

assembly summoned together we will debate; where we must take such counsel that what is well may endure so and abide, while as for what must have medicinal remedy, we will do our kind endeavour with lancet or cautery to defeat the mischief of the sore.

For the moment, I go to mine house and private chambers, where my hand's first greeting must be to the gods, who sent me forth and have brought me back. May victory, as she hath attended me, constantly abide with me still!

*Clytaemnestra.* Townsmen of Argos, her noblest present here, what love I have practised toward my husband my modesty will let me declare to you. With time men lose their fear.

Upon no witness but mine own I can say, how weary were my days all the long while my lord lay before Ilium. A sore grief it is in itself, for a woman without a man to sit in the empty throne of the house, with ever persistent flatteries at her ear, and one coming after another with loud tidings of woe to the house each worse than the last. As for wounds, if my lord was wounded as often as the conduits of fame brought news of it, he hath holes in him more in number than a net. And had he died, as report thereof multiplied, he might, with three bodies like another Geryon, have boasted many times three—not beds, but coverlets rather of earth taken on to him, if he had had one death for each of his shapes. Such, ever present at mine ear, were the rumours that put me many times to the hanging noose, which others, preventing my eagerness, loosed from my neck.

This is indeed why the boy Orestes, he who might best make confidence between thee and me, is not, as he should be, here; be not surprised. He is in the special care of our ally, Strophius of Phocis, who warned me of double mischief, the peril first of thee before Ilium, and the chance that noisy rebellion from below might risk a plot against us, as it is native to man to spurn the more him that is down. The excuse however is such as cannot have guile in it.

But as for me, the fountains of my tears have run themselves dry, and there is no drop there. With watching late mine eyes are sore, with weeping for thine attendance of torch-bearers neglected still. The droning gnat with lightest flutter would wake me from dreams, in which I saw thee pass through more than the time of my sleep.

Now, after all this misery, in the relief of my soul, I would hail this my husband as a watch-dog to the fold, the ship's securing stay, the high roof's grounded pillar, the father's sole-born child; or as a land espied by mariners in despair, dawn as it looks most beautiful after storm, a flowing spring to the thirsty wayfarer,—but everywhere