim less abhorred :

No respite to her griefs she knows,
 Not so the heart inured to woes,
 As trained to sorrow's rigid lore :
 Now comes a change, it mourns no more.
 But to long bliss when ill succeeds
 The anguished heart for ever bleeds.

Strophe 2.

Thee, loved virgin, freed from fear
 Home the Argive bark shall bear :
 Mountain Pan, with shrilling strain,
 To the oars that dash the main
 In just cadence well agreed,
 Shall accord his wax-joined reed :
 Phœbus, with a prophet's fire
 Sweeping o'er his seven-stringed lyre,
 And his voice attuning high
 To the swelling harmony,
 Thee shall guide the wild waves o'er
 To the soft Athenian shore.
 Leaving me, thy oars shall sweep
 Eager o'er the foaming deep ;
 Thou shalt catch the rising gales
 Swelling in thy firm-bound sails,
 And thy bark in gallant pride
 Light shall o'er the billows glide.

Antistrophe 2.

Might I through the lucid air
 Fly where rolls yon flaming car,
 O'er these loved and modest bowers,
 Where I passed my youthful hours,
 I would stay my weary flight,
 Wave no more my pennons light,
 But amidst the virgin band,
 Once my loved companions, stand :
 Once 'midst them my charms could move,
 Blooming then, the flames of love,

When the mazy dance I trod,
 Whilst with joy my mother glowed ;
 When to vie in grace was mine,
 And in splendid robes to shine ;
 For with radiant tints imprest
 Glowed for me the gorgeous vest ;
 And these tresses gave new grace,
 As their ringlets shade my face.

THOAS, IPHIGENIA, CHORUS.

THO. Where is the Grecian lady, to whose charge
 This temple is committed? Have her rites
 Hallowed the strangers? Do their bodies burn
 In the recesses of the sacred shrine?

CHOR. She comes, and will inform thee, king, of all.

THO. Daughter of Agamemnon, what means this!
 The statue of the goddess in thine arms
 Why dost thou bear from its firm base removed?

IPH. There in the portal, monarch, stay thy step.

THO. What of strange import in the shrine hath chanced?

IPH. Things ominous: that word I, holy, speak.

THO. To what is tuned thy proem? Plainly speak.

IPH. Not pure the victims, king, you lately seized.

THO. What showed thee this? Or speakst thou but thy
 thought?

IPH. Back turned the sacred image on its base.

THO. Spontaneous turned, or by an earthquake moved?

IPH. Spontaneous; and, averted, closed its eyes.

THO. What was the cause? The blood-stained strangers' guilt?

IPH. That and nought else; for horrible their deeds.

THO. What, have they slain some Scythian on the shore?

IPH. They came polluted with domestic blood.

THO. What blood? I have a strong desire to know.

IPH. They slew their mother with confederate swords.

THO. O Phœbus! This hath no barbarian dared.

IPH. All Greece indignant chased them from her realms.

THO. Bearst thou for this the image from the shrine?

IPH. To the pure air, from stain of blood removed.

THO. By what means didst thou know the strangers' guilt ?

IPH. I learned it as the statue started back.

THO. Greece trained thee wise : this well hast thou discerned.

IPH. Now with sweet blandishments they soothe my soul.

THO. Some glozing tale from Argos telling thee ?

IPH. I have one brother : he, they say, lives happy.

THO. That thou mayst save them for their pleasing news ?

IPH. And that my father lives, by fortune blessed.

THO. But on the goddess well thy thoughts are turned.

IPH. I hate all Greece ; for it hath ruined me.

THO. What with the strangers, say then, should be done ?

IPH. The law ordained in reverence we must hold.

THO. Are then thy lavers ready, and the sword ?

IPH. First I would cleanse them with ablutions pure.

THO. In fountain waters, or the ocean wave ?

IPH. All man's pollutions doth the salt sea cleanse.

THO. More holy to the goddess will they bleed.

IPH. And better what I have in charge advance.

THO. Doth not the wave e'en 'gainst the temple beat ?

IPH. This requires solitude : more must I do.

THO. Lead where thou wilt : on secret rites I pry not.

IPH. The image of the goddess I must cleanse.

THO. If it be stained with touch of mother's blood.

IPH. I could not else have borne it from its base.

THO. Just is thy provident and pious thought :

For this by all the state thou art revered.

IPH. Knowst thou what next I would ?

THO. 'Tis thine thy will

To signify.

IPH. Give for these strangers chains.

THO. To what place can they fly ?

IPH. A Grecian knows

Nought faithful.

THO. Of my train go some for chains.

IPH. Let them lead forth the strangers.

THO. Be it so.

IPH. And veil their faces.

THO. From the sun's bright beams ?

IPH. Some of thy train send with me.

THO. These shall go

Attending thee.

IPH. One to the city send.

THO. With what instructions charged?

IPH. That all remain

Within their houses.

THO. That the stain of blood

They meet not?

IPH. These things have pollution in them.

THO. Go thou, and bear th' instructions.

IPH. That none come

In sight.

THO. How wisely careful for the city!

IPH. Warn our friends most.

THO. This speaks thy care for me.

IPH. Stay thou before the shrine.

THO. To what intent?

IPH. Cleanse it with lustral fires.

THO. That thy return

May find it pure?

IPH. But when the strangers come

Forth from the temple.

THO. What must I then do?

IPH. Spread o'er thine eyes a veil.

THO. That I receive not

Pollution?

IPH. Tedious if my stay appear.

THO. What bounds may be assigned?

IPH. Deem it not strange.

THO. At leisure what the rites require perform.

IPH. May this lustration as I wish succeed.

THO. Thy wish is mine.

IPH. But from the temple, see,

The strangers come, the sacred ornaments,

The hallowed lambs, for I with blood must wash

This execrable blood away, the light

Of torches, and what else my rites require

To purify these strangers to the goddess.

But to the natives of this land my voice
 Proclaims, from this pollution far remove,
 Art thou attendant at the shrine, who liftest
 Pure to the gods thy hands, or nuptial rites
 Dost thou prepare, or pregnant matron, hence
 Be gone, that this defilement none may touch.
 Thou, daughter of Latona and high Jove,
 O royal virgin, if I cleanse the stain
 Of these, and where I ought with holy rites
 Address thee, thou shalt hold thy residence
 In a pure mansion ; we too shall be blest !
 More though I speak not, goddess, unexpressed
 All things to thee and to the gods are known.

CHOR. Latona's glorious offspring claims the song,

Born the hallowed shades among
 Where fruitful Delos winds her valleys low ;
 Bright-haired Phœbus skilled t' inspire
 Raptures as he sweeps the lyre,
 And she that glories in th' unerring bow.
 From the rocky ridges steep,
 At whose foot the hushed waves sleep,
 Left their far famed native shore,
 Them th' exulting mother bore
 To Parnassus, on whose heights
 Bacchus shouting holds his rites ;
 Glitt'ring in the burnished shade,
 By the laurel's branches made,
 Where th' enormous dragon lies,
 Brass his scales, and flame his eyes,
 Earth-born monster, that around
 Rolling guards th' oracular ground :
 Him, while yet a sportive child
 In his mother's arms that smiled,
 Phœbus slew, and seized the shrine
 Whence proceeds the voice divine ;
 On the golden tripod placed,
 Throne by falsehood ne'er disgraced,
 Where Castalia's pure stream flows,
 He the fates to mortals shows.

But when Themis, whom of yore
 Earth, her fruitful mother, bore,
 From her hallowed seat he drove,
 Earth t' avenge her daughter strove,
 Forming visions of the night,
 Which, in rapt dreams hov'ring light,
 All that Time's dark volumes hold
 Might to mortal sense unfold,
 When in midnight's sable shades
 Sleep the silent couch invades :
 Thus did Earth her vengeance boast.
 His prophetic honours lost,
 Royal Phœbus speeds his flight
 To Olympus, on whose height
 At the throne of Jove he stands,
 Stretching forth his little hands,
 Suppliant that the Pythian shrine
 Feel no more the wrath divine ;
 That the goddess he appease,
 That her nightly visions cease.
 Jove with smiles beheld his son
 Early thus address his throne,
 Suing with ambitious pride
 O'er the rich shrine to preside :
 He assenting bowed his head.
 Straight the nightly visions fled ;
 And prophetic dreams no more
 Hovered slumb'ring mortals o'er :
 Now to Phœbus given again
 All his honours pure remain ;
 Votaries distant regions send
 His frequented throne t' attend,
 And the firm decrees of fate
 On his faithful voice await.

MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MESS. Say you, that keep the temple and attend
 The altar, where is Thoas, Scythia's king ?
 Open these strong-compacted gates, and call
 Forth from the shrine the monarch of the land.

CHOR. Wherefore? At thy command if I must speak.

MESS. The two young men are gone, through the device
Of Agamemnon's daughter; from this land
They fly, and in their Grecian galley placed
The sacred image of the goddess bear.

CHOR. Incredible thy tale: but whom thou seekest
The monarch from the temple went in haste.

MESS. Whither? For what is doing he should know.

CHOR. We know not: but go thou and seek for him:
Where'er thou find him, thou wilt tell him this.

MESS. See, what a faithless race you women are!
In all that hath been done you have a part.

CHOR. Sure thou art mad? What with the strangers'
flight

Have we to do? But wilt thou not with all
The speed thou mayst go to the monarch's house?

MESS. Not till I first am well informed if here
Within the temple be the king or not.

Unbar the gates: to you within I speak;
And tell your lord that at the portal here
I stand, and bring him tidings of fresh ills.

THOAS, MESSENGER, CHORUS.

THO. Who at the temple of the goddess dares
This clamour raise, and thund'ring at the gates
Strikes terror through the ample space within?

MESS. With falsehoods would these women drive me hence,
Without to seek thee; thou wast in the shrine.

THO. With what intent? Or what advantage sought?

MESS. Of these hereafter: what more urgent now
Imports thee, hear: the virgin, in this place
Presiding at the altars, from this land
Is with the strangers fled, and bears with her
The sacred image of the goddess: all
Of her ablutions but a false pretence.

THO. How sayst thou? What is her accursed design?

MESS. To save Orestes: this too will amaze thee.

THO. Whom? What Orestes? Clytemnestra's son?

MESS. Him at the altar hallowed now to bleed.

THO. Portentous ! For what less can it be called ?

MESS. Think not on that, but hear me ; with deep
thought

Reflect ; weigh well what thou shalt hear, devise
By what pursuit to reach and seize the strangers.

THO. Speak : thou advisest well ; the sea though nigh,
They fly not so as to escape my spear.

