

hunger, which doth not mate peaceably with high spirit, will not leave him till he is mild.

*Eld.* Why then of thy cowardice didst thou not butcher the victim alone? Why, to the defilement of our country and our country's gods, join the wife with thee in the murder? Oh, doth Orestes haply live, that by grace of fortune he may return to this land and slay this pair victoriously?

*Aeg.* Nay then, if thou wilt so say and do, thou shalt have a lesson at once!

*A Soldier of Aegisthus.* Come on, comrades! Our work is not far off now.

*Aeg.* Come on! Make ready! Draw every man his sword!

*Eld.* Nay, I too, sword in hand, am prepared to die.

*Soldier.* 'To die!' An acceptable word! We take the moment.

*Cl.* Nay, dearest, let us do no more ill. What is done is much to reap, a bitter harvest. Begin pain with enough; but let us have no bloodshed. Go ye at once and confine these old men to their destined dwelling-place before they come to harm (?). What we arranged should have stood<sup>1</sup>. And if we should find that enough has been inflicted, there we will stop, sore smitten as we have been by the heavy heel<sup>2</sup> of fate.

*Aeg.* And must they thus flaunt the folly of their tongues against me, and tempt fate with a fling of such high words?

*Cl.* And when they lose their senses, must he who is master of them do the like?

*Eld.* It is not the way in Argos to fawn upon a villain!

*Aeg.* Well, I will come up with thee one of these days yet.

*Eld.* Not if heaven guide Orestes back to the land.

*Aeg.* I know myself how exiles feed upon hopes.

*Eld.* Go on, make thee fat, and befoul the good cause, as thou canst.

*Aeg.* Be sure thou shalt make me amends for this kind insolence!

*Eld.* Brag, brag with boldness, like a cock beside his hen!

*Cl.* Care not for this idle barking. I and thou will make good order, being masters in this house.

<sup>1</sup> Taking ἀρκείν for καιρόν.

<sup>2</sup> Modern English will hardly bear the Greek metaphor from the 'spur' of the

fighting cock. Aeschylus draws upon this pastime for poetry more than once.