The Iphigenia in Tauris

by Euripides

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THE IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS OF EURIPIDES

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH RHYMING VERSE WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES BY

GILBERT MURRAY, LL.D., D. Litt.

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

PREFACE

The Iphigenia in Tauris is not in the modern sense a tragedy; it is a romantic play, beginning in a tragic atmosphere and moving through perils and escapes to a happy end. To the archaeologist the cause of this lies in the ritual on which the play is based. All Greek tragedies that we know have as their nucleus something which the Greeks called an Aition—a cause or origin. They all explain some ritual or observance or commemorate some great event. Nearly all, as a matter of fact, have for this Aition a Tomb Ritual, as, for instance, the Hippolytus has the worship paid by the Trozenian Maidens at that hero's grave. The use of this Tomb Ritual may well explain both the intense shadow of death that normally hangs over the Greek tragedies, and also perhaps the feeling of the Fatality, which is, rightly or wrongly, supposed to be prominent in them. For if you are actually engaged in commemorating your hero's funeral, it follows that all through the story, however bright his prospects may seem, you feel that he is bound to die; he cannot escape. A good many tragedies, however, are built not on Tomb Rituals but on other sacred Aitia: on the foundation of a city, like the Aetnae, the ritual of the torch- race, like the Prometheus; on some great legendary succouring of the oppressed, like the Suppliant Women of Aeschylus and Euripides. And the rite on which the Iphigenia is based is essentially one in which a man is brought to the verge of death but just does not die.

The rite is explained in 11. 1450 ff. of the play. On a certain festival at Halae in

Attica a human victim was led to the altar of Artemis Tauropolos, touched on the throat with a sword and then set free: very much what happened to Orestes among the Tauri, and exactly what happened to Iphigenia at Aulis. Both legends have doubtless grown out of the same ritual.

Like all the great Greek legends, the Iphigenia myths take many varying forms. They are all of them, in their essence, conjectural restorations, by poets or other 'wise men,' of supposed early history. According to the present play, Agamemnon, when just about to sail with all the powers of Greece against Troy, was bound by weather at Aulis. The medicine-man Calchas explained that Artemis demanded the sacrifice of his daughter, Iphigenia, who was then at home with her mother, Clytemnestra. Odysseus and Agamemnon sent for the maiden on the pretext that she was to be married to the famous young hero, Achilles; she was brought to Aulis and treacherously slaughtered—or, at least, so people thought.

There is a subject for tragedy there; and it was brilliantly treated in Euripides' Iphigenia in Aulis, which was probably left unfinished at his death. But our play chooses a later moment of the story.

In reality Artemis at the last moment saved Iphigenia, rapt her away from mortal eyes and set her down in the land of the Tauri to be her priestess. (In Tauris is only the Latin for "among the Tauri.") These Tauri possessed an image of Artemis which had fallen from heaven, and kept up a savage rite of sacrificing to it all strangers who were cast on their shores. Iphigenia, obedient to her goddess, and held by "the spell of the altar," had to consecrate the victims as they went in to be slain. So far only barbarian strangers had come: she waited half in horror, half in a rage of revenge, for the day when she should have to sacrifice a Greek. The first Greek that came was her own brother, Orestes, who had been sent by Apollo to take the image of Artemis and bear it to Attica, where it should no more be stained with human sacrifice.

If we try to turn from these myths to the historical facts that underlay them, we may conjecture that there were three goddesses of the common Aegean type, worshipped in different places. At Brauron and elsewhere there was Iphigenia ('Birth-mighty'); at Halae there was the Tauropolos ('the Bull-rider,' like Europa, who rode on the horned Moon); among the savage and scarcely known Tauri there was some goddess to whom shipwrecked strangers were sacrificed. Lastly there came in the Olympian Artemis. Now all these goddesses (except possibly the Taurian, of whom we know little) were associated with the Moon and with child-birth, and with rites for sacrificing or redeeming the first-born. Naturally enough, therefore, they were all gradually absorbed by the prevailing worship of Artemis. Tauropolis became an epithet of Artemis, Iphigenia became her priestess and 'Keybearer.' And the word 'Tauropolis,' which had become obscure, was explained as a reference to the Tauri. The old rude image of Tauropolis had come from the Tauri, and the strange ritual was descended from their bloody rites. So the Taurian goddess must be Artemis too. The tendency of ancient polytheism, when it met with some alien religion, was not to treat the alien gods as entirely new persons, but assuming the real and obvious existence of their own gods, to inquire by what names and with what ritual the strangers worshipped them.

As usual in Euripides, the central character of this play is a woman, and a woman most unsparingly yet lovingly studied. Iphigenia is no mere 'sympathetic heroine.' She is a worthy member of her great but sinister house; a haggard and exiled woman, eating out her heart in two conflicting emotions: intense longing for home and all that she had loved in childhood, and bitter self- pitying rage against 'her murderers.' The altar of Aulis is constantly in her thoughts. She does not know whether to hate her father, but at least she can with a clear conscience hate all the rest of those implicated, Calchas, Odysseus, Menelaus, and most fiercely, though somewhat unjustly, Helen. All the good women in Euripides go wild at the name of Helen. Iphigenia broods on her wrongs till she can see nothing else; she feels as if

she hated all Greeks, and lived only for revenge, for the hope of some day slaughtering Greeks at her altar, as pitilessly as they slaughtered her at Aulis. She knows how horrible this state of mind is, but she is now "turned to stone, and has no pity left in her." Then the Greeks come; and even before she knows who they really are, the hard shell of her bitterness slowly yields. Her heart goes out to them; she draws Orestes against his will into talk; she insists on pitying him, insists on his pitying her; and eventually determines, come what may, that she will save at least the one stranger that she has talked with most. Presently comes the discovery who the strangers are; and she is at once ready to die with them or for them.

As for the scene in which Iphigenia befools Thoas, my moral feelings may be obtuse, but I certainly cannot feel the slightest compunction or shock at the heavy lying. Which of us would not expect at least as much from his own sister, if it lay with her to save him from the altars of Benin or Ashanti? I suspect that the good people who lament over "the low standard of truthfulness shown by even the most enlightened pagans" have either forgotten the days when they read stories of adventure, or else have not, in reading this scene, realised properly the strain of hairbreadth peril that lies behind the comedy of it. A single slip in Iphigenia's tissue of desperate improvisations would mean death, and not to herself alone. One feels rather sorry for Thoas, certainly, and he is a very fine fellow in his way; but a person who insists on slaughtering strangers cannot expect those strangers or their friends to treat him with any approach to candour.

The two young men come nearer to mere ideal heroes de roman than any other characters in Euripides. They are surprisingly handsome and brave and unselfish and everything that they should be; and they stand out like heroes against the mob of cowardly little Taurians in the Herdsman's speech. Yet they have none of the unreality that is usual in such figures. The shadow of madness and guilt hanging over Orestes makes a difference. At his first entrance, when danger is still far off, he is a mass of broken nerves; he depends absolutely on Pylades. In the later scenes,

when they are face to face with death, the underlying strength of the son of the Great King asserts itself and makes one understand why, for all his madness, Orestes is the chief, and Pylades only the devoted follower.