MESS. When to the shore we came, where stationed rode
The galley of Orestes by the rocks
Concealed, to us, whom thou hadst sent with her
To hold the strangers' chains, the royal maid
Made signs that we retire, and stand aloof,
As if with secret rites she would perform
The purposed expiation : on she went,
In her own hands holding the strangers' chains
Behind them : not without suspicion this,
Yet by thy servants, king, allowed. At length,
That we might deem her in some purpose high
Employed, she raised her voice, and chaunted loud
Barbaric strains, as if with mystic rites
She cleansed the stain of blood. When we had sate
A tedious while, it came into our thought
That from their chains unloosed the stranger youths
Might kill her, and escape by flight ; yet fear
Of seeing what we ought not kept us still
In silence ; but at length we all resolved
To go, though not permitted, where they were.
There we behold the Grecian bark, with oars
Well furnished, winged for flight ; and at their seats
Grasping their oars were fifty rowers ; free
From chains beside the stern the two youths stood.
Some from the prow relieved the keel with poles ;
Some weighed the anchors up ; the climbing ropes
Some hastened, through their hands the cables drew,
Launched the light bark, and gave her to the main.
But when we saw their treacherous wives, we rushed
Heedless of danger, seized the priestess, seized
The halsers, hung upon the helm, and strove
To rend the rudder-bands away. Debate

Now rose : " What mean you, sailing o'er the seas,
The statue and the priestess from the land
By stealth conveying? Whence art thou, and who,
That bearest her, like a purchased slave, away?"
He said : " I am her brother, be of this
Informed, Orestes, son of Agamemnon ;
My sister, so long lost, I bear away,
Recovered here." But nought the less for that
Held we the priestess, and by force would lead
Again to thee ; hence dreadful on our cheeks
The blows ; for in their hands no sword they held,
Nor we ; but many a rattling stroke the youths
Dealt with their fists, against our sides and breasts
Their arms fierce darting, till our battered limbs
Were all disabled. Now with dreadful marks
Disfigured up the precipice we fly,
Some bearing on their heads, some in their eyes
The bloody bruises ; standing on the heights
Our fight was safer, and we hurled at them
Fragments of rocks ; but standing on the stern
The archers with their arrows drove us thence.
And now a swelling wave rolled in, which drove
The galley tow'rd's the land ; the sailors feared
The sudden swell. On his left arm sustained
Orestes bore his sister through the tide,
Mounted the bark's tall side, and on the deck
Safe placed her, and Diana's holy image
Which fell from heaven : from the midship his voice
He sent aloud, " Ye youths, that in this bark
From Argos ploughed the deep, now ply your oars,
And dash the billows till they foam : those things
Are ours, for which we swept the Euxine sea,
And steered our course within its clashing rocks."
They gave a cheerful shout, and with their oars
Dashed the salt wave. The galley, whilst it rode
Within the harbour, worked its easy way ;
But having passed its mouth, the swelling flood
Rolled on it, and with sudden force the wind
Impetuous rising drove it back ; their oars

They slacked not, stoutly struggling 'gainst the wave ;
 But tow'rd's the land the refluent flood impelled
 The galley ; then the royal virgin stood,
 And prayed : " O daughter of Latona, save me,
 Thy priestess save ; from this barbaric land
 To Greece restore me, and forgive my thefts ;
 For thou, O goddess, dost thy brother love,
 Deem then that I love those allied to me."
 The mariners responsive to her prayer
 Shouted loud pæans, and their naked arms,
 Each cheering each, to their stout oars apply.
 But nearer, and yet nearer to the rock
 The galley drove ; some rushed into the sea,
 Some strained the ropes that bind the loosened sails.
 Straight was I hither sent to thee, O king,
 T' inform thee of these accidents. But haste,
 Take chains and gyves with thee ; for if the flood
 Subside not to a calm, there is no hope
 Of safety to the strangers. Be assured
 That Neptune, awful monarch of the main,
 Remembers Troy, and, hostile to the race
 Of Pelops, will deliver to thy hands,
 And to thy people, as is meet, the son
 Of Agamemnon ; and bring back to thee
 His sister, who the goddess hath betrayed,
 Unmindful of the blood at Aulis shed.

CHOR. Unhappy Iphigenia, thou must die,
 Thy brother too must die, if thou again,
 Seized in thy flight, to thy lord's hands shalt come.

THO. Inhabitants of this barbaric land,
 Will you not rein your steeds, will you not fly
 Along the shore, to seize whate'er this skiff
 Of Greece casts forth, and for your goddess roused
 Hunt down these impious men ? Will you not launch
 Instant your swift-oared barks, by sea, by land
 To catch them, from the rugged rock to hurl
 Their bodies, or impale them on the stake ?
 But for you women, in these dark designs
 Accomplices, hereafter, as I find

Convenient leisure, I will punish you.

Th' occasion urges now, and gives no pause.

MIN. Whither, O royal Thoas, dost thou lead
This vengeful chase? Attend; Minerva speaks.

Cease thy pursuit, and stop this rushing flood

Of arms; for hither by the fateful voice

Of Phœbus came Orestes, warned to fly

The anger of the Furies, to convey

His sister to her native Argos back,

And to my land the sacred image bear.

Thoas, I speak to thee: him, whom thy rage

Would kill, Orestes, on the wild waves seized,

Neptune, to do me grace, already wafts

On the smooth sea, the swelling surges calmed.

And thou, Orestes (for my voice thou hearest,

Though distant far), to my commands attend:

Go, with the sacred image, which thou bearest,

And with thy sister: but when thou shalt come

To Athens, built by gods, there is a place

On th' extreme borders of the Attic land,

Close neighb'ring to Carystia's craggy height,

Sacred, my people call it Alæ: there

A temple raise, and fix the statue there,

Which from the Tauric goddess shall receive

Its name, and from thy toils, which thou, through Greece

Driven by the Furies' madd'ning stings, hast borne;

And mortals shall in future times with hymns

The Tauric goddess there, Diana, hail.

And be this law established, when the feast

For thy deliverance from this shrine is held,

To a man's throat that they apply the sword,

And draw the blood, in memory of these rites,

That of her honours nought the goddess lose.

Thou, Iphigenia, on the hallowed heights

Of Brauron on this goddess shalt attend

Her priestess, dying shalt be there interred,

Graced with the honours of the gorgeous vests

Of finest texture, in their houses left

By matrons who in childbed pangs expired.

These Grecian dames back to their country lead,
 I charge thee : justice this return demands ;
 For I saved thee, when on the mount of Mars
 The votes were equal : and from that decree,
 The shells in number equal, still absolve.
 But, son of Agamemnon, from this land
 Thy sister bear ; nor, Thoas, be thou angry.

THO. Royal Minerva, he that hears the gods
 Commanding, and obeys not, is unwise.
 My anger 'gainst Orestes flames no more,
 Gone though he be, and bears with him away
 The statue of the goddess, and his sister.
 Have mortals glory 'gainst the powerful gods
 Contending ? Let them go, and to thy land
 'The sacred image bear, and fix it there ;
 Good fortune go with them. To favoured Greece
 These dames, at thy high bidding, I will send.
 My arms will I restrain, which I had raised
 Against the strangers, and my swift-oared barks,
 Since, potent goddess, this is pleasing to thee.

MIN. I praise thy resolution ; for the power
 Of fate o'er thee and o'er the gods prevails.
 Breathe soft ye fav'ring gales, to Athens bear
 These sprung from Agamemnon ; on their course
 Attending I will go, and heedful save
 My sister's sacred image. You too go [*to the CHORUS*]
 Prosp'rous, and in the fate that guards you blest.

CHOR. O thou, among th' immortal gods revered,
 And mortal men, Minerva, we will do
 As thou commandest ; for with transport high,
 Exceeding hope, our ears receive thy words.
 O Victory, I revere thy awful power :
 Guard thou my life, nor ever cease to crown me !

THE TROJAN DAMES.

A MIGHTY kingdom overturned, its imperial city wasted and levelled with the ground, its venerable king, his numerous sons, and all the brave defenders of their country fallen by the sword, their unhappy wives captive and assigned to slavery in a foreign land, are events of such complicated misery as must deeply affect the human heart. Euripides knew how to give these woes their full force : his tender and pathetic spirit raises here the most exquisite sensations of pity, which increase to terror, and swell on to distraction. One would have thought that the real existence of evils could not be greater, and that the imagination could not form a deeper distress than that of Hecuba on her first appearance, lying on the ground before the tent of Agamemnon : but every new scene presents her with some new cause of grief of the most affecting nature ; the gradation is astonishing ; and the whole drama resembles a terrible storm whose fury falls upon some magnificent edifice. At first it is awful and alarming ; but its violence increases, every flash of lightning sets some part of the structure on fire, every clap of thunder shakes some part to the ground, till at length the whole is one dreadful scene of tempest, flames, and ruin.

The scene is in the plains of Troy, before the tent of Agamemnon.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

NEPTUNE.	HELENA.
MINERVA.	MENELAUS.
HECUBA.	TALTHYBIUS.
CASSANDRA.	CHORUS OF TROJAN DAMES.
ANDROMACHE.	

NEPTUNE.

FROM the vast depths of the Ægean sea,
 Where many a maze with graceful-moving feet
 Unwinds the choir of Nereids, Neptune comes.
 For from the time when Phœbus and myself
 Raised on this land the rampired towers of Troy
 With exact skill, my mind hath never lost
 Its fondness for this city of the Phrygians,
 Which now in ruins by the arms of Greece
 Smokes on the ground : for by Minerva's art
 Epœus of Parnassian Phocis framed
 A horse, whose hollow womb was full of arms,
 And sent within the walls th' enormous bulk
 Big with destruction ; hence in after times
 It shall be called "The Horse of Spears," the spear
 In its dark sides concealed. The sacred groves
 Are desolate, the temples of the gods
 Flooded with gore, and Priam at the steps
 Ascending to the shrine of guardian Jove
 Hath fall'n and died : much gold, and Phrygian spoils
 Are to the Grecian vessels borne ; the troops
 Expect the fav'ring gale to breathe from shore,
 That after ten long years, which they have passed
 In arms to lay this city low, with joy
 They may behold their children and their wives.
 But I, by Argive Juno, mighty queen,
 O'erpowered, and Pallas, whose united force
 Hath crushed the Phrygians, quit the once famed towers

Of Ilium, and my altars : for when once
 Wide through a city desolation spreads,
 The hallowed rites, the worship of the gods
 Must be neglected. Now with loud laments
 Of captive dames to their new lords assigned
 Scamander's banks resound : th' Arcadian some,
 Some the Thessalian bands, and some the sons
 Of Theseus, chiefs of Athens, as decides
 The lot, obtain. Beneath this roof are those
 Of Troy's unhappy daughters by no lot
 Disposed, but to the leaders of the host
 Selected ; these among, by righteous doom
 A captive led, the Spartan Helena.
 And Hecuba, if any wish to see
 Her and her wretched state, before the gates
 Lies stretched, and pours an ample flood of tears ;
 And she hath ample cause, for at the tomb
 Raised to Achilles hath her daughter died,
 How piteously ! the poor Polyxena ;
 Priam is fall'n, her sons are fall'n ; and her,
 Cassandra, whom the royal Phœbus gave
 To rove a virgin, and declare the fates,
 To secret nuptials Agamemnon leads
 Perforce, religion and the gods despised.
 But, O my town once flourishing, once crowned
 With beauteous-structured battlements, farewell !
 Had not Minerva sunk thee in the dust,
 On thy firm base e'en now thou mightst have stood.

