

enough; for I mean to be, for my part, clear to who knows and to him who knows not blind. [Exit.]

*Chorus of Elders.* 'Tis now the tenth year since, to urge their powerful right against Priam, King Menelaus and King Agamemnon, the mighty sons of Atreus, paired in the honour of throne and sceptre derived from Zeus, put forth from this land with an Argive armament, a thousand crews of fighting men, summoned to their aid.

Loud rang their angry battle-cry, as the scream of vultures who, vexed by boys in the supreme solitudes where they nest, wheel with beating pinions round and round, when they miss the young brood whose bed it was their care to watch. And the shrill sad cry of the birds is heard by ears supreme, by Apollo belike or Pan or Zeus, who to avenge the licensed sojourners of their dwelling-place, sends soon or late on the offenders the ministers of punishment. Even such ministers are the sons of Atreus, sent to punish the triumph of Paris by their mightier Zeus, guardian of hospitality, that so for a woman whom many could win there should be wrestlings many and weary, where the knee is pressed in the dust and the shaft, the spousal shaft, is snapped, between suffering Greek and Trojan suffering too.

The cause is this day no further: the end will be as it must. By no increase of fuel or libation, and by no tears, shalt thou overcome the stubbornness of a sacrifice that will not burn.

As for us, whose worn thews could not render their service, that martial gathering left us behind, and here we bide, on guiding-staves supporting our childish strength. For if the young breast, where the sap is but rising, is no better than old but in this, that the spirit of war is not there, oh what is man, when he is more than old? His leaf is withered, and with his three feet he wanders, weak as a child, a day-lit dream.

But what of thee, daughter of Tyndareus, Queen Clytaemnestra? What chance? What news? On what intelligence, what convincing report are thy messengers gone round bidding sacrifice? To all the gods that dwell in Argos, upper and nether gods, the high gods and the low, the altars blaze with gifts, while on all sides the flames soar up to the sky, yielding to the innocent spell and soft persuasion of hallowed oil, rich from the store of kings. All this (so far as thou canst and mayest consent) do thou explain, and thus cure my present care, which vexes me now anon, although at whiles the sacrifices call up a kindly