

by the arrival of that Trojan embassy which Odysseus had foreshadowed in the prologue. It came, probably, before the seizure of the bow, and while, therefore, Odysseus was still disguised. Two verses, spoken by him in the play, run thus:—

ὑπέρ γε μέντοι παντός Ἑλλήνων στρατοῦ
αἰσχρὸν σιωπᾶν βαρβάρους δ' εἶαν λέγειν¹.

Such words would be fitting in the mouth of a Greek speaker who pretended to have been wronged by his countrymen. They suggest a context of the following kind;—‘(Although I have been badly treated by the Greek chiefs,) yet, in the cause of the Greek army at large, I cannot be silent, while barbarians plead.’ The leader of the Trojan envoys—perhaps Paris—would urge Philoctetes to become their ally. Then the appeal to Hellenic patriotism would be made with striking effect by one who alleged that, like Philoctetes himself, he had personal injuries to forget. This scene would end with the discomfiture and withdrawal of the Trojan envoys. It may be conjectured that the subsequent course of the action was somewhat as follows. Philoctetes was seized with an attack of his malady; the disguised Odysseus, assisted perhaps by the Lemnian shepherd, was solicitous in tending him; and meanwhile Diomedes, entering at the back of the group, contrived to seize the bow. Odysseus then revealed himself, and, after a stormy scene, ultimately prevailed on Philoctetes to accompany him. His part would here give scope for another great speech, setting forth the promises of the oracle. Whether Athena intervened at the close, is uncertain.

This play of Euripides struck Dion as a masterpiece of declamation, and as a model of ingenious debate,—worthy of study, indeed, as a practical lesson in those arts. When he speaks of the ‘contrast’ to the play of Aeschylus, he is thinking

¹ The first of these two verses is preserved by Plut. *Mor.* 1108 B, who from the second v. quotes only αἰσχρὸν σιωπᾶν. The second v. was made proverbial by Aristotle’s parody (αἰσχρὸν σιωπᾶν Ἴσοκράτην δ’ εἶαν λέγειν). That the original word was βαρβάρους appears from Cic. *de orat.* 3. 35. 141; where, as in Quintil. 3. 1. 14, it is called ‘a verse from the *Philoctetes*.’ That this was the play of Euripides, is a certain inference from the fact of the Trojan embassy.