NEPTUNE, MINERVA.

MIN. Is it permitted me, all former thoughts
 Of variance laid aside, t' address a god
 Nearest by lineage to my sire allied,
 Of mighty power, and honoured by the gods ?

NEPT. It is permitted thee : for kindred blood,
 Royal Minerva, hath a potent charm
 To reconcile the alienated mind.

MIN. Thy gentleness in anger claims my praise.
 What I would offer, king, imports us both.

NEPT. Hast thou of new aught from the gods to speak,
From Jove, or other of the heavenly powers?

MIN. No: for the sake of Troy I to thy power
Am come, to use it in one common cause.

NEPT. Dost thou, thy former hostile thoughts appeased,
Pity its ruins blazing in the flames?

MIN. First speak to this: wilt thou with joint design,
Joint labour, aid in what I wish to do?

NEPT. Most willingly: but wish to know thy purpose,
If to the Trojans friendly, or to Greece.

MIN. The Trojans hated once, would I delight,
To th' Argive host embittering their return.

NEPT. Why have thy measures this quick change, in love
Or hate, whiche'er betides, too violent?

MIN. Me knowst thou not how outraged, and my shrine?

NEPT. I know: Cassandra Ajax dragged by force.

MIN. Nor punished by the Grecians, nor reprov'd.

NEPT. Yet by thy power these Grecians wasted Troy.

MIN. Therefore with thee I now would work them woe.

NEPT. Thy purpose finds me prompt: what wouldst thou do?

MIN. With rig'rous vengeance sadden their return.

NEPT. On land, or when they plough the briny wave?

MIN. When o'er the deep they steer their course for Greece,
The stormy rain, the fierce-descending hail,
And the dark fury of tempestuous winds
My sire will send: to me, his word is passed,
His fiery thunder will he give, to hurl
Against the Grecians, and with lightning flames
To burn their ships. Do thou, for thine the power,
With foaming billows vast and whirling gulfs
Tempest the vexed Ægean; with their dead
Fill the Eubœan bay: that they may learn
Henceforth with reverence to approach my shrines,
And pay due honours to the other gods.

NEPT. It shall be so: few words this favour needs.
With tempests will I chafe th' Ægean sea;
The shores of Mycone, the Delian rocks,
Scyrus, and Lemnus, and the rugged brow
Of steep Caphareus shall with numerous dead

Be covered. But to high Olympus go,
 The bolts of thunder from thy father's hands
 Receive: then wait till they unmoor their fleet.
 Unwise is he, whoe'er of mortals storms
 Beleaguered towns, and crushed in ruins wastes
 The temples of the gods, the hallowed tombs
 Where sleep the dead; for he shall perish soon.

HEC. Rise, thou unhappy; from the cold ground raise
 Thy head, thy neck. This is no longer Troy,
 In Troy we rule no longer. Ah the change
 Of fortune! Bear the change; sail with the tide.
 With fortune sail, nor turn the prow of life
 Against the wave, nor struggle with thy fate.—
 Oh woe, woe, woe! Why is it not allowed
 A wretch like me to moan my country lost,
 My children, and my husband! Thou high boast
 Of noble ancestry, how art thou shrunk,
 How vanished! What shall I in silence hold?
 Or what not hold in silence? What bewail?
 In what a woful state are these poor limbs
 Reclined, how ill on this hard bed now stretched?
 Ah me, my head! Ah me, my temples! Ah,
 My sides! O how I long to change my place,
 To roll, and roll, and shift from side to side,
 Proofs of the restless torture of my mind!
 E'en here th' unhappy have a Muse, to give
 These woes a voice, far other than the notes
 To joy and dance attuned. Ye wingéd barks,
 Which through the purple seas and sheltered bays
 Of Greece, whilst to the inauspicious sound
 Of flutes and oaten pipes your oars kept time,
 With all your streamers flying, proudly sailed
 To sacred Ilium, to the ports of Troy
 Bringing the hated wife of Menelaus,
 A foul disgrace to Castor, and a stain
 Dishonouring Eurotas. She hath slain
 Priam, the reverend sire of fifty children,
 And in this gulf of misery hath plunged
 The wretched Hecuba. My seat is now—

Ah, what a seat!—at Agamemnon's tent ;
 And I am led, in my old age am led
 A captive from my house, of its hoar hairs,
 Sad argument of grief, this head despoiled.
 But, O ye wretched wives of Trojans once
 Valiant in war, ye virgins, and ye brides
 Torn from your loves, Troy smokes : let us lament ;
 And, as the parent bird that o'er her young
 Swells her shrill notes, I will begin the strain,
 Not such as in my happier days I raised,
 Leaning on Priam's sceptre, when my foot
 In Phrygian measures, by the Graces taught,
 Led to th' immortal gods the festive dance.

HECUBA, CHORUS.

CHOR. Why, Hecuba, these cries, these cries of woe ?
 Why dost thou raise these loud laments ? I hear
 The wailings, which thou utterest, o'er these roofs
 Resound ; and terror strikes each Trojan dame,
 That in this tent bemoans her slavery.

HEC. O children, in the vessels of the Greeks
 The hand now grasps the oar. O wretched me,
 What will they do ? Will they with spreading sails
 Far from my country bear my hapless age ?

CHOR. I know not ; but my mind presages ill.
 Alas, alas, distracted with our woes,
 Soon we shall hear, "Ye Trojan dames, come forth.
 The Grecians are preparing their return."

HEC. Ah, send not now the mad Cassandra to me,
 That shame to Greece : her ravings to my woe
 Would add fresh woe. O Troy, unhappy Troy,
 Thou art no more. Unhappy they who leave thee,
 Unhappy are the living and the slain.

CHOR. Ah me ! With trembling foot I leave the tent
 Of Agamemnon, from thee, queen, to learn
 Whether the sentence of the Greeks be passed
 To kill me, wretched me ; or in the ships
 The sailors are prepared to plough the main.

HEC. Early, my child, my soul with terror struck,
Was I brought hither; from the Grecians now
A herald comes informing me to whom
I am assigned—ah wretched me!—a slave.

CHOR. Soon will thy lot be cast.

HEC. Ah me! Ah me!

CHOR. Me, miserable me, what Argive leads,
Or who of Phthia's vales, or of the isles
Encircled by the ocean, far from Troy?

HEC. To whom am I, unhappy, in what land
Assigned a slave, useless, worn out with age,
The wretched form of one that is no more,
A lifeless image on a monument?

To keep their gates will they assign my charge?
Or on their children shall my office be
T' attend, at Troy with royal honours graced?

CHOR. Ah, with what plaints thy miseries dost thou scan?

HEC. No more these hands in the Idæan looms
The shuttle with alternate cast shall throw:
No more my children's sportive youth I see;
Nor, as in youth, shall I to lighter toils
Be destined, or approach some Grecian's bed:
The night itself and fortune cheerless frowns.
But at Pirene's fount shall be my task,
My wretched task, to draw its sacred streams.

CHOR. Oh, to that happy country might we come,
O'er which th' illustrious Theseus held his reign!

HEC. But never to Therapnæ, hated town
Of Helen, seated where Eurotas whirls
His eddying stream; exposed my servile state
To Menelaus, who wasted sacred Troy.
The lovely tract, through which Penæus flows,
Delightful base, from which his awful height
Olympus rears, in wealth, so fame reports,
Abounds, and boasts its blooming fruitfulness.
This, next the honoured and divine domains
Where Theseus reigned, would be most pleasing to me.
Much have I heard of the Ætnæan coast
Sacred to Vulcan, to the Punic shore

That rises opposite, the mighty mother
 Of the Sicilian mountains, where the wreath
 Blooms ever fresh ; and of the neighbouring land,
 Sweet habitation in th' Ionian sea,
 Irriguous with the beauteous-flowing stream
 Of Crathis, which the yellow tresses gilds,
 And blessings from its sacred fountains pours
 Through a rich land, that boasts a generous race.

CHOR. But from the Grecian host a herald comes,
 Fraught with fresh tidings : hasty is his step.
 What brings he ? what announces ? For in truth
 We of the Dorian land e'en now are slaves.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TALT. Thou, Hecuba, hast seen Talthybius oft
 In Troy, a herald from the Grecian host
 In frequent intercourse : but now to thee,
 In past time not unknown, I come, and bring
 The public mandate, which concerns you all.

HEC. This, this, my friends, ye dames of Troy, long
 since
 This was my fear.

TALT. You are by lot assigned,
 If this was what you feared.

HEC. Alas, alas !
 To what Thessalian, or what Phthian town,
 Or to Cadmæan Thebes ? I pray thee tell me.

TALT. Singly to single chiefs are you allotted,
 And not together all.

HEC. To whom, to whom
 Am I appointed, say. What happy fate
 Awaits each Trojan dame ?

TALT. I can inform thee :
 But singly ask of each, not all at once.

HEC. The poor Cassandra, my unhappy daughter,
 Where falls her lot ?

TALT. Her, a selected prize,
 The royal Agamemnon hath received.

HEC. What ! For his Spartan spouse a slave ? Ah me !

TALT. No : but in secret to the nuptial bed.

HEC. The virgin of Apollo, whom the god
Radiant with golden locks allowed to live
In her pure vow of maiden chastity !

TALT. With love the raptured virgin smote his heart.

HEC. Cast from thee, O my daughter, cast away
Thy sacred wand, rend off the honoured wreaths,
The splendid ornaments that grace thy brows.

TALT. Is it not great to share a monarch's bed ?

HEC. But where is she, whom late you took from me,
Where is my daughter ?

TALT. Of Polyxena,
Or of whom else is this inquiry made ?

HEC. To whom is she allotted ?

TALT. At the tomb
Raised to Achilles it is hers to serve.