Romantic plays with happy endings are almost of necessity inferior in artistic value to true tragedies. Not, one would hope, simply because they end happily; happiness in itself is certainly not less beautiful than grief; but because a tragedy in its great moments can generally afford to be sincere, while romantic plays live in an atmosphere of ingenuity and make-believe. The Iphigenia is not of the same order as The Trojan Women. Yet it is a delightful play; subtle, ever-changing, full of movement and poignancy. The recognition scene became to Aristotle a model of what such a scene should be; and the long passage before it, from the entrance of the two princes onward, seems to me one of the most skilful and fascinating in Greek drama.

And after all the adventure of Euripides is not quite like that of the average romantic writer. It is shot through by reflection, by reality and by sadness. There is a shadow that broods over the Iphigenia, though it is not the shadow of death. It is exile, homesickness. Iphigenia, Orestes, the Women of the Chorus, are all exiles, all away from their heart's home, among savage people and cruel gods. They wait on the shore while the sea-birds take wing for Hellas, out beyond the barrier of the Dark-Blue Rocks and the great stretches of magical and 'unfriended' sea. Nearly all the lyrics are full of sea-light and the clash of waters, and the lyrics are usually the very soul of Euripidean tragedy.

G. M.

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

IPHIGENIA, eldest daughter of Agamemnon, King of Argos; supposed to have been sacrificed by him to Artemis at Aulis.

ORESTES, her brother; pursued by Furies for killing his mother, Clytemnestra, who had murdered Agamemnon.

PYLADES, Prince of Phocis, friend to Orestes.

THOAS, King of Tauris, a savage country beyond the Symplegades.

A HERDSMAN. A MESSENGER.

CHORUS of Captive Greek Women, handmaids to Iphigenia.

The Goddess PALLAS ATHENA.

The play was first performed between the years 414 and 412 B.C.

THE IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS

[The Scene shows a great and barbaric Temple on a desolate sea-coast. An altar is visible stained with blood. There are spoils of slain men hanging from the roof. IPHIGENIA, in the dress of a Priestess, comes out from the Temple.]

IPHIGENIA.

Child of the man of torment and of pride Tantalid Pelops bore a royal bride On flying steeds from Pisa. Thence did spring Atreus: from Atreus, linked king with king, Menelaus, Agamemnon. His am I And Clytemnestra's child: whom cruelly At Aulis, where the strait of shifting blue Frets with quick winds, for Helen's sake he slew, Or thinks to have slain; such sacrifice he swore To Artemis on that deep-bosomed shore. For there Lord Agamemnon, hot with joy To win for Greece the crown of conquered Troy, For Menelaus' sake through all distress Pursuing Helen's vanished loveliness, Gathered his thousand ships from every coast Of Hellas: when there fell on that great host Storms and despair of sailing. Then the King Sought signs of fire, and Calchas answering

Spake thus: "O Lord of Hellas, from this shore No ship of thine may move for evermore, Till Artemis receive in gift of blood Thy child, Iphigenia. Long hath stood

Thy vow, to pay to Her that bringeth light Whatever birth most fair by day or night The year should bring. That year thy queen did bear A child—whom here I name of all most fair. See that she die."

So from my mother's side By lies Odysseus won me, to be bride In Aulis to Achilles. When I came, They took me and above the altar flame Held, and the sword was swinging to the gash, When, lo, out of their vision in a flash Artemis rapt me, leaving in my place A deer to bleed; and on through a great space Of shining sky upbore and in this town Of Tauris the Unfriended set me down; Where o'er a savage people savagely King Thoas rules. This is her sanctuary And I her priestess. Therefore, by the rite Of worship here, wherein she hath delight— Though fair in naught but name. … But Artemis Is near; I speak no further. Mine it is To consecrate and touch the victim's hair; Doings of blood unspoken are the care Of others, where her inmost chambers lie. Ah me! But what dark dreams, thou clear and morning sky, I have to tell thee, can that bring them ease! Meseemed in sleep, far over distant seas, I lay in Argos, and about me slept My maids: and, lo, the level earth was swept With quaking like the sea. Out, out I fled, And, turning, saw the cornice overhead Reel, and the beams and mighty door-trees down In blocks of ruin round me overthrown. One single oaken pillar, so I dreamed, Stood of my father's house; and hair, meseemed, Waved from its head all brown: and suddenly A human voice it had, and spoke. And I, Fulfilling this mine office, built on blood Of unknown men, before that pillar stood, And washed him clean for death, mine eyes astream With weeping.

And this way I read my dream. Orestes is no more: on him did fall My cleansing drops.—The pillar of the hall Must be the man first-born; and they, on whom My cleansing falls, their way is to the tomb. Therefore to my dead brother will I pour Such sacrifice, I on this bitter shore And he beyond great seas, as still I may, With all those maids whom Thoas bore away In war from Greece and gave me for mine own. But wherefore come they not? I must be gone And wait them in the temple,

where I dwell.

[She goes into the Temple.]

VOICE. Did some one cross the pathway? Guard thee well.

ANOTHER VOICE. I am watching. Every side I turn mine eye.

(Enter ORESTES and PYLADES. Their dress shows fhey are travellers ORESTES is shaken and distraught.)

ORESTES. How, brother? And is this the sanctuary At last, for which we sailed from Argolis?

PYLADES. For sure, Orestes. Seest thou not it is?

ORESTES. The altar, too, where Hellene blood is shed.

PYLADES. How like long hair those blood-stains, tawny red!

ORESTES. And spoils of slaughtered men—there by the thatch.

PYLADES. Aye, first-fruits of the harvest, when they catch Their strangers!—'Tis a place to search with care

[He searches, while ORESTES sits.]

ORESTES. O God, where hast thou brought me? What new snare Is this?—I slew my mother; I avenged My father at thy bidding; I have ranged A homeless world, hunted by shapes of pain, And circling trod in mine own steps again. At last I stood once more before thy throne And cried thee question, what thing should be done To end these miseries, wherein I reel Through Hellas, mad, lashed like a burning wheel; And thou didst bid me seek … what land but this Of Tauri, where thy sister Artemis Her altar hath, and seize on that divine Image which fell, men say, into this shrine From heaven. This I must seize by chance or plot Or peril—clearer word was uttered not— And bear to Attic earth. If this be done, I should have peace from all my malison.

Lo, I have done thy will. I have pierced the seas Where no Greek man may

live.—Ho, Pylades, Sole sharer of my quest: hast seen it all? What can we next? Thou seest this circuit wall Enormous? Must we climb the public stair, With all men watching? Shall we seek somewhere Some lock to pick, some secret bolt or bar—Of all which we know nothing? Where we are, If one man mark us, if they see us prize The gate, or think of entrance anywise, 'Tis death.—We still have time to fly for home: Back to the galley quick, ere worse things come!

