

Cl. Nay, but the great may e'en yield a point with grace.

Ag. Thou plainly, no less than I, thinkest the point worth fight.

Cl. Yield : I constrain thee ; let it be with consent.

Ag. Then, if this be thy will, quick, let one loose my shoes, these trodden slaves to the serving foot.—Even with these bare soles, as I walk the sacred purple, I hope no distant eye may give me an evil glance. It is shame enough¹ to stain with the stain of human feet textures of price, purchased for silver.

Of this enough. But here is one, whom thou must receive into the house with kindness. A gentle master wins from the distant eye of God an approving glance ; for none takes willingly to the yoke of a slave. This damsel was the choice flower of a rich treasure, bestowed by the soldiers upon me, with whom she goes.

And now, since I am reduced to obey thee herein, I will proceed to the palace along your purple path².

Cl. There is a sea (and who shall drain it dry?) which hath in it purple enough, precious as silver, oozing fresh and fresh, to dye vestures withal. And we have, O king, I trust, a chamber of such from which to take thereof, our house being unacquainted with poverty. Vestures plenty would I have devoted to the trampling, had it been proposed to me in some temple of divination, when I was devising means to bring this dear life back. It is the root of the house, whereby the leaves arrive that make a shade overhead against the dog-star. Yes, now, at thy coming to the familiar hearth, thy winter-coming betokens warmth, and when Zeus from the grape's sourness is making wine, then it is to the home like a sudden coolness to be visited by the crowned lord thereof. [Exit Agamemnon.

Zeus, Zeus, who crownest all, crown but my prayer and let thy providence do even what thou wilt. [Exit Clytaemnestra.

The Elders. Why is it that so constantly my auguring soul shows at the door this fluttering sign, and the prophet-chant offers itself without bidding or fee? Canst thou not spit it away, like an unexplainable dream, and reach such willing trust as the mind is glad to rest upon? Yet time hath heaped the sands of the shore upon the anchor-stones, since the naval host set forth to Troy : and they are returned, mine own eyes tell me so. But yet, as without the lyre, my bosom repeats that dirge of Doom, unlearned and self-inspired, unable to grasp in full the welcome assurance of hope. It cannot be for naught, the throb

¹ See vv. 950, 1655 etc.

² I have inserted the word *your* as some compensation for the loss of em-

phasis, given in Greek by the position and mere sound of the words πορφύρας πατῶν.