HEC. Unhappy me ! Have I brought forth a child
Doomed at a tomb to serve ? But tell me, friend.
What custom or what rite of Greece is this ?

TALT. Pronounce her happy : all with her is well.

HEC. What mean thy words ? Views she the sun's bright
beams ?

TALT. Her doth fate hold from every ill released.

HEC. What of Andromache, the wretched wife
Of helméd Hector ? Tell me what her fate ?

TALT. Her without lot Achilles' son receives.

HEC. And I, whose age-enfeebled limbs require
A staff, to whom am I assigned a slave ?

TALT. Thee hath Ulysses, king of Ithaca,
By lot obtained : to him thou art a slave.

HEC. Ah, let me beat this head, and rend these cheeks.
O miserable me ! I am enslaved
To a detested, an insidious foe,
A creeping viper, who with baleful bite
Impoisons justice ; one, whose double tongue
With glozing arguments from side to side
All things perverts, and turns to hostile hate
What was before most friendly. Mourn for me,

Ye Trojan dames, for I am wretched, sunk
 To the most abject fortune, woe is me,
 Totally sunk by this ill-fated lot.

CHOR. Thy fortune, venerable queen, I know ;
 But mine what Argive or what Greek commands ?

TALT. Go, ye attendants ; with what speed you may
 Conduct Cassandra hither ; I must give her
 To the king's hand. The other captives then,
 Each as allotted, lead to their new lords.—

But what is this ? Why flames the blazing torch
 Within ? What mean these Trojan dames ? To fire
 The inmost tent ? that, since the hour draws nigh
 When from this land they must perforce be borne
 To Argos, they may perish in the flames,
 Seeking to die ; ill brooks th' excessive love
 Of freedom woes like these. Open these doors,
 Open, lest what to these may give delight,
 And grief to Greece, may to my blame be charged.

HEC. It is not so ; they raise no flames ; but forth
 My frenetic child, Cassandra, rushes to us.

CASSANDRA, HECUBA, TALTHYBIUS, CHORUS.

CASS. Wave the torch, and spread its light ;
 Thus I bear it blazing bright,
 Rev'rence and illumine the shrine ;
 Royal Hymen, it is thine.
 See, the happy bridegroom see,
 And the happy bride in me :
 At Argos I shall mount the nuptial bed,
 Royal Hymen, by thee led.
 Since thy tears, my mother, flow,
 And thy heart is rent with woe,
 For my slaughtered father's fate,
 And my country's ruined state,
 At my spousals I will raise
 A fire shall shine, shall flame, shall blaze,
 And, royal Hymen, on the bridal night
 Give to Hecate the light,

For a virgin's nuptial bands ;
 Sacred custom this demands.
 Nimbly let your feet advance,
 Quiv'ring high in festive dance,
 As if Priam's prosperous throne
 Bright with royal splendours shone.
 The choir is hallowed : with them, Phœbus, move :
 In thy sacred laurel grove
 Off'rings at thy shrine I lay,
 Hymen, 'tis my bridal day.
 Lead the dance, my mother, lead,
 Quick in varying motions tread,
 And, my gliding steps to grace,
 Light the mazy measure trace.
 To royal Hymen raise, O hallowed train,
 Raise the joy-announcing strain ;
 Hail the bride with songs of joy,
 Gorgeous-vested nymphs of Troy ;
 Hail the bridegroom, to my bed
 By the Fates' appointment led.

CHOR. Wilt thou not, queen, thy raving daughter hold,
 That she appear not 'midst the host of Greece
 Possessed with this indecent levity ?

HEC. O Vulcan, thou indeed the nuptial torch
 Of mortals bearest, but a baleful flame
 Dost thou now wave, and void of each fond hope.
 Alas, my daughter, little did I think
 That ever thou shouldst wed beneath the spear,
 Beneath the arms of Greece ! Give me the torch ;
 Ill it beseems thee frenetic thus, with step
 Thus wild, to bear its flame : nor to thy mind
 Have thy misfortunes brought more sober sense ;
 But, my poor child, thy state remains the same.
 Bear in the torches ; and, ye Trojan dames,
 For tears exchange her nuptial melody.

CASS. Mother, adorn my head ; for I have gained
 A conquest : in my nuptials with a king
 Rejoice. Come, lead me. If I go too slow,
 Push me by force ; for this is not Apollo.

Th' illustrious Agamemnon, king of Greece,
Weds me ; but in these nuptials he shall find
More woe than Paris when he wedded Helen ;
For I will kill him, and lay waste his house ;
Thus for my brothers' and my father's death
I will have vengeance : but no words of this :
I will say nothing of the axe, which goes
Into my neck, and that of others too ;
Nor of the contest where a mother bleeds
(This shall my nuptials raise) ; nor of the house
Of Atreus sunk in ruins : I will show
This city than the Grecians far more blest
(I feel th' inspiring god, but will awhile
Bid the prophetic fury cease to swell) :
They for one woman, and one fatal bed
Sought Helen, and lost thousands ; their wise chief
Himself, to gain what most the soul abhors,
Hath thrown away what most it loves, and given
The sweet domestic pleasures of his children
To win his brother's wife ; yet was she borne
Consentingly, not forcibly away.
When to Scamander's banks they came, they died ;
Nor from their country, or its high-tow'red towns,
Were they driven forth : those whom the sword destroyed
Their children saw no more, nor were their limbs
By their wives' hands in decent vestments wrapt,
But in a foreign land they lie. At home
Like desolation reigns : their widowed wives
Are dead ; their parents, childless, have in vain
Reared offspring in their houses ; not a son
Survives to pour libations at their tombs.
Such are the triumphs of this martial host.
Deeds of impurity are better hushed
In silence : never Muse be mine, to chaunt
What raises on the modest cheek a blush.
The Trojans, what is glory's brightest grace,
Died for their country : they, beneath the spear
Who fell, were by their friends borne home, and dead

Found in their native land a sepulchre,
Entombed by those from whom those rites were due.
But such, as fell not in the field, each day
Dwelt with their wives and children ; whilst the Greeks
Were strangers to that sweet society.
Mournful the fate of Hector seems to thee :
But weigh it well : he dies, among the brave
Esteemed the bravest ; this high fame the Greeks
By their arrival raised ; had they not come
The hero's virtues had remained obscure.
Paris espoused the daughter of high Jove ;
Had she not been his bride, he would at home
Have formed some mean alliance, unrenowned.
War then the man, whom prudence rules, will shun :
But if its flames are kindled, no mean crown
He wins who bravely for his country dies :
Not to act bravely is inglorious shame.
Therefore behoves thee, mother, not to wail
Thy country, or my bed ; for those to thee
Whose deeds have been most hostile, and to me,
I by my nuptials to the dust will bow.

CHOR. How sweetly at thy house's ills thou smilest,
Chaunting what haply thou wilt not show true !

TALT. But that Apollo hath with frenzy hurt
Thy sense, unpunished with such taunting speech
Thou shouldst not from this country send the chiefs.
But what commands respect, and is held high
As wise, is nothing better than the mean
Of no repute : for this most potent king
Of all the Grecians, the much honoured son
Of Atreus, is enamoured with his prize,
This frenetic raver. I am a poor man,
Yet would I not receive her to my bed.
For thee, since thou hast not thy perfect sense,
All thy reproaches on the Greeks and all
Thy praises of the Trojans, to the winds
I give to scatter them. But to the ships
Attend me, beauteous minion of our chief.

Thou, since Ulysses wills to lead thee with him,
Follow ; a virtuous lady shalt thou serve,
As they, who came to Ilium, speak her fame.

CASS. This is a busy slave. What one name suits
All heralds? The abhorrence of mankind,
Ye ministers of tyrants and of states,
And dost thou say that to Ulysses' house
My mother shall be led? Where are the words
Of Phœbus then, which say, by me made known,
Here she shall die? The rest revile I not :
But he, unhappy, knows not what a train
Of sufferings waits him, so that he shall deem
Mine and the Phrygians' ills, with his compared,
Treasures of gold : for after ten long years
To ten long years here wasted, he shall reach
His native land alone ; but visit first
The straits, amidst whose gulfs, that now disgorge
And now resorb the floods, Charybdis holds
Her terrible abode ; the blood-stained cave
Of the huge Cyclops, mountain savage, gorged
With flesh where life yet quivers ; Circe's isle,
Whose charmed cup transforms whoever taste
To swine ; tempestuous seas with wrecks o'erspread :
Men in the flow'ry Lotus who delight ;
The sacred heifers of the sun, whose flesh
Shall send forth lowings, to Ulysses sound
Of horror : to be brief, to Pluto's realms
Alive shall he descend : and from the waves
Escaped, returning to his country find
A thousand ills. But why repeat the toils
That wait Ulysses? Go, that I with speed
May wed a bridegroom in the shades below.
Thou, who in thought some glorious deed art now
Achieving, leader of the Grecian host,
Wretch, shall be buried wretchedly by night,
Not in the day ; and me, a livid corse,
Naked, cast out, the torrent floods shall leave
In their rough channels, nigh my bridegroom's tomb,
A prey to beasts, this priestess of Apollo.

Ye garlands of the gods, most dear to me,
 Prophetic ornaments, farewell : the feasts,
 In which I once delighted, are to me
 No more. Begone! I rend you from me. While
 I yet am chaste, I give them to the winds,
 To toss, to scatter them, prophetic king!
 Where is the leader's bark? How shall my foot
 Mount its tall sides? No longer shall thy sails
 Wait for the breathing gales; but thou shalt bear me
 A Fury, an Erinny, from this land.
 Farewell, my mother! Do not shed a tear.
 O my loved country, O my brother, sunk
 To the dark realms below, O father soon
 Shall you receive me; to your shades I come
 Triumphant from the ruin of the house
 Of Atreus, by whose sons we thus are fall'n!

HECUBA, CHORUS.

CHOR. Ye, who attend the aged Hecuba,
 Behold you not the queen, how to the ground
 Speechless she sinks? Shall not your hands with care
 Support her? Wretches, will you let her age
 Lie on the earth? Haste, raise her, upright raise her.

