

undexterous steersman to thy wits, that thou for a willing wanton would'st spend the lives of men. But now we contemplate thee with riper judgment and less unkind. Happy the labour that is happily done. Thou wilt learn by inquisition hereafter, who here at home hath done his duty, and who hath mis-spent the time.

Agamemnon. To Argos first my salutation is due, and to the gods that inhabit here, who have aided me to my home-coming and the justice which I have taken of Priam's town. For they, having heard the mortal argument which with main force we pleaded for Troy's destroying, put their votes undivided into the vase for blood, while to the opposite urn hope of the hand came nigh, yet it was not filled. By her smoke the conquered city is conspicuous even yet. Life in the ruin pants, and from the expiring ash is breathed a reek of richness. For all this there must be paid to the gods a memorable return, even as the fine is great, which our wrath hath taken, since for one woman stolen a city hath been laid level by the fierce beast of Argos, the foal of the horse, the folk of the shield, that launched himself with a leap in the season of the Pleiads' fall. Over the wall he sprang and, like a lion fleshed, lapped his fill of proud princes' blood¹.

Now, having given to religion this ample precedence, I come to thee and thy feelings. I remember what I have heard. I am with thee, and support thine accusation. Rare among men are they to whom it is natural to love and admire the fortunate without envying. The poison of ill-will settles to the heart and doubles the load of him that has aught amiss: at once his own sorrows press upon him and he sighs to see the other's happiness. I may speak with knowledge, having learnt thoroughly that mirror of friendship, image of a shadow, the hypocrites' semblance of devotion to me. Ulysses only, Ulysses, who joined the fleet against his will, I found, being once in harness, mine own right horse. That I will say for him living or dead.

[*Enter* CLYTAEMNESTRA².]

And for the rest, the affairs of state and religion too in general

¹ We want a better word for *τύραννος* than English supplies. *Despot* or *tyrant* is too specific and would not here do at all; and yet the distasteful sound of the word to Greek ears is almost always important, and here especially so. It is not accurate to say, as is sometimes said, that the dramatists habitually use *τύραννος*, *τυραννίς* etc. without regard to their associations. They scarcely ever do so,

and for the *Agamemnon* at least the words have their full and worst meaning (see vv. 1354, 1633). The Asiatic royalty of Priam might of course be called a *τυραννίς*, and the unpleasing title suits the tone of the speaker. To the conspirators it is only too suggestive.

² See on vv. 903, 904. The king does not perceive her, till at the end of his speech he turns to enter the palace.