PYLADES. To fly we dare not, brother. 'Twere a thing Not of our custom; and ill work, to bring God's word to such reviling.—Let us leave The temple now, and gather in some cave Where glooms the cool sea ripple. But not where The ship lies; men might chance to see her there And tell some chief; then certain were our doom. But when the fringed eye of Night be come Then we must dare, by all ways foul or fine, To thieve that wondrous Image from its shrine. Ah, see; far up, between each pair of beams A hollow one might creep through! Danger gleams Like sunshine to a brave man's eyes, and fear Of what may be is no help anywhere.

ORESTES. Aye; we have never braved these leagues of way To falter at the end. See, I obey Thy words. They are ever wise. Let us go mark Some cavern, to lie hid till fall of dark. God will not suffer that bad things be stirred To mar us now, and bring to naught the word Himself hath spoke. Aye, and no peril brings Pardon for turning back to sons of kings.

[They go out towards the shore. After they are gone, enter gradually the WOMEN]

OF THE CHORUS.

CHORUS. Peace! Peace upon all who dwell By the Sister Rocks that clash in the swell Of the Friendless Seas.

O Child of Leto, thou, Dictynna mountain-born, To the cornice gold-inlaid To the pillared sanctities, We come in the cold of morn, We come with virgin brow, Pure as our oath was sworn, Handmaids of thine handmaid Who holdeth the stainless keys,

From Hellas, that once was ours, We come before thy gate, From the land of the

western seas, The horses and the towers, The wells and the garden trees, And the seats where our fathers sate.

LEADER. What tidings, ho? With what intent Hast called me to thy shrine and thee, O child of him who crossed the sea To Troy with that great armament, The thousand prows, the myriad swords? I come, O child of Atreid Lords.

[IPHIGENIA, followed by ATTENDANTS, comes from the Temple.]

IPHIGENIA. Alas, O maidens mine, I am filled full of tears: My heart filled with the beat Of tears, as of dancing feet, A lyreless joyless line, And music meet for the dead.

For a whisper is in mine ears, By visions borne on the breath Of the Night that now is fled, Of a brother gone to death. Oh sorrow and weeping sore, For the house that no more is, For the dead that were kings of yore And the labour of Argolis!

[She begins the Funeral Rite.]

O Spirit, thou unknown, Who bearest on dark wings My brother, my one, mine own, I bear drink-offerings, And the cup that bringeth ease Flowing through Earth's deep breast; Milk of the mountain kine, The hallowed gleam of wine, The toil of murmuring bees: By these shall the dead have rest.

To an ATTENDANT.

The golden goblet let me pour, And that which Hades thirsteth for.

O branch of Agamemnon's tree Beneath the earth, as to one dead, This cup of love I pour to thee. Oh, pardon, that I may not shed

One lock of hair to wreathe thy tomb, One tear: so far, so far am I From what to me and thee was home, And where in all men's fantasy, Butchered, O God! I also lie.

CHORUS.

Woe; woe: I too with refluent melody, An echo wild of the dirges of the Asian, I, thy bond maiden, cry to answer thee: The music that lieth hid in lamentation, The song

that is heard in the deep hearts of the dead, That the Lord of dead men 'mid his dancing singeth, And never joy-cry, never joy it bringeth; Woe for the house of Kings in desolation, Woe for the light of the sceptre vanished.

From kings in Argos of old, from joyous kings, The beginning came: Then peril swift upon peril, flame on flame: The dark and wheeling coursers, as wild with wings, The cry of one betrayed on a drowning shore, The sun that blanched in heaven, the world that changed— Evil on evil and none alone!—deranged By the Golden Lamb and the wrong grown ever more; Blood following blood, sorrow on sorrow sore! So come the dead of old, the dead in wrath, Back on the seed of the high Tantalidae; Surely the Spirit of Life an evil path Hath hewed for thee. IPHIGENIA. From the beginning the Spirit of my life Was an evil spirit. Alas for my mother's zone, And the night that bare me! From the beginning Strife, As a book to read, Fate gave me for mine own. They wooed a bride for the strikers down of Troy— Thy first-born, Mother: was it for this, thy prayer?— A hind of slaughter to die in a father's snare, Gift of a sacrifice where none hath joy.

They set me on a royal wane; Down the long sand they led me on, A bride new-decked, a bride of bane, In Aulis to the Nereid's son. And now estranged for evermore Beyond the far estranging foam I watch a flat and herbless shore, Unloved, unchilded, without home Or city: never more to meet For Hera's dance with Argive maids, Nor round the loom 'mid singing sweet Make broideries and storied braids, Of writhing giants overthrown And clear-eyed Pallas … All is gone! Red hands and ever-ringing ears: The blood of men that friendless die, The horror of the strangers' cry Unheard, the horror of their tears.

But now, let even that have rest: I weep for him in Argos slain, The brother whom I knew, Ah me, A babe, a flower; and yet to be— There on his mother's arms and breast— The crowned Orestes, lord of men!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS. Stay, yonder from some headland of the sea There

comes—methinks a herdsman, seeking thee.

(Enter a HERDSMAN. IPHIGENIA is still on her knees.)

HERDSMAN. Daughter of Clytemnestra and her king, Give ear! I bear news of a wondrous thing.

IPHIGENIA. What news, that should so mar my obsequies?

HERDSMAN. A ship hath passed the blue Symplegades, And here upon our coast two men are thrown, Young, bold, good slaughter for the altar-stone Of Artemis!

[SHE RISES.]

Make all the speed ye may; 'Tis not too much. The blood-bowl and the spray!

IPHIGENIA. Men of what nation? Doth their habit show?

HERDSMAN. Hellenes for sure, but that is all we know.

IPHIGENIA. No name? No other clue thine ear could seize?

HERDSMAN. We heard one call his comrade "Pylades."

IPHIGENIA. Yes. And the man who spoke—his name was what?

HERDSMAN. None of us heard. I think they spoke it not.

IPHIGENIA. How did ye see them first, how make them fast?

HERDSMAN. Down by the sea, just where the surge is cast …

IPHIGENIA. The sea? What is the sea to thee and thine?

HERDSMAN. We came to wash our cattle in the brine.

IPHIGENIA. Go back, and tell how they were taken; show The fashion of it, for I fain would know All.—'Tis so long a time, and never yet, Never, hath Greek blood made this altar wet.

HERDSMAN. We had brought our forest cattle where the seas Break in long tides from the Symplegades. A bay is there, deep eaten by the surge And hollowed clear, with cover by the verge Where purple-fishers camp. These twain were there When

one of mine own men, a forager, Spied them, and tiptoed whispering back: "God save Us now! Two things unearthly by the wave Sitting!" We looked, and one of pious mood Raised up his hands to heaven and praying stood: "Son of the white Sea Spirit, high in rule, Storm-lord Palaemon, Oh, be merciful: Or sit ye there the warrior twins of Zeus, Or something loved of Him, from whose great thews Was-born the Nereids' fifty-fluted choir." Another, flushed with folly and the fire Of lawless daring, laughed aloud and swore 'Twas shipwrecked sailors skulking on the shore, Our rule and custom here being known, to slay All strangers. And most thought this was the way To follow, and seek out for Artemis The blood-gift of our people.