HEC. Forbear, ye virgins; what was pleasing once
 Pleases no more: here let me lie thus fall'n,
 A fall that suits what I have suffered, what
 I suffer, and shall suffer. O ye gods,
 Unkind associates I indeed invoke,
 Yet when affliction rends the anguished heart,
 We with becoming grace invoke the gods.
 First it is pleasing to me to recount
 My happier fortunes: thus my woes shall raise
 A stronger pity. Royal was my birth,
 And marriage joined me to a royal house;
 There I was mother of illustrious sons,
 Sons with superior excellence adorned
 Above the Phrygians; such no Trojan dame,
 No Grecian, no Barbarian e'er could boast:

These I saw fall'n beneath the Grecian spear,
And laid my severed tresses on their tomb.
For Priam too, their father, flow'd my tears ;
His fate I heard not from report, but saw it,
These eyes beheld him murdered at the altar
Of guardian Jove ; my vanquished city storm'd ;
My daughters, whom I nurtured high in hope
Of choosing honourable nuptials for them,
For others nurtured from my hands are rent ;
There is no hope that me they e'er shall see,
And I shall never see them more. Th' extreme,
The height of my afflicting ills is this :
I to some house shall go a hoary slave,
To some base task, most irksome to my age,
Assigned ; or at their doors to keep the keys
A portress shall I wait, the mother once
Of Hector, or to labour at the mill ;
For royal couches, on the ground to make
My rugg'd bed ; and o'er these worn-out limbs
The tattered remnant of a worn-out robe,
Unseemly to my happier state, to throw.
Ah, for one woman's nuptial bed, what woes
Are mine, and will be mine ! Alas, my child,
My poor Cassandra, madd'ning with the gods,
By what misfortunes is thy purity
Defiled ? And where art thou, Polyxena,
O thou unhappy ! Thus of all my sons
And all my daughters, many though they were,
Not one is left to soothe my miseries.
Why do you raise me, virgins ? With what hope
Lead you this foot, which once with stately port
In Troy advanced, but now a slave, to seek
A bed of leaves strewn on the ground, a stone
My pillow, there to lie, to perish there
Wasted with tears ? Then deem not of the great
Now flourishing as happy, ere they die.

CHORUS.

Strophe.

For Troy, O Muse, attune thy woe,
 And steep in tears the solemn-breathing song ;
 To such a theme such notes belong :
 For Troy unwonted measures now shall flow,
 Shall tell my sorrows, how beneath
 The guileful fabric, big with death,
 I fell a captive to the Argive spear :
 When from th' enormous beast, that hides
 A host within its caverned sides,
 With golden trappings hung around,
 Rolled to the gates with thund'ring sound,
 Issuing in arms the chiefs of Greece appear.
 But from the rock of Ilium high
 With shouts the blinded Phrygians cry,
 "Go, from your toils released, ye sons of Troy.
 This hallowed fabric draw with joy :
 To Jove-born Pallas place the pledge divine
 In favoured Ilium's rampired shrine."
 The young, the old promiscuous throng,
 And roll with songs of joy the fraudulent pest along.

Antistrophe.

From every street with eager pace,
 The pines of Ida flaming in their hands,
 Rush to the gates the Trojan bands,
 To Pallas in her favoured tower to place
 The fabric formed with Argive wiles,
 The pest which Phrygia's state beguiles,
 The heaven-framed present of the unyoked steed :
 With twisted cables thrown around
 They drag it o'er the fatal ground,
 Like a new bark in gallant state,
 To Pallas in her rocky seat.
 To toil and joy the shades of night succeed :

The Libyan pipe swells clear and high,
 Attuned to Phrygian melody ;
 To the light notes in many an airy round
 The frolic virgins nimbly bound,
 And joyful as they dance their voices raise,
 Sweet warbling spritely-fancied lays.
 In every house the blazing fires
 Sink at the hour of rest, and their swart light expires.

Epode.

Then too my vaulted roofs around
 The voice of joy was heard to sound ;
 We to Diana raised the strain,
 Chaste huntress-queen that leads the mountain train.
 Sudden a wild tumultuous roar
 With shudd'ring horror strikes our souls :
 Loud and more loud the city o'er
 To Pergamus it deep'ning rolls :
 My dear, dear infants round their mother prest,
 And grasped with trembling hands my vest.
 Now, by Minerva's guardian care,
 Rushed from its ambush the imprisoned war :
 Round the polluted altars slain
 In blood are rolled the sons of Troy :
 O'er the rich rooms, once scenes of joy,
 Horror and desolation reign,
 And bear to Greece, her victor sons t' adorn,
 The crown from weeping Phrygia borne.

HECUBA, ANDROMACHE, CHORUS.

CHOR. See, royal lady, on this foreign car
 Andromache is borne ; and at her breast,
 Which trembles to the motion of the wheels,
 Astyanax, the son of Hector, laid.

HEC. Whither, unhappy woman, art thou borne,
 Placed in that car beside the brazen arms

Of Hector, and the spoils by the strong spear
 Rent from the Phrygians? Distant far from Troy
 In Phthia these the proud son of Achilles
 Shall hang, to crown the temples of the gods.

ANDR. My Grecian lords force me away.

HEC. Ah me!

ANDR. Why dost thou heave my sighs?

HEC. Ah wretched me!

ANDR. That for my sorrows—

HEC. Seest thou this, O Jove!

ANDR. And my distresses rise.

HEC. Alas, my children!

ANDR. We were thy children once.

HEC. My state is fall'n;

Troy too is fall'n.

ANDR. Unhappy!

HEC. And my sons,

My noble sons are fall'n.

ANDR. Alas, alas!

HEC. Alas my ills, the miserable fate

ANDR. Of ruined Troy.

HEC. Which smokes upon the ground.

ANDR. Oh, wouldst thou come, my husband!

HEC. Thou dost call

My son, unhappy, in the realms below!

ANDR. Thou bulwark of thy wife!

HEC. And thou, whose soul

Swelled high against the Grecians, Priam, once

The aged father of my children, lead,

O lead me to the gloomy realms below!

CHOR. These griefs are great.

HEC. And dreadful are the ills

We suffer.

CHOR. For thy ruined country: woes,

Such is the pleasure of the gods, succeed

To woes. Nor hath thy son escaped from death,

Who for a bed abhorred hath sunk in dust

The towers of Troy, and near the rampired rock

Of Pallas stretched the bodies of the slain,

Welt'ring in blood, by vultures to be torn :
And Troy is bowed beneath the servile yoke.

HEC. My country, my unhappy country, thee
Wasted I weep.

CHOR. Thou seest its wretched end.

HEC. And thee my house, where oft I was a mother.

CHOR. Unhappy children, wasted is your town,
Your mother desolate.

HEC. What strains are these,
What strains of woe ! Tears after tears stream down
In sorrow for my house : the dead forgets
His sorrows, and his tears stream down no more.

CHOR. How sweet are tears to those who suffer ills ?
Sweet are the strains of lamentation, sweet
The mournful Muse that tunes her notes to woe.

ANDR. Mother of Hector, that brave chief, whose spear
Once pierced the Grecian squadrons, seest thou this ?

HEC. I see th' appointment of the gods ; the low
How they exalt, and hurl the mighty down.

ANDR. I, with my child, am led away, the spoil
Of war : th' illustrious progeny of kings,
O fatal change, is sunk to slavery.

HEC. Necessity is rig'rous : from me late
Cassandra went, torn from my arms by force.

ANDR. Alas ! Another Ajax then, it seems,
Thy daughter finds : but thou hast other ills.

HEC. Unmeasured and unnumbered are my ills :
Afflictions with afflictions still contend.

ANDR. Polyxena, thy daughter, is no more :
Devoted to Achilles, on his tomb
An offering to the lifeless dead she fell.

HEC. Ah wretched me ! This was the dread event
Talthybius hinted to me in dark terms.

ANDR. I saw her, and descending from this car
Wrapt the vests round her, and bewailed her dead.

HEC. Alas, my daughter, what unhallowed rites !
Alas, alas ! unseemly hast thou perished.

ANDR. She perished, as she perished : but her fate
In death is happier far than mine who live.

HEC. 'Tis not one thing, my child, to live or die :
The living hopes await, the dead are nothing.

ANDR. Hear, that with pleasure I may touch thy soul.
Not to be born, I argue, and to die,
Are equal : but to die is better far
Than to live wretched ; for he knows not grief
Who hath no sense of misery : but to fall
From fortune's blessed height, to the low state
Of abject wretchedness, distracts the soul
With the keen sense of former happiness.
Like as the light of life she ne'er had seen,
Polyxena is dead, and of her ills
Knows nothing : I, who aimed at glorious rank,
And reached my aim, from fortune widely erred :
All that to prudent matrons gives a grace,
In Hector's house was ever my employ.
First, for in this to women blame is due,
Charged or not charged, to such as rove abroad,
I checked this wand'ring humour, and remained
At home, within my house ; nor gay discourse
Of females there admitted, but intent
On ordering what was useful, deemed myself
Well occupied. With silence of the tongue
And cheerfulness of look I entertained
My husband : where my province to command
I knew, and where to yield obedience to him.
The fame of this was bruited through the host
Of Greece, and wrought my ruin ; for the son
Of fierce Achilles, soon as I was made
A captive, wished to take me as his wife,
Doomed in the house of those, whose slaught'ring hands
I rue, to be a slave. From my fond heart
Could I rend Hector, and expand my breast
To this new husband, faithless to the dead
Should I appear : if I disdain his love,
I shall excite the malice of my lords.
Short time, they say, to a new lord disarms
A woman's hate : but her my soul abhors,
Who for new nuptials slights her former husband,

And loves another : e'en the social steed,
 Divided from its fellow, draws the yoke
 Reluctant ; yet the beast, by nature formed
 Less excellent, nor speech nor reason knows.
 O my loved Hector, I was blest in thee,
 Thou wast the lord of all my wishes, great
 In understanding, noble birth, and wealth,
 And valour : from my father's house thou first
 Ledd'st me a virgin to the bridal bed :
 Now thou are perished, and I mount the bark
 For Greece, a captive to the servile yoke.
 Hath not the death then of Polyxena,
 Whom thou bewailest, lighter ills than mine !
 For not to me e'en Hope, which still is left
 To all of mortal race, remains ; no thought
 That better fortune e'er will visit me
 With pleasing expectation cheats my mind.

CHOR. Alike our suff'rings ; and thou teachest me,
 Thine own ills wailing, my unhappy state.

HEC. I never entered bark ; my knowledge springs
 From what in picture I have seen, or heard
 From others. When a storm, whose moderate force
 May be sustained, the curling billows swells,
 With prompt alacrity the sailors toil
 To guide the vessel safe ; one at the helm
 His station takes, one tends the sails, one plies
 The pump : but if the wild tempestuous sea
 Mocks their vain efforts, they to fortune yield,
 And leave her to the rolling of the waves.
 So fares it now with me : with various ills
 Encompassed I am silent, give them way,
 And check my vain complaints ; for from the gods
 This cruel storm o'erpowers me. But do thou,
 O my loved child, on Hector's fate no more
 Fix thy sad thoughts ; not all thy streaming tears
 Will save him : honour then thy present lord,
 And with thy gentle manners win his soul ;
 This doing, thou shalt cheer thy friends, and train
 This child, my Hector's son, to manhood, strong

To succour Troy ; that sons from him may spring,
 Who shall again the towers of Ilium raise,
 And once more to its state restore the town.
 But trouble yet perchance from trouble springs ;
 This Grecian officer I see again
 Advancing to us, bearing new commands.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, ANDROMACHE, CHORUS.

