

12. All sides support me in assenting to this, to have clear knowledge how it is with Atreus' son.

*Clytaemnestra.* If now I contradict all that to suit the moment I said before, I shall feel no shame. What shame should he feel, who plots as a foe against a foe? With the semblance of friendship let him make his dangerous snare too high to be overleaped.

For me, I have had long enough to prepare this wrestle for victory, though it has come at last. I stand where I struck, over the finished work. And such I made the death (I will own this also) as to forbid escape or resistance, a net unpassable, like the fisherman's round a shoal, a rich robe deadly dyed<sup>1</sup>. Twice I smote him, and with two shrieks he let himself sink down. And when he had fallen, I gave him yet a third stroke, an offering of thanks to the nether god, to Hades, safe keeper of the dead. With that he lay and himself gasped away his breath. And as he blew the spurts of his running blood, he rained upon me a crimson<sup>2</sup> gory dew, and I rejoiced no less than beneath the sweet rain of heaven doth the corn when it bursts from the labouring sheath.

So stands the case, ye nobles of Argos here; be glad of it, if ye will; for me, I triumph upon it. And could there be case fit for a libation over the dead, justly and more than justly now would it be. With so many imprecations of suffering homes this man hath filled the bowl which himself returning hath drained.

*Eld.* We are astonished that thy mouth bears so bold a tongue, to boast over thy dead lord in such terms.

*Cl.* Ye challenge me, supposed an unthinking woman. But I speak with unshaken courage to those who know, indifferent whether thou chooseth to praise or blame. This is Agamemnon, my husband, wrought to death by the just handicraft of this my hand. So stands the case.

*Cho.* What poison hast thou taken, woman, what drug born of the earth or draught from the great water, that thou hast brought on thyself the fury and the loud curses of yon folk? Thou hast cut off,

<sup>1</sup> For the suggestion conveyed by the language here see on v. 949.

<sup>2</sup> Literally 'dark-coloured', but modern

habit would demand more distinction of colour.