Just at this One of the strangers started from his seat, And stood, and upward, downward, with a beat His head went, and he groaned, and all his arm Trembled. Then, as a hunter gives alarm, He shrieked, stark mad and raving: "Pylades, Dost see her there?—And there—Oh, no one sees!— A she-dragon of Hell, and all her head Agape with fanged asps, to bite me dead. She hath no face, but somewhere from her cloak Bloweth a wind of fire and bloody smoke: The wings' beat fans it: in her arms, Ah see! My mother, dead grey stone, to cast on me And crush … Help, help! They crowd on me behind …"

No shapes at all were there. 'Twas his sick mind Which turned the herds that lowed and barking hounds That followed, to some visionary sounds Of Furies. For ourselves, we did but sit And watch in silence, wondering if the fit Would leave him dead. When suddenly out shone His sword, and like a lion he leaped upon Our herds, to fight his Furies! Flank and side He stabbed and smote them, till the foam was dyed Red at the waves' edge. Marry, when we saw The cattle hurt and falling, no more law We gave, but sprang to arms and blew the horn For help—so strong they looked and nobly born For thralls like us to meet, that pair unknown.

Well, a throng gathered ere much time was gone; When suddenly the whirl of

madness slips From off him and he falls, quite weak, his lips Dropping with foam. When once we saw him fall So timely, we were at him one and all To pelt and smite. The other watched us come, But knelt and wiped those lips all dank with foam And tended the sick body, while he held His cloak's good web above him for a shield; So cool he was to ward off every stone And all the while care for that stricken one.

Then rose the fallen man, calm now and grave, Looked, and saw battle bursting like a wave That bursts, and knew that peril close at hand Which now is come, and groaned. On every hand We stood, and stoned and stoned, and ceased not. Aye, 'Twas then we heard that fearful battle-cry: "Ho, Pylades, 'tis death! But let it be A gallant death! Draw sword and follow me."

When those two swords came flashing, up the glen Through the loose rocks we scattered back; but when One band was flying, down by rocks and trees Came others pelting: did they turn on these, Back stole the first upon them, stone on stone. 'Twas past belief: of all those shots not one Struck home. The goddess kept her fated prey Perfect. Howbeit, at last we made our way Right, left and round behind them on the sands, And rushed, and beat the swords out of their hands, So tired they scarce could stand. Then to the king We bore them both, and he, not tarrying, Sends them to thee, to touch with holy spray— And then the blood-bowl!

I have heard thee pray, Priestess, ere now for such a draft as this. Aye, slay but these two chiefs to Artemis And Hellas shall have paid thy debt, and know What blood was spilt in Aulis long ago.

LEADER. I marvel that one mad, whoe'er he be, Should sail from Hellas to the Friendless Sea.

IPHIGENIA. 'Tis well. Let thy hand bring them, and mine own Shall falter not till here God's will be done.

[EXIT HERDSMAN.]

O suffering heart, not fierce thou wast of old To shipwrecked men. Nay, pities

manifold Held thee in fancy homeward, lest thy hand At last should fall on one of thine own land. But now, for visions that have turned to stone My heart, to know Orestes sees the sun No more, a cruel woman waits you here, Whoe'er ye be, and one without a tear. 'Tis true: I know by mine own evil will: One long in pain, if things more suffering still Fall to his hand, will hate them for his own Torment … And no great wind hath ever blown, No ship from God hath passed the Clashing Gate, To bring me Helen, who hath earned my hate, And Menelaus, till I mocked their prayers In this new Aulis, that is mine, not theirs: Where Greek hands held me lifted, like a beast For slaughter, and my throat bled. And the priest My father! … Not one pang have I forgot. Ah me, the blind half-prisoned arms I shot This way and that, to find his beard, his knees, Groping and wondering: "Father, what are these For bridal rites? My mother even now Mid Argive women sings for me, whom thou … What dost thou? She sings happy songs, and all Is dance and sound of piping in the hall; And here … Is he a vampyre, is he one That fattens on the dead, thy Peleus' son— Whose passion shaken like a torch before My leaping chariot, lured me to this shore To wed—" Ah me! And I had hid my face, Burning, behind my veil. I would not press Orestes to my arms … who now is slain! … I would not kiss my sister's lips again, For shame and fulness of the heart to meet My bridegroom. All my kisses, all my sweet Words were stored up and hid: I should come back So soon to Argos! And thou, too: alack, Brother, if dead thou art, from what high things Thy youth is outcast, and the pride of kings Fallen! And this the goddess deemeth good! If ever mortal hand be dark with blood; Nay, touch a new-made mother or one slain In war, her ban is on him. 'Tis a stain She driveth from her outer walls; and then Herself doth drink this blood of slaughtered men? Could ever Leto, she of the great King Beloved, be mother to so gross a thing? These tales be lies, false as those feastings wild Of Tantalus and Gods that tore a child. This land of murderers to its god hath given Its own lust; evil dwelleth not in heaven.

[SHE GOES INTO THE TEMPLE.] CHORUS.

Dark of the sea, dark of the sea, [STROPHE 1.] Gates of the warring water, One, in the old time, conquered you, A winged passion that burst the blue, When the West was shut and the Dawn lay free To the pain of Inachus' daughter. But who be these, from where the rushes blow On pale Eurotas, from pure Dirce's flow, That turn not neither falter, Seeking Her land, where no man breaketh bread, Her without pity, round whose virgin head Blood on the pillars rusts from long ago, Blood on the ancient altar. [ANTISTROPHE 1.] A flash of the foam, a flash of the foam, A wave on the oarblade welling, And out they passed to the heart of the blue: A chariot shell that the wild winds drew. Is it for passion of gold they come, Or pride to make great their dwelling?

For sweet is Hope, yea, to much mortal woe So sweet that none may turn from it nor go, Whom once the far voice calleth, To wander through fierce peoples and the gleam Of desolate seas, in every heart a dream: And these she maketh empty die, and, lo, To that man's hand she falleth.

[STROPHE 2.]

Through the Clashing Rocks they burst: They passed by the Cape unsleeping Of Phineus' sons accurst: They ran by the star-lit bay Upon magic surges sweeping, Where folk on the waves astray Have seen, through the gleaming grey, Ring behind ring, men say, The dance of the old Sea's daughters.

The guiding oar abaft It rippled and it dinned, And now the west wind laughed And now the south-west wind; And the sail was full in flight, And they passed by the Island White:

Birds, birds, everywhere, White as the foam, light as the air; And ghostly Achilles raceth there, Far in the Friendless Waters. [ANTISTROPHE 1.] Ah, would that Leda's child … (So prayeth the priestess maiden) From Troy, that she beguiled, Hither were borne, to know What sin on her soul is laden! Hair twisted, throat held low, Head back for the blood to flow, To die by the sword. … Ah no! One hope my

soul yet hideth.