TALT. Thou wife of Hector, of the Phrygians once
 The bravest, do not hate me : for my tongue
 Unwillingly will utter what the Greeks
 Decree and the Pelopidæ command.

ANDR. Why with this tragic proem dost thou greet me ?

TALT. It is decreed thy son—how shall I speak it !

ANDR. What ? that he have not the same lord with me ?

TALT. None of the Grecians e'er shall be his lord.

ANDR. To leave him here, a relic of the Trojans ?

TALT. I cannot utter, but with pain, thy ills.

ANDR. I praise thy modest awe, speak thou but good.

TALT. This great ill thou must know : they slay thy son.

ANDR. This than my marriage is a greater ill.

TALT. Ulysses 'midst th' assembled Greeks prevails.

ANDR. Ah, these are ills too grievous to be borne.

TALT. Not to bring up a valiant warrior's son.

ANDR. Thus for his own sons may his voice prevail !

TALT. But that they cast him from the towers of Troy.

In this sad trial be thy prudence shown :

Withhold him not, with noble fortitude

Support thy griefs : nor think that thou hast power,

Where all thou canst is nothing. Thou canst find

No succour : it behoves thee weigh this well.

Low lies thy city, low thy husband lies,

Thou art a captive : we have force enough

Against one woman. Wish not then to strive ;

Let no indecent, no spiteful deed

Dishonour thee. Nor would I have thee vent

Thy curses on the Greeks ; for shouldst thou speak

What shall disgust the troops, thy son perchance

May lie unpitied, and denied the rites
Of sepulture : but if thou bear thine ills
In silence and with fortitude, his corse
Will not be left unburied, and thyself
Wilt from the Grecians find more courtesy.

ANDR. O my dear child, my fondly cherished son,
Thou by the foes shalt die, ah me ! and leave
Thy wretched mother. Yes, thy father's worth
Shall kill thee, which to others is a shield
Yielding protection. In an evil hour
For thee thy father's virtues are renowned.
O my unhappy bed, and nuptial rites,
Which led me to the house of Hector, there
Not to be mother of a son to fall
A victim by the Grecians, but to reign
Lord of the fruitful Asia ! Dost thou weep,
My son ? Hast thou a sense of thy ill fate ?
Why dost thou clasp me with thy hands, why hold
My robes, and shelter thee beneath my wings
Like a young bird ? No more my Hector comes
Returning from the tomb, he grasps no more
His glitt'ring spear, bringing protection to thee .
No more thy father's kindred, or the force
Of the brave Phrygians : but from Ilium's height,
By merciless hands hurled headlong, shalt thou fall,
And crushed breathe out thy life. O soft embrace,
And to thy mother dear ! O fragrant breath !
In vain I swathed thy infant limbs, in vain
I gave thee nurture at this breast, and toiled
Wasted with care. If ever, now embrace,
Now clasp thy mother, throw thine arms around
My neck, and join thy cheek, thy lips to mine.
Why, O ye Grecians, studying barb'rous ills,
Why will you kill my son ? He hath not wronged you.
Daughter of Tyndarus, but not of Jove,
From many fathers must I deem thee sprung,
From Vengeance first, then Hate, from Slaughter, Death,
And all the ills earth breeds : for ne'er from Jove
Durst I pronounce thy birth. Thou fatal pest

To many Phrygians, and to many Greeks,
 Perdition seize thee ! By thy beauteous eyes
 Thou vilely hast destroyed the realms of Troy.
 Here, take him, bear him, hurl him from the height,
 If ye must hurl him, feast upon his flesh :
 For from the gods hath ruin fall'n on us :
 We have no power to save my child from death.
 Cover this wretched body, wrap it close,
 Cast it into your galley ; for I come
 To glorious nuptials, having lost my son.

CHOR. Unhappy Troy, what numbers hast thou lost,
 Through one vile woman, and her hateful bed !

ANDR. Forbear, my son, forbear thy fond embrace
 Of thy afflicted mother. Go, ascend
 The summit of those towers, thy father's once,
 There leave thy life, for so hath Greece decreed.
 Take him : fit herald of this deed is he,
 Who knows no touch of pity or of shame,
 But rather to your mandate gives assent.

HEC. O child, O son of my unhappy son,
 We of thy life, beyond our thoughts, are left,
 I, and thy mother ! What can I, poor boy,
 What can I do for thee, but smite this head,
 And beat this breast ? That we can give thee, that
 Is in our power. Ah me, what griefs for Troy
 I suffer, what for thee ! Is there an ill
 We have not ? What is wanting to the woes,
 Which all the dreadful band of Ruin brings ?

HECUBA, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Strophe 1.

Thou lord of Salamis, where love
 The honey-gath'ring bees to rove,
 Thou, who didst hold thy island-seat
 Around whose rocks the billows beat,
 Whose hallowed mounds first boast to show
 Ranged down their sloping sides the olive bough,

Of blue-eyed Pallas heavenly crown,
 And glory of her polished town :
 Thou with Alcmena's son, whose hand
 Grasped the strong bow, heldst high command.
 Thy soul, like his, to glorious action bold,
 To Troy, O Telamon, to Troy,
 Our rampired city to destroy,
 Thou camst, from Greece thou camst in times of old.

Antistrophe 1.

When, raging for the steeds denied,
 Of Greece he led the blooming pride ;
 Where Simois pours his beauteous flood
 The hero's barks at anchor stood ;
 Dauntless he leaped upon the strand,
 His bow and arrows grasping in his hand :
 Laomedon with wild affright
 Marked how they winged their slaught'ring flight.
 Though Phœbus squared each polished stone,
 The high-raised rampires are o'erthrown ;
 Around the ruddy flames devouring rise,
 And Troy a heap of ruin lies :
 Twice raged the spear around her walls,
 And twice with thund'ring sound the city falls.

Strophe 2.

In vain then at the golden bowls of Jove
 Hast thou thy honoured place,
 Thy steps composed with sweetest grace,
 Presenting at the feast divine
 To heaven's high king the sparkling wine ;
 Vain, Dardan boy, thy glorious charge above ;
 For war and wasting flames destroy,
 Sunk to the ground, thy native Troy.
 The sea-washed shores around
 Loud cries and shrieks resound,
 As for her young when the poor bird complains,
 And anguish swells her strains :

Their husbands some, and some their sons deplore,
 Their mothers some, with age that bow,
 Lament with pious woe.
 Thy brimmed baths are now no more,
 A silent waste the circus lies,
 Once thy loved scene of manly exercise,
 But thou the throne of Jove beside,
 Blooming in all youth's roseate pride,
 Sweetly serene dost woo each grace
 To give new beauties to thy face :
 Yet Priam's realms lie waste, a desert drear,
 Beneath the Grecian spear.

Antistrophe 2.

O Love, O Love, that to the seats of Troy,
 Thy gently glowing fire
 Kindling in heavenly breasts desire,
 Didst once direct thy pleasing flight,
 To what a splendid, stately height,
 Whilst gods her dear alliance sought with joy,
 Didst thou exalt her glorious fame ?
 Now must thou bear another name ;
 No more joy-kindling Love,
 But the reproach of Jove.
 This fatal morn, with silver-waving wings
 Which light to mortals brings,
 Hath seen destruction wide its ravage spread,
 Hath seen the towers of Troy laid low
 Beneath th' insulting foe :
 With offspring yet to bless her bed
 Her husband from this land she bore ;
 The favoured youth yon orient regions o'er
 Her four ethereal coursers bear,
 Placed by her in the golden car.
 Hence to thy country Hope might rise,
 Graced with the favour of the skies :
 But all the love, which touched the gods with joy,
 Shrinks from the aid of Troy.

MENELAUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

MEN. O thou bright-beaming radiance of this sun,
 Helen in thee, my wife, these hands shall seize,
 After the many toils I have sustained,
 I, and the Grecian host. I came to Troy,
 Not for a woman, as some lightly think,
 But armed with vengeance 'gainst the man who broke
 Each hospitable law, and from my house
 Bore, as his spoil, my wife. But the just gods
 He hath his meed, he and his country fall'n
 Beneath the arms of Greece. The Spartan dame,
 For not with pleasure can my tongue pronounce
 Her name who was my wife, once was, I come
 To lead from hence : for in this tent, among
 The other captive dames of Troy enrolled,
 Is she detained. For they, whose toiling spear
 Achieved her, have presented her to me
 To kill her, or, if such my will, to Greece
 Alive to lead her : but my purpose is
 The death of Helen to forbear at Troy,
 And bear her in my stout bark o'er the seas
 To Greece ; and there, in vengeance for my friends
 Who beneath Ilium died, to give her death.
 But, ye attendants, go into the tent,
 Bring her forth, drag her by the hair with blood
 Deeply polluted : when the fav'ring winds
 Breathe in our sails, to Greece shall she be sent.

HEC. O Jove, who rulest the rolling of the earth,
 And o'er it hast thy throne, who'er thou art,
 The ruling mind, or the necessity
 Of nature, I adore thee. Dark thy ways
 And silent are thy steps ; to mortal man
 Yet thou with justice all things dost ordain.

MEN. Why to the gods dost thou renew thy vows ?

HEC. I praise thy resolution, Menelaus,
 If thou shalt kill thy wife. But fly her sight :
 She captivates the eyes of men, takes towns,

Sets houses all on fire ; such blandishments
 She hath t' allure the soul ; I know her well,
 Thou knowst her, and all they that suffer by her.

HELENA, MENELAUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

HEL. This is a prelude which may well cause fear ;
 For by thy servants, Menelaus, by force
 I from the tent am dragged. But little wants
 T' assure me that I am detested by thee.
 Yet I would ask thee, by the states of Greece
 And thee touching my life what is decreed.

MEN. Justice hath not pronounced fixed sentence on thee ;
 But all the host of Greece, whom thou hast wronged,
 Give thee to me, and thou by me shalt die.

HEL. May I have leave 'gainst this to urge my plea,
 That, if I die, not justly I shall die ?

MEN. Not to hold converse came I, but to kill thee.

HEC. Yet hear her, Menelaus, nor let her die,
 Her bland excuse not urged : but to her plea
 Let me reply, for of the ills in Troy
 Thou nothing knowst ; but when I sum them all,
 From death no refuge shall be left to her.

