

been made impossible by the want of a favourable wind. In the midst of the growing impatience of leaders and men alike, the seer Calchas has revealed to Agamemnon, the chief commander, and his two principal advisers, Menelaus and Odysseus, that they have incurred the displeasure of the goddess Artemis, whose temple stands at Aulis, and that she will keep them where they are till her wrath is appeased: that moreover this can only be done in one way: Agamemnon must sacrifice at the altar of the goddess his eldest daughter Iphigeneia. On first hearing this, Agamemnon refused to make the sacrifice, and resolved to abandon the expedition, but Menelaus and Odysseus over-persuaded him, and at the suggestion of Odysseus he sent for his daughter to come to him, telling her mother Clytaemnestra that he wished to give her in marriage to Achilles. As the day of her arrival approaches Agamemnon's mind shrinks afresh from the dreadful deed, and it is at this juncture that the play begins. He sends while it is still night an old household attendant, with a letter to his wife, countermanding his previous orders. This letter is intercepted by Menelaus, and at *v.* 317 the dispute between the two brothers begins again. In the end the sight of Agamemnon's grief seems to recall his brother's better feelings (*v.* 477): he is willing to renounce his claim, but Agamemnon here shows the impotence of an irresolute and feeble nature to renounce a pursuit once engaged in. He knows too that Odysseus and the army will not allow him to draw back now that he has gone so far. His own love of power and high position, to which his brother has skilfully appealed, concurs with this fear to drive him onwards. Accordingly he makes up his mind anew to proceed with his original plan. He meets his wife and daughter when they arrive, and though incapable of mastering his emotion, conducts them to his tent without betraying his purpose.

At *v.* 801 a fresh turn is given to the action by the appearance of Achilles on the scene. The new-comer knows nothing of the necessity of the sacrifice, or of the artifice in which his name has been used to lure Iphigeneia to Aulis. He comes full of impatience, to remonstrate, somewhat unreasonably, with Agamemnon on his continued inaction. The first person whom he meets before the general's tent happens to be Clytaemnestra. His surprise at finding who she is, is increased when she salutes him as her destined son-in-law. The intervention of the old attendant (who had been intrusted with the second letter) reveals to both their true position, and the dreadful fate which Iphigeneia's father is preparing for her.

Clytaemnestra then turns to Achilles as her only hope, and goes