A sail, a sail from Greece, Fearless to cross the sea, With ransom and with peace To my sick captivity. O home, to see thee still, And the old walls on the hill!

Dreams, dreams, gather to me! Bear me on wings over the sea; O joy of the night, to slave and free, One good thing that abideth!

LEADER. But lo, the twain whom Thoas sends, Their arms in bondage grasped sore; Strange offering this, to lay before The Goddess! Hold your peace, O friends.

Onward, still onward, to this shrine They lead the first-fruits of the Greek. 'Twas true, the tale he came to speak, That watcher of the mountain kine.

O holy one, if it afford Thee joy, what these men bring to thee, Take thou their sacrifice, which we, By law of Hellas, hold abhorred.

[Enter ORESTES and PYLADES, bound, and guarded by taurians. re-enter IPHIGENIA.]

IPHIGENIA. So be it. My foremost care must be that nothing harms The temple's holy rule.—Untie their arms. That which is hallowed may no more be bound. You, to the shrine within! Let all be found As the law bids, and as we need this day.

[ORESTES and PYLADES are set free; some ATTENDANTS go into the temple.]

Ah me! What mother then was yours, O strangers, say, And father? And your sister, if you have A sister: both at once, so young and brave To leave her brotherless! Who knows when heaven May send that fortune? For to none is given To know the coming nor the end of woe; So dark is God, and to great darkness go His paths, by blind chance mazed from our ken. Whence are ye come, O most unhappy men? From some far home, methinks, ye have found this shore And far shall stay from home for evermore.

ORESTES. Why weepest thou, woman, to make worse the smart Of that which needs must be, whoe'er thou art? I count it not for gentleness, when one Who means

to slay, seeks first to make undone By pity that sharp dread. Nor praise I him, With hope long dead, who sheddeth tears to dim The pain that grips him close. The evil so Is doubled into twain. He doth but show His feeble heart, and, as he must have died, Dies.—Let ill fortune float upon her tide And weep no more for us. What way this land Worships its god we know and understand.

IPHIGENIA. Say first … which is it men call Pylades?

ORESTES. 'Tis this man's name, if that will give thee ease.

IPHIGENIA. From what walled town of Hellas cometh he?

ORESTES. Enough!—How would the knowledge profit thee?

IPHIGENIA. Are ye two brethren of one mother born?

ORESTES. No, not in blood. In love we are brothers sworn.

IPHIGENIA. Thou also hast a name: tell me thereof.

ORESTES. Call me Unfortunate. 'Tis name enough.

IPHIGENIA. I asked not that. Let that with Fortune lie.

ORESTES. Fools cannot laugh at them that nameless die.

IPHIGENIA. Why grudge me this? Hast thou such mighty fame?

ORESTES. My body, if thou wilt, but not my name.

IPHIGENIA. Nor yet the land of Greece where thou wast bred?

ORESTES. What gain to have told it thee, when I am dead?

IPHIGENIA. Nay: why shouldst thou deny so small a grace?

ORESTES. Know then, great Argos was my native place.

IPHIGENIA. Stranger! The truth! … From Argos art thou come?

ORESTES. Mycenae, once a rich land, was my home.

IPHIGENIA. 'Tis banishment that brings thee here—or what?

ORESTES. A kind of banishment, half forced, half sought.

IPHIGENIA. Wouldst thou but tell me all I need of thee!

ORESTES. 'Twere not much added to my misery.

IPHIGENIA. From Argos! … Oh, how sweet to see thee here!

ORESTES. Enjoy it, then. To me 'tis sorry cheer.

IPHIGENIA. Thou knowest the name of Troy? Far doth it flit.

ORESTES. Would God I had not; nay, nor dreamed of it.

IPHIGENIA. Men fable it is fallen beneath the sword?

ORESTES. Fallen it is. Thou hast heard no idle word.

IPHIGENIA. Fallen! At last!—And Helen taken too?

ORESTES. Aye; on an evil day for one I knew.

IPHIGENIA. Where is she? I too have some anger stored …

ORESTES. In Sparta! Once more happy with her lord!

IPHIGENIA. Oh. hated of all Greece, not only me!

ORESTES. I too have tasted of her wizardry.

IPHIGENIA. And came the armies home, as the tales run?

ORESTES. To answer that were many tales in one.

IPHIGENIA. Oh, give me this hour full! Thou wilt soon die.

ORESTES. Ask, if such longing holds thee. I will try.

IPHIGENIA. A seer called Calchas! Did he ever come …?

ORESTES.

Calchas is dead, as the news went at home.

IPHIGENIA.

Good news, ye gods!—Odysseus, what of him?

ORESTES.

Not home yet, but still living, as men deem.

IPHIGENIA.

Curse him! And may he see his home no more.

ORESTES.

Why curse him? All his house is stricken sore.

IPHIGENIA.

How hath the Nereid's son, Achilles, sped?

ORESTES.

Small help his bridal brought him! He is dead.

IPHIGENIA.

A fierce bridal, so the sufferers tell!

ORESTES.

Who art thou, questioning of Greece so well?

IPHIGENIA.

I was Greek. Evil caught me long ago.

ORESTES. Small wonder, then, thou hast such wish to know.

IPHIGENIA. That war-lord, whom they call so high in bliss…

ORESTES. None such is known to me. What name was his?

IPHIGENIA. They called him Agamemnon, Atreus' son.

ORESTES. I know not. Cease.—My questioning is done.

IPHIGENIA. 'Twill be such joy to me! How fares he? Tell!

ORESTES. Dead. And hath wrecked another's life as well.

IPHIGENIA. Dead? By what dreadful fortune? Woe is me!

ORESTES. Why sighst thou? Had he any link with thee?

IPHIGENIA. I did but think of his old joy and pride.

ORESTES. His own wife foully stabbed him, and he died.

IPHIGENIA. O God! I pity her that slew … and him that slew.

ORESTES. Now cease thy questions. Add no word thereto.

IPHIGENIA. But one word. Lives she still, that hapless wife?

ORESTES. No. Her own son, her first-born, took her life.

IPHIGENIA. O shipwrecked house! What thought was in his brain?

ORESTES. Justice on her, to avenge his father slain.

IPHIGENIA. Alas! A bad false duty bravely hath he wrought.

ORESTES. Yet God, for all his duty, helps him not.

IPHIGENIA. And not one branch of Atreus' tree lives on?

ORESTES. Electra lives, unmated and alone.

IPHIGENIA. The child they slaughtered … is there word of her?

ORESTES. Why, no, save that she died in Aulis there.

IPHIGENIA. Poor child! Poor father, too, who killed and lied!

ORESTES. For a bad woman's worthless sake she died.

IPHIGENIA. The dead king's son, lives he in Argos still?