MEN. This requires leisure ; yet if she would speak,
 She is allowed : but let her know thy words
 Gain her this leave ; no grace to her I grant.

HEL. Let me or well or ill appear to speak,
 Thou no reply wilt haply deign me, deemed [*to MENELAUS*]
 An enemy : yet to the crime, of which
 I know thou wilt accuse me, I will make [*to HELENA*]
 Reply ; and to thy charge my pleas oppose,
 'Gainst thee my charge. She first, then, to these ills
 Gave birth, when she gave Paris birth ; and next
 The aged Priam ruined Troy and thee,
 The infant not destroying, at his birth
 Denounced a baleful firebrand. Hear from thence
 What followed. 'Twixt the rival goddesses
 Paris was judge. From Pallas was his meed
 To lead the Phrygian arms, and conquer Greece ;

From Juno, if to her his voice adjudged
The prize, to hold o'er Asia and the bounds
Of Europe his wide empire : but, my form
Extolling, Venus promised to his arms
To give me, if in beauty she surpassed
The other goddesses. Mark now th' event.
The prize is given to Venus; and so far
My nuptials profit Greece : you are not fall'n
Beneath Barbarians or a tyrant's sway,
Nor to protect your country stand in arms.
I, in what Greece is happy, am undone,
Sold for my beauty, and with cruel taunts
Reviled for what my head deserves a crown.
But thou wilt say that to an obvious charge
I have not yet replied, that from thy house
I fled by stealth. Her son, for ruin born,
Or Paris called or Alexander, came,
And brought no feeble goddess in his train :
Him, thou most worthless, leaving in thy house,
From Sparta didst thou hoist thy sails for Crete.
Well, what ensued of thee I will not ask,
But of myself : what could induce my thought,
My country for a stranger, and my house
Betrayed, to follow him ? Thy vengeance rouse
Against the goddess, and be thou than Jove
More potent ; he o'er other gods bears rule,
But is her slave : I then may pardon find.
But hence against me thou mayst urge a charge
Of specious argument : When Paris died,
And low in earth was laid, behoved me then,
Since by no god my nuptials then were wrought,
To leave his house, and to the Grecian ships
To come. On this I earnestly was bent ;
Witness, ye guards who kept the gates, and you
Who stationed on the walls held careful watch,
How oft you found me from the battlements
With ropes attempting to slide down by stealth :
But this new husband seizing me by force,
Deiphobus, the Trojans much averse,

Held me his wife. How then can justice doom me
 To die? With justice how can I be slain
 By thee, my husband, since he wedded me
 By force? Thus from my house was I a slave
 Sold for the prize of conquest. If thou aim
 T' exceed the gods in power, the thought is folly.

CHOR. Defend thy children and thy country, queen ;
 Refute her glozing speech. Her words are fair,
 Her actions foul. In this much danger lies.

HEC. The goddesses my voice shall first defend,
 And show that she unjustly charges blame
 On them. For Juno never will I deem,
 Or virgin Pallas, to such frenzy sunk,
 That Argos to Barbarians she would sell,
 Or Pallas to the Phrygians e'er enslave
 Her favoured Athens, who in sportive mood
 And dainty dalliance to Ida came,
 For form contesting. Whence this strong desire
 In royal Juno of superior charms ?
 Was it to win a greater lord than Jove ?
 Did Pallas, of her father who had asked
 To keep her virgin purity unsoiled,
 Flying connubial rites, aim now t' obtain
 The nuptials of some god ? Forbear to charge
 These goddesses with folly, to set off
 Thy own misdeeds ; no credence with the wise
 Wilt thou acquire. But Venus, thou hast said
 (High subject this for laughter), with my son
 Came to the house of Menelaus. At rest
 In heaven remaining, could she not have brought her,
 And e'en Amyclæ, had she pleased, to Troy ?
 My son was with surpassing beauty graced ;
 And thy fond passion, when he struck thy sight,
 Became a Venus : for each foolish fondness
 To mortals is a Venus, and the soul
 Bereaves of reason. When thine eyes beheld him
 Glitt'ring in rich barbaric vests and gold,
 Thy passions were to madness soon inflamed,
 At Argos little hadst thou been with wealth

Acquainted. Quitting Sparta, thou hadst hope
The Phrygian state, flowing with gold, would yield
Thy proud expense supplies ; nor could the house
Of Menelaus within its narrow walls
Give thy insulting vanities free scope.
Well, let that pass. My son, thou sayst, by force
Bore thee away. What Spartan of that force
Was sensible ? With what cries didst thou call
Castor, thy brother, to thy aid, then strong
In manhood's prime, then living, to the stars
Not then exalted ? When thou camest to Troy,
And, following close, the Grecians, raged the spear
In conflict fierce ; whene'er his arms obtained
Aught of advantage, Menelaus thy praise
Extolled, to grieve my son in that his love
Met with a potent rival : if success
Favoured the Trojans, he was nothing then.
Thine eyes were fixed on Fortune ; this thy care,
To follow her ; to Virtue thou wouldst pay
No homage. Yet with ropes didst thou attempt,
Such is thy plea, down from the walls to slide
By stealth, as if detained against thy will :
By whom wast thou surprised in act to fix
The pendent rope or point the sharpened sword ?
This would a woman of a gen'rous soul,
Who sorrowed for her husband lost, have done.
Yet much did I admonish thee, and oft,
" Leave, O my daughter, leave us : other wives
My sons shall wed : I to the Grecian ships
Will send thee secretly, that war no more
'Twixt Greece and us may rage." To this thy heart
Was much averse ; still in thy husband's house
Thy insolence of grandeur wouldst thou hold,
Imperious still from thy barbaric train
Claim prostrate adoration : there thy pride
Found rich supplies ; from thence didst thou come forth
Gorgeously vested, and the same bright sky
View with thy husband, O detested wretch,
When it became thee with thy garments rent,

Humble, and cow'ring, and thy tresses shorn,
 To have appeared, and for thy former faults
 To veil thy shameless pride with modesty.
 But, Menelaus, that thou mayst know what end
 My words would have, give Greece a glorious crown
 By killing her, and this thy law confirm
 To other women, "She who dares betray
 Her husband, faithless to his bed, shall die."

CHOR. Oh, for the honour of thy ancestors,
 And of thy house, punish thy wife. From Greece
 Take this vile woman, this reproach, away ;
 And show thy gen'rous spirit to thy foes.

MEN. In this thy sentiment accords with mine,
 That willingly she left my house, and sought
 A foreign bed ; and, to set off her plea,
 Is Venus introduced. Go, where with stones
 Thou shalt be crushed : and in one hour repay
 The Grecians for their tedious toils, by death,
 That thou mayst learn ne'er to disgrace me more.

HEL. Low at thy knees a suppliant I beg thee,
 To me impute not what the gods have done
 Amiss. Ah, do not kill me ; pardon me !

HEC. Thy brave associates in this wasteful war,
 Whom she hath slain, I beg thee for their sake,
 And for my children's, do not thou betray.

MEN. Forbear, age-honoured lady ; for of her
 I have no heed. You, who attend me, hence
 To the bark bear her : she shall sail for Greece.

HEC. Let her not enter the same bark with thee.

MEN. Why ? Is the freight more heavy than before ?

HEC. He is no lover, who not always loves.

MEN. That every thought of love may be discharged,
 Thy will shall be complied with : the same bark
 With me she shall not enter : not amiss
 Is thy monition. When she comes to Greece,
 For her vile deeds as vilely shall she die,
 And teach all other women to be chaste,
 No easy lesson : yet her death with fear
 Shall strike their folly, be they worse than she.

HECUBA, CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Strophe I.

So, to the Grecian arms a prey,
 The temple Ilium's height that crowned,
 The altar breathing odours round,
 O Jove, dost thou betray ;
 The flames of holy sacrifice,
 The clouds of incense wreathing to the skies.
 The towers of Pergamus that rose
 A sacred rampire 'gainst the foes,
 The darksome, ivy-vested woods,
 The woods that wave on Ida's brow,
 Down whose steep sides the cool translucent floods
 In mazy channels flow,
 The height, which first the sun's bright ray
 Impurples with the orient beams of day.

Antistrophe I.

Ah, banished is each solemn rite ;
 The sacred choirs with tuneful song,
 Echoing thy hollow rocks among,
 No more shall charm the night :
 No more thy summits shall behold
 The forms of gods that breathe in sculptured gold :
 On thee the full-orbed moon no more
 Shall Phrygia's hallowed sports restore.
 O king, in yon ethereal skies
 High-throned who holdst thy sov'reign state,
 Will in thy soul no gentle pity rise,
 For Troy's unhappy fate,
 Sunk to the dust her towered head
 As wide the raging flames their ravage spread ?

Strophe 2.

Dear to my soul, my wedded lord,
 Fall'n, fall'n beneath the slaught'ring sword,
 Nor cleansing bath, nor decent tomb
 Was thine, but in the Stygian gloom
 Wanders thy melancholy ghost.
 But me the bark that ploughs the main,
 Winged with her swelling sails, shall bear
 To Argos famed for steeds that whirl the car :
 Where by the lab'ring Cyclops rise
 The rampired walls that brave the skies.
 My children, now a friendless train,
 Wailing with sighs and tears their fate,
 Call on their mother in the gate :
 Their mother from their eyes the Grecian host
 In the black vessel bear away,
 And dash with oars the foaming sea ;
 To sacred Salamis they sweep,
 Or where the Isthmus o'er the deep
 Stretches its head, and views with pride
 An ocean rolling 'gainst each side ;
 Where Pelops in the rocky strait
 Fixed in old times his royal seat.

Antistrophe 2.

On the detested bark, the waves
 In the wide ocean when she braves
 May the loud thunder's deep'ning roar
 Fierce its tempestuous fury pour ;
 And, kindled by Idæan Jove,
 The forked lightning's bick'ring flame,
 In haughty triumph as she rides,
 Fall on her deck, and pierce her rifted sides :
 For me from Ilium, bathed in tears,
 From my loved country far she bears
 A slave to some proud Grecian dame.

Reflecting Helen's winning grace
 The golden mirror there hath place,
 At which the virgins joy their charms t' improve.
 Ne'er may she reach the Spartan shore,
 Her household gods ne'er visit more,
 Through Pitane ne'er proudly pass,
 Nor through Minerva's gates of brass ;
 For Greece, through all its wide domains,
 With shame her fatal marriage stains ;
 And gives through scenes of bitterest woe
 The streams of Simois to flow.

