

killed upon the stage—*ἰδίως δὲ Αἰσχύλος τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονα ἐπὶ σκηνῆς ἀναιρεῖσθαι ποιεῖ*: and as the text does not suggest this, it is one of the few points in the hypothesis which might appear to rest on some independent tradition. The truth is that our knowledge of ancient scenery is not such as to warrant any positive assertion on details of this kind.

Clytaemnestra appears and fiercely justifies her act. She describes the manner of the king's death with cruel detail, answers invective with invective, and declares her reliance upon her partizans and upon the loyalty of Aegisthus. She even forces the lamenting elders to admit that as between her and her husband the justice of the case is doubtful (*v.* 1569). But a fresh explosion of feeling is produced by the entrance of Aegisthus himself, with his band (*λοχῆται v.* 1650).

The meeting of the triumphant lovers is left entirely to action, as is necessary. Conversation between them at such a moment and in such a presence would have been altogether out of place. From the fact that Aegisthus' speech is immediately preceded by a speech of Clytaemnestra it is clear that she does not leave the stage.

*Finale.* Aegisthus, Clytaemnestra, etc. Aegisthus claims to have merely procured his 'just restoration' to Argos (*v.* 1608), while avenging upon the son of Atreus the wrongs of his father and his own.

That Aegisthus does not come from the palace but on the contrary has just entered the country is shown not only by his address, but by the interval which occurs between the achievement of the murder and his appearance. Consistent in his 'prudent' plan he does not enter the fortress till the deed is actually done and all is safe.

This is too much for the friends of the king. Stung by their taunts Aegisthus calls on his ruffians to commence a massacre, when the queen, with hypocritical clemency, interposes to prevent an impolitic cruelty which might yet have endangered the success. 'Less,' she says, 'than blood-shed will serve the occasion' (*vv.* 1654—1664). Accordingly the elders are led away to imprisonment; and with this final triumph of Clytaemnestra the scene comes to an end.

#### 4. *Critical Remarks.*

I hope I am not rash in thinking that the preceding exposition of the play does in its general outline fulfil the conditions; that is to say, the story is itself intelligible, and it explains why the drama is constructed as it is, and what are the relations of its parts to one another. As to the details I do not pretend to offer more than conjecture; on the