

certain that we miss altogether much which to the playwright was important. It is scarcely necessary to point out, what opportunities are given in this scene and those that follow for effective contrasts of action between those who are and those who are not in the secret.

Second Stasimon (vv. 379—480). The elders, avoiding the topic of the alleged victory, pursue their reflexions upon the sin of Paris, and all the misery thereby caused to the princes and people of Argos, misery of which the end is yet obscure. The people are weary of their sufferings, and their anger, malignantly fomented, threatens the gravest danger; nor can the friends of the king appeal with a clear conscience to the favour of heaven. They fear an insurrection. Triumph and conquest they would gladly exchange for the security of their own freedom¹.

Their doubts still increasing, the elders in a brief *lyrical dialogue* are discussing not without contempt the alleged evidence for the victory, when they observe the approach of the herald and other signs of an arrival (vv. 481—507). Their hope that 'what is now happily believed may be happily increased', is echoed in a very different sense by those to whom it is addressed.

The effect of the situation here much depends on the presence face to face of the elders and the objects of their suspicion. On the question whether one of the bystanders speaks, see on vv. 505—507.

Second Scene in Dialogue (vv. 508—685). The Herald, The Elders, Conspirators, and Clytaemnestra. The herald relates the destruction of Troy, the arrival of the king, and the storm.

Almost everything in the action of this scene has been sufficiently described in the preceding narrative. The queen is summoned from the palace and comes hastily to put an end to the dangerous conversation which has commenced. The abruptness of her entrance and opening (v. 592) is accommodated to the situation. The favourable comment upon her speech (vv. 618—619) must be assigned to one of her party, as is clearly shown by the reply from the other side. See note there.

Third Stasimon (vv. 686—773). The far-reaching consequences of crime, suggested by the fatal disaster just described. 'Again the application is apparently to Paris; again we feel that the sin of Agamemnon is present in the thought.'

March accompanying the Entrance of the King (vv. 774—800).

dulity that, as Mr Sidgwick says, she clearly refers. It may be added that however little she may know about the elders, she must know even less of the general feeling of the citizens, with whom she cannot possibly have had any communi-

cation on the subject.

¹ I have already noticed that the latter part of this chorus is of the utmost importance as giving to us now some of the essential facts of the supposed situation.