Alas ! In quick succession o'er this land
 Ills roll on ill. Behold, ye Trojan dames
 Oppressed with woes, the dead Astyanax,
 Thrown by the ruthless Grecians from the towers.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TALT. One vessel, royal Hecuba, yet waits
 To plough the deep, the treasures that remain,
 Selected for Achilles' son, to bear
 To Phthia's shore : the youthful chief is gone,
 Informed of some calamities, which late
 Have fall'n on Peleus, that Acastus, son
 Of Pelias, hath driven him from his realms :
 On this with quicker speed, than if the time
 Allowed delay, he sailed, and with him bore
 Andromache, who from mine eyes wrung tears
 At her departure, for her country such
 Her mournful sighs, and such at Hector's tomb
 Her invocations : earnest her request
 To thee, that her dead child, who from the tower
 Fell and expired, thou in the earth wouldst lay,
 Thy Hector's son ; and this brass-plated shield,
 The terror of the Grecians, which his father
 Before his breast once raised ; that to the house
 Of Peleus, nay to the same chamber, where
 Andromache, the mother of this child,

Must mount the nuptial bed, she may not bear it,
To sorrow at its sight : but for the chest
Of cedar, for the marble tomb, in this
That thou wouldst bury him ; conjuring me
To give him to thy arms, that with what robes
And crowns thy present fortune yields thee means,
Thou her dead son wouldst grace, since she is gone,
And her lord's haste allowed her not to give
Her dear child to the tomb. When thou hast dressed
The body with what ornaments thou mayst,
The earth will we heap on him ; then we sail.
With thy best speed what is enjoined thee do :
From one toil I have freed thee ; passing o'er
Scamander's stream the body I have bathed,
And washed its wounds : but now I go to sink
Deep in the earth his place of sepulture,
That with more speed, with what thou hast in charge
My toil concurring, we may sail for Greece.

HECUBA, CHORUS.

HEC. Place the orb'd shield of Hector on the ground,
A mournful sight, nor pleasing to mine eyes.
Why, O ye Grecians, who in arms excel
More than in gen'rous minds, why have you wrought,
Fearing this child, a slaughter to this hour
Unheard of? Was it lest the time might come
When he might raise fall'n Troy? There was no cause :
E'en when my Hector shone in prosperous arms,
And thousands with him shook the purple spear,
We perished : since the vanquished city sunk
Your prey, and in the war the Phrygian force
Was wasted, such an infant could you fear?
The fear, which reason disavows, I blame.
O thou most dear, how hapless was thy death?
Hadst thou in manhood's prime, the nuptial bed
Possessed, and high, imperial, godlike power,
Died for thy country, happy hadst thou been,
If aught of these be happy ; now, my child,

These to thine eyes presented and thy thought,
Thou didst not taste, nor aught of what thy house
Contained enjoy. Ah me, how wretchedly
Thy father's walls, the towers by Phœbus raised,
Have rent the crispéd ringlets from thy head,
Which thy fond mother cherished, nor withheld
The frequent kiss ! But now, the bones all crushed,
The slaughter riots, to abstain from words
Of harsher utt'rance. Ah, these hands, whose joints
Once the dear image of thy father's bore,
Now lie with loosened nerves ! O thou dear mouth,
Which utterdest many a spritely pleasantry,
How art thou mangled ? Where thy promise now
Which once thou madst me, hanging on my robes ?
" O mother, didst thou say, these clust'ring locks
Will I for thee cut off, and to thy tomb
With my companions bear them, hailing thee
With dear address." Such honours now to me
Thou dost not pay ; but thee, unhappy child,
Dead in thy early bloom, must I inter,
Old, of my country, of my children reft.
Ah me, are all my fond embraces, all
My nursing pains to lull thy infancy
To sleep, thus lost ? And on thy tomb what verse,
Thy death declaring, shall the bard inscribe ?
" This child the Grecians, for they feared him slew ;"
A verse recording the disgrace of Greece.
But of thy father's wealth though reft, his shield
Shall yet be thine, and on its plated brass
Thou shalt be laid in th' earth. O thou, the fence
Of Hector's nervous arm, thou hast, O shield,
Lost thy best guardian ! Yet how sweet to trace
The mark of his strong grasp, and on the verge
Of thy high orb the sweat, which from his brows
Amidst his toils oft dropt, when to his face
Close he applied thee ! For th' unhappy dead
Bring what of ornament is left us now ;
For not to splendour hath the god assigned
Our fortunes ; but of what I have to grace thee

Thou shalt receive. Of mortals him I deem
 Unwise, who, thinking that his state is blest,
 Joys as secure : for Fortune, like a man
 Distempered in his senses, this way now,
 Now that way leaps, inconstant in her course.
 No mortal knows stability of bliss.

CHOR. See, from the spoils of Troy their ready hands
 Have brought thee ornaments t' inwrap the dead.

HEC. Thee, O my child, not victor with the bow
 O'er thy compeers, nor on the spritely steed,
 Customs held high by Phrygia's manly sons,
 Unwearied in the chase, thy father's mother
 Decks with these ornaments from treasures once
 Thine own ; but Helen, by the gods abhorred,
 Hath rent them from thee, hath destroyed thy life,
 And all thy hapless house in ruins laid.

CHOR. O thou hast touched, O thou hast touched my heart,
 Thou, who wast once my city's mighty king !

HEC. Around thy limbs I wrap these gorgeous vests
 Of Phrygian texture, which thou shouldst have worn
 To grace thy nuptials with some noble bride
 Surpassing all the Asiatic dames.

And thou, with conquests glorious, mother once
 Of num'rous trophies, be thou crowned, loved shield
 Of Hector : for, not dying, with the dead
 Shalt thou be laid : with honours to be graced,
 Thee worthier than the arms of my new lord,
 The wise and base Ulysses, I esteem.

CHOR. Ah bitter lamentation ! Thee, O child,
 Thee shall the Earth receive : thou, mother, raise
 The cry that wails the dead.

HEC. My heart is rent.

CHOR. My heart too for thy dreadful ills is rent.

HEC. Thy wounds with hands medicinal—ah me,
 Vain service !—will I bind. Among the dead
 All that remains shall be thy father's care.

CHOR. Strike, strike thy head ; loud let thy hands resound.
 Ah me !

HEC. Ye females dearest to my soul !

CHOR. Give utterance, royal lady, to thy griefs.

HEC. The gods intended nothing, but my woes,
 And hate to Troy, most ruthless hate. In vain
 The victims at their altars then we slew.
 Yet from the heights above had not their power
 Encompassed us, and low beneath the earth
 Sunk us in ruin, by the Muse's voice
 We had not been recorded, nor the bards
 To latest ages given the lofty verse.
 Go, in the tomb lay the unhappy dead ;
 For, as becomes the shades below, with crowns
 He is adorned : but little it imports
 The dead, I think, if any shall obtain
 Magnificent and costly obsequies :
 Vain affectation of the living this.

CHOR. Ah the unhappy mother, in thy life
 Who wove her brightest hopes ! Though highly blest,
 As from illustrious parents thy rich stream
 Of blood deriving, dreadful was thy death.

HEC. Alas, alas ! Whom see I on the heights
 Of Ilium, blazing torches in their hands
 Waving ? Some fresh misfortune threatens Troy.

TALTHYBIUS, HECUBA, CHORUS.

TALT. Ye leaders of the bands, who have in charge
 To burn the town of Priam, from my voice
 Hear your instructions : idle in your hands
 No longer hold the flames, but hurl them, spread
 The wasting blaze, that, Ilium low in dust
 O'rtorned, we may with joy return to Greece.
 And you (for now to you my speech is turned),
 Ye Trojan dames, soon as the chiefs shall give
 The trumpet's sounding voice, go to the ships
 Of Greece, that from this country you may sail.
 And thou, unhappy lady worn with age,
 Follow : for from Ulysses these are come,
 To whom thy fortune sends thee hence a slave.

HEC. O miserable me ! This is the last,

This is the extreme bound of all my ills.
 I from my country go ; my city sinks
 In flames. But haste, my aged foot, though weak,
 That I may yet salute the wretched town :
 O Troy, that once 'mongst the barbaric states
 Stoodst high aspiring, thy illustrious name
 Soon shalt thou lose, for thee the raging flames
 Consume : and from our country us they lead,
 Now lead us slaves. Ye gods ! But why invoke
 The gods ? Invoked before they did not hear.
 But bear me, let me rush into the flames :
 For this would be the greatest glory to me,
 With thee my burning country now to die.

TALT. Unhappy, thou art frenetic with thine ills.
 Lead her, nay force her hence : for to his hand,
 Charged by Ulysses, I must give his prize.

HEC. Woe, woe, woe, woe, intolerable woe !
 O Jove, O sov'reign lord of Phrygia's realms,
 Almighty sire, seest thou our miseries,
 Unworthy of the race of Dardanus ?

CHOR. He sees, yet this magnificent city, now
 No city, is destroyed. Troy is no more.

HEC. O sight of horror ! Ilium blazes ; high
 O'er Pergamus the fiery deluge rolls,
 Rolls o'er the city, and its tow'rd red walls.

CHOR. The glories of my country, e'en as smoke
 Which on light wings is borne aloft in air,
 By war are wasted ; all her blazing domes
 Are sunk beneath the flames and hostile spear.

HEC. O my dear country, fost'ring land, who gavst
 My children nurture !

CHOR. O unhappy land !

HEC. Hear, O my children, know your mother's voice !

CHOR. With mournful voice dost thou address the dead ;
 And throwing on the ground thy aged limbs
 Dig with thy hands the earth. Behold, I bend
 My knee with thine, and grov'ling on the ground
 Call our unhappy husbands laid beneath.

HEC. Ah, we are borne, are dragged,

CHOR. O mournful voice !

HEC. Dragged to the house of slavery.

CHOR. From my country.

HEC. O Priam, Priam, thou indeed art fall'n,
Thou hast no tomb, no friend ; but of my woes
Thou knowst not ; for black death hath closed thine eyes ;
By impious slaughter is the pious fall'n !

CHOR. Ye temples of the gods, and thou, loved town,
Destruction from the flames and pointed spear
Is on you ; low on earth you soon will lie,
Your glories vanished ; for the dust, like smoke
On light wings mounting high, will leave my house
An undistinguished ruin ; e'en thy name,
My country, shall be lost. In different forms
Destruction comes on all. Troy is no more.

HEC. Heard you that dreadful crash ? It was the fall
Of Pergamus. The city rocks—it rocks,
And crushed beneath the rolling ruin sinks.
My limbs, my trembling limbs, hence, bear me hence.

TALT. Go to the wretched day of servile life.
Alas, unhappy city ! But from hence
Go, to the Grecian ships advance thy steps.

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