ORESTES. He lives, now here, now nowhere, bent with ill.

IPHIGENIA. O dreams, light dreams, farewell! Ye too were lies.

ORESTES. Aye; the gods too, whom mortals deem so wise, Are nothing clearer than some winged dream; And all their ways, like man's ways, but a stream Of turmoil. He who cares to suffer least, Not blind, as fools are blinded, by a priest, Goes straight… to what death, those who know him know.

LEADER. We too have kinsmen dear, but, being low, None heedeth, live they still or live they not.

IPHIGENIA (WITH SUDDEN IMPULSE). Listen! For I am fallen upon a thought, Strangers, of some good use to you and me, Both. And 'tis thus most good things come to be, When different eyes hold the same for fair.

Stranger, if I can save thee, wilt thou bear To Argos and the friends who loved my youth Some word? There is a tablet which, in truth For me and mine ill works, a prisoner wrote, Ta'en by the king in war. He knew 'twas not My will that craved for blood, but One on high Who holds it righteous her due prey shall die. And since that day no Greek hath ever come Whom I could save and send to Argos home With prayer for help to any friend: but thou, I think, dost loathe me not; and thou dost know Mycenae and the names that fill my heart. Help me! Be saved! Thou also hast thy part, Sending Completed Page, Please Wait …

IPHIGENIA. 'Tis I. This altar's spell is over me.

ORESTES. A grievous office and unblest, O maid.

IPHIGENIA. What dare I do? The law must be obeyed.

ORESTES. A girl to hold a sword and stab men dead!

IPHIGENIA. I shall but sign the water on thy head.

ORESTES. And who shall strike me, if I needs must ask?

IPHIGENIA. There be within these vaults who know their task.

ORESTES. My grave, when they have finished their desire?

IPHIGENIA. A great gulf of the rock, and holy fire.

ORESTES. Woe's me! Would that my sister's hand could close mine eyes!

IPHIGENIA. Alas, she dwelleth under distant skies, Unhappy one, and vain is all thy prayer. Yet, Oh, them art from Argos: all of care That can be, I will give and fail thee not. Rich raiment to thy burial shall be brought, And oil to cool thy pyre in golden floods, And sweet that from a thousand mountain buds The murmuring bee hath garnered, I will throw To die with thee in fragrance. … I must go And seek the

tablet from the Goddess' room Within.—Oh, do not hate me for my doom!

Watch them, ye servitors, but leave them free.

It may be, past all hoping, it may be, My word shall sail to Argos, to his hand Whom most I love. How joyous will he stand To know, past hope, that here on the world's rim His dead are living, and cry out for him!

[She goes into the Temple.]

CHORUS. Alas, we pity thee; surely we pity thee: [Strophe.] Who art given over to the holy water, The drops that fall deadly as drops of blood.

ORESTES. I weep not, ye Greek maidens: but farewell.

CHORUS. [ANTISTROPHE.]

Aye, and rejoice with thee; surely rejoice with thee, Thou happy rover from the place of slaughter; Thy foot shall stand again where thy father's stood.

PYLADES. While he I love must die? 'Tis miserable.

DIVERS WOMEN OF THE CHORUS. A. Alas, the deathward faring of the lost! B. Woe, woe; thou too shalt move to misery. C Which one shall suffer most? D. My heart is torn by two words evenly, For thee should I most sorrow, or for thee?

ORESTES. By heaven, is THY thought, Pylades, like mine?

PYLADES. O friend, I cannot speak.—But what is thine?

ORESTES. Who can the damsel be? How Greek her tone Of question, all of Ilion overthrown, And how the kings came back, the wizard flame Of Calchas, and Achilles' mighty name, And ill-starred Agamemnon. With a keen Pity she spoke, and asked me of his queen And children … The strange woman comes from there By race, an Argive maid.—What aileth her With tablets, else, and questionings as though Her own heart beat with Argos' joy or woe?

PYLADES. Thy speech is quicker, friend, else I had said The same; though surely all men visited By ships have heard the fall of the great kings. But let that be: I think

of other things …

ORESTES. What? If thou hast need of me, let it be said.

PYLADES. I cannot live for shame if thou art dead. I sailed together with thee; let us die Together. What a coward slave were I, Creeping through Argos and from glen to glen Of wind-torn Phocian hills! And most of men— For most are bad—will whisper how one day I left my friend to die and made my way Home. They will say I watched the sinking breath Of thy great house and plotted for thy death To wed thy sister, climb into thy throne… I dread, I loathe it.—Nay, all ways but one Are shut. My last breath shall go forth with thine, Thy bloody sword, thy gulf of fire be mine Also. I love thee and I dread men's scorn.

ORESTES. Peace from such thoughts! My burden can be borne; But where one pain sufficeth, double pain I will not bear. Nay, all that scorn and stain That fright thee, on mine own head worse would be If I brought death on him who toiled for me. It is no bitter thing for such an one As God will have me be, at last to have done With living. THOU art happy; thy house lies At peace with God, unstained in men's eyes; Mine is all evil fate and evil life … Nay, thou once safe, my sister for thy wife— So we agreed:—in sons of hers and thine My name will live, nor Agamemnon's line Be blurred for ever like an evil scroll. Back! Rule thy land! Let life be in thy soul! And when thou art come to Hellas, and the plain Of Argos where the horsemen ride, again— Give me thy hand!—I charge thee, let there be Some death-mound and a graven stone for me. My sister will go weep thereat, and shear A tress or two. Say how I ended here, Slain by a maid of Argolis, beside God's altar, in mine own blood purified.

And fare thee well. I have no friend like thee For truth and love, O boy that played with me, And hunted on Greek hills, O thou on whom Hath lain the hardest burden of my doom! Farewell. The Prophet and the Lord of Lies Hath done his worst. Far out from Grecian skies With craft forethought he driveth me, to die Where none may

mark how ends his prophecy! I trusted in his word. I gave him all My heart. I slew my mother at his call; For which things now he casts me here to die.

PYLADES. Thy tomb shall fail thee not. Thy sister I Will guard for ever. I, O stricken sore, Who loved thee living and shall love thee more Dead. But for all thou standest on the brink, God's promise hath not yet destroyed thee. Think! How oft, how oft the darkest hour of ill Breaks brightest into dawn, if Fate but will!

ORESTES. Enough. Nor god nor man can any more Aid me. The woman standeth at the door.

[enter IPHIGENIA from the Temple.]

IPHIGENIA. Go ye within; and have all things of need In order set for them that do the deed. There wait my word.

[ATTENDANTS go in.]

Ye strangers, here I hold The many-lettered tablet, fold on fold. Yet … one thing still. No man, once unafraid And safe, remembereth all the vows he made In fear of death. My heart misgiveth me, Lest he who bears my tablet, once gone free, Forget me here and set my charge at naught.

ORESTES. What wouldst thou, then? Thou hast some troubling thought.

IPHIGENIA. His sworn oath let him give, to bear this same Tablet to Argos, to the friend I name.

ORESTES. And if he give this oath, wilt thou swear too?

IPHIGENIA. What should I swear to do or not to do?

ORESTES. Send him from Tauris safe and free from ill.

IPHIGENIA. I promise. How else could he do my will?

ORESTES. The King will suffer this?

IPHIGENIA. Yes: I can bend The King, and set upon his ship thy friend.

ORESTES. Choose then what oath is best, and he will swear.

IPHIGENIA (to PYLADES, who has come up to her). Say: "To thy friend this tablet I will bear."

PYLADES (TAKING THE TABLET). Good. I will bear this tablet to thy friend.

IPHIGENIA. And I save thee beyond this kingdom's end.

PYLADES. What god dost thou invoke to witness this?

IPHIGENIA. Her in whose house I labour, Artemis.

PYLADES. And I the Lord of Heaven, eternal Zeus.

IPHIGENIA. And if thou fail me, or thine oath abuse …?

PYLADES. May I see home no more. And thou, what then?

IPHIGENIA. May this foot never tread Greek earth again.

PYLADES. But stay: there is one chance we have forgot.

IPHIGENIA. A new oath can be sworn, if this serve not.

PYLADES. In one case set me free. Say I be crossed With shipwreck, and, with ship and tablet lost And all I bear, my life be saved alone: Let not this oath be held a thing undone, To curse me.

IPHIGENIA. Nay, then, many ways are best To many ends. The words thou carriest Enrolled and hid beneath that tablet's rim, I will repeat to thee, and thou to him I look for. Safer so. If the scrip sail Unhurt to Greece, itself will tell my tale Unaided: if it drown in some wide sea, Save but thyself, my words are saved with thee.

PYLADES. For thy sake and for mine 'tis fairer so. Now let me hear his name to whom I go In Argolis, and how my words should run.

IPHIGENIA (REPEATING THE WORDS BY HEART). Say: "To Orestes, Agamemnon's son She that was slain in Aulis, dead to Greece Yet quick, Iphigenia sendeth peace:"

ORESTES. Iphigenia! Where? Back from the dead?

IPHIGENIA. 'Tis I. But speak not, lest thou break my thread.— "Take me to Argos, brother, ere I die, Back from the Friendless Peoples and the high Altar of Her whose bloody rites I wreak."

ORESTES (ASIDE). Where am I, Pylades? How shall I speak?

IPHIGENIA. "Else one in grief forsaken shall, like shame, Haunt thee."

PYLADES (aside). Orestes!

IPHIGENIA (overhearing him). Yes: that is the name.

PYLADES. Ye Gods above!

IPHIGENIA. Why callest thou on God For words of mine?

PYLADES. 'Tis nothing. 'Twas a road My thoughts had turned. Speak on.—No need for us To question; we shall hear things marvellous.

IPHIGENIA. Tell him that Artemis my soul did save, I wot not how, and to the altar gave A fawn instead; the which my father slew, Not seeing, deeming that the sword he drew Struck me. But she had borne me far away And left me in this land.—I charge thee, say So much. It all is written on the scroll.

PYLADES. An easy charge thou layest on my soul, A glad oath on thine own. I wait no more, But here fulfil the service that I swore. Orestes, take this tablet which I bear To thine own hand, thy sister's messenger.

ORESTES. I take it, but I reck not of its scrip Nor message. Too much joy is at my lip. Sister! Beloved! Wildered though I be, My arms believe not, yet they crave for thee. Now, filled with wonder, give me my delight!

[he goes to embrace her. she stands speechless.]

LEADER. Stranger, forbear! No living man hath right To touch that robe. The Goddess were defiled!

ORESTES. O Sister mine, O my dead father's child, Agamemnon's child; take me

and have no fear, Beyond all dreams 'tis I thy brother here.

IPHIGENIA. My brother? Thou? … Peace! Mock at me no more. Argos is bright with him and Nauplia's shore.

ORESTES. Unhappy one! Thou hast no brother there.

IPHIGENIA. Orestes … thou? Whom Clytemnestra bare?

ORESTES. To Atreus' firstborn son, thy sire and mine.

IPHIGENIA. Thou sayst it: Oh, give me some proof, some sign!

ORESTES. What sign thou wilt. Ask anything from home.

IPHIGENIA. Nay, thou speak: 'tis from thee the sign should come.

ORESTES. That will I.—First, old tales Electra told. Thou knowest how Pelops' princes warred of old?

IPHIGENIA. I know: the Golden Lamb that wrought their doom.

ORESTES. Thine own hand wove that story on the loom…

IPHIGENIA. How sweet! Thou movest near old memories.

ORESTES. With a great Sun back beaten in the skies.

IPHIGENIA. Fine linen threads I used. The memories come.

ORESTES. And mother gave thee shrift-water from home For Aulis …

IPHIGENIA. I remember. Not so fair A day did drink that water!

ORESTES. And thine hair They brought us for thy dying gift, and gave To mother.

IPHIGENIA. Yes: for record on the grave I sent it, where this head should never lie.

ORESTES. Another token, seen of mine own eye. The ancient lance that leapt in Pelops' hand, To win his bride, the virgin of the land, And smite Oenomaus, in thy chamber hid …

IPHIGENIA (falling into his arms). Beloved! Oh, no other, for indeed Beloved art thou! In mine arms at last, Orestes far away.

ORESTES. And thou in mine, the evil dreaming past, Back from the dead this day! Yet through the joy tears, tears and sorrow loud Are o'er mine eyes and thine eyes, like a cloud.

IPHIGENIA. Is this the babe I knew, The little babe, light lifted like a bird? O heart of mine, too blest for any word, What shall I say or do? Beyond all wonders, beyond stories heard, This joy is here and true.

ORESTES. Could we but stay thus joined for evermore!

IPHIGENIA. A joy is mine I may not understand, Friends, and a fear, lest sudden from my hand This dream will melt and soar Up to the fiery skies from whence it came. O Argos land, O hearth and holy flame That old Cyclopes lit, I bless ye that he lives, that he is grown, A light and strength, my brother and mine own; I bless your name for it.

ORESTES. One blood we are; so much is well. But Fate, Sister, hath not yet made us fortunate.

IPHIGENIA. O most unfortunate! Did I not feel, Whose father, misery-hearted, at my bare Throat held the steel?

ORESTES. Woe's me! Methinks even now I see thee there.

IPHIGENIA. No love-song of Achilles! Crafty arms Drew me to that cold sleep, And tears, blind tears amid the altar psalms And noise of them that weep— That was my cleansing!

ORESTES. My heart too doth bleed, To think our father wrought so dire a deed.

IPHIGENIA. My life hath known no father. Any road To any end may run, As god's will drives; else …

ORESTES. Else, unhappy one, Thyself had spilt this day thy brother's blood!

IPHIGENIA. Ah God, my cruel deed! … 'Twas horrible. 'Twas horrible … O brother! Did my heart Endure it? … And things fell Right by so frail a chance; and

here thou art. Bloody my hand had been, My heart heavy with sin. And now, what end cometh? Shall Chance yet comfort me, Finding a way for thee Back from the Friendless Strand, Back from the place of death— Ere yet the slayers come And thy blood sink in the sand— Home unto Argos, home? … Hard heart, so swift to slay, Is there to life no way? …

No ship! … And how by land? … A rush of feet Out to the waste alone. Nay: 'twere to meet Death, amid tribes unknown And trackless ways of the waste … Surely the sea were best. Back by the narrow bar To the Dark Blue Gate! … Ah God, too far, too far! … Desolate! Desolate!

What god or man, what unimagined flame, Can cleave this road where no road is, and bring To us last wrecks of Agamemnon's name, Peace from long suffering?

LEADER. Lo, deeds of wonder and beyond surmise, Not as tales told, but seen of mine own eyes.

PYLADES. Men that have found the arms of those they love Would fain long linger in the joy thereof. But we, Orestes, have no respite yet For tears or tenderness. Let us forget All but the one word Freedom, calling us To live, not die by altars barbarous. Think not of joy in this great hour, nor lose Fortune's first hold. Not thus do wise men use.

ORESTES. I think that Fortune watcheth o'er our lives, Surer than we. But well said: he who strives Will find his gods strive for him equally.

IPHIGENIA. He shall not check us so, nor baffle me Of this one word. How doth Electra move Through life? Ye twain are all I have to love.

ORESTES. A wife and happy: this man hath her hand.

IPHIGENIA. And what man's son is he, and of what land?

ORESTES. Son of King Strophios he is called of men.

IPHIGENIA. Whom Atreus' daughter wed?—My kinsman then.

ORESTES. Our cousin, and my true and only friend.

IPHIGENIA. He was not born, when I went to mine end.

ORESTES. No, Strophios had no child for many a year.

IPHIGENIA. I give thee hail, husband of one so dear.

ORESTES. My more than kinsman, saviour in my need!

IPHIGENIA. But mother … Speak: how did ye dare that deed?

ORESTES. Our father's wrongs … But let that story be.

IPHIGENIA. And she to slay her king! What cause had she?

ORESTES. Forget her! … And no tale for thee it is.

IPHIGENIA. So be it.—And thou art Lord of Argolis?

ORESTES. Our uncle rules. I walk an exile's ways.

IPHIGENIA. Doth he so trample on our fallen days?

ORESTES. Nay: there be those that drive me, Shapes of Dread.

IPHIGENIA. Ah! That frenzy on the shore! 'Tis as they said…

ORESTES. They saw me in mine hour. It needs must be.

IPHIGENIA. 'Twas our dead mother's Furies hounding thee!

ORESTES. My mouth is bloody with the curb they ride.

IPHIGENIA. What brought thee here beyond the Friendless Tide?

ORESTES. What leads me everywhere—Apollo's word.

IPHIGENIA. Seeking what end?—Or may the tale be heard?

ORESTES. Nay, I can tell thee all. It needs must be The whole tale of my days of misery. When this sore evil that we speak not of Lit on my hand, this way and that they drove My body, till the God by diverse paths Led me to Athens, that the nameless Wraths Might bring me before judgment. For that land A pure tribunal hath, where Ares' hand, Red from an ancient stain, by Zeus was sent For justice.

Thither came I; and there went God's hate before me, that at first no man Would give me shelter. Then some few began To pity, and set out for me aloof One table. There I sate within their roof, But without word they signed to me, as one Apart, unspoken to, unlocked upon, Lest touch of me should stain their meat and sup. And every man in measure filled his cup And gave me mine, and took their joy apart, While I sat silent; for I had no heart To upbraid the hosts that fed me. On I wrought In my deep pain, feigning to mark them not.

And now, men say, mine evil days are made A rite among them and the cups are laid Apart for each. The rule abideth still.

Howbeit, when I was come to Ares' Hill They gave me judgment. On one stone I stood, On one she that was eldest of the brood That hunted me so long. And many a word Touching my mother's death was spoke and heard, Till Phoebus rose to save me. Even lay The votes of Death and Life; when, lo, a sway Of Pallas' arm, and free at last I stood From that death grapple. But the Shapes of Blood— Some did accept the judgment, and of grace Consent to make their house beneath that place In darkness. Others still consented not, But clove to me the more, like bloodhounds hot On the dying; till to Phoebus' house once more I crept, and cast me starving on the floor Facing the Holy Place, and made my cry: "Lord Phoebus, here I am come, and here will die, Unless thou save me, as thou hast betrayed." And, lo, from out that dark and golden shade A voice: "Go, seek the Taurian citadel: Seize there the carven Artemis that fell From heaven, and stablish it on Attic soil. So comes thy freedom." [IPHIGENIA shrinks.] Sister, in this toil

Help us!—If once that image I may win That day shall end my madness and my sin: And thou, to Argos o'er the sundering foam My many-oared barque shall bear thee home.

O sister loved and lost, O pitying face, Help my great peril; help our father's race. For lost am I and perished all the powers Of Pelops, save that heavenly thing be

ours!

LEADER. Strange wrath of God hath fallen, like hot rain, On Tantalus' house: he leadeth them through pain.

IPHIGENIA. Long ere you came my heart hath yearned to be In Argos, brother, and so near to thee: But now—thy will is mine. To ease thy pain, To lift our father's house to peace again, And hate no more my murderers—aye,'tis good. Perchance to clean this hand that sought thy blood, And save my people… But the goddess' eyes, How dream we to deceive them? Or what wise Escape the King, when on his sight shall fall The blank stone of the empty pedestal? … I needs must die … What better can I do?

And yet, one chance there is: could I but go Together with the image: couldst thou bear Both on the leaping seas! The risk were fair. But how?

Nay, I must wait then and be slain: Thou shalt walk free in Argolis again, And all life smile on thee … Dearest, we need Nor shrink from that. I shall by mine own deed Have saved thee. And a man gone from the earth Is wept for. Women are but little worth.

ORESTES. My mother and then thou? It may not be. This hand hath blood enough. I stand with thee One-hearted here, be it for life or death, And either bear thee, if God favoureth, With me to Greece and home, or else lie here Dead at thy side.—But mark me: if thou fear Lest Artemis be wroth, how can that be? Hath not her brother's self commanded me To bear to Greece her image?—Oh, he knew Her will! He knew that in this land we two Must meet once more. All that so far hath past Doth show his work. He will not at the last Fail. We shall yet see Argos, thou and I.

IPHIGENIA. To steal for thee the image, yet not die Myself! 'Tis that we need. 'Tis that doth kill My hope. Else … Oh, God knows I have the will!

ORESTES. How if we slew your savage king?

IPHIGENIA. Ah, no: He sheltered me, a stranger.

ORESTES. Even so, If it bring life for me and thee, the deed May well be dared.

IPHIGENIA. I could not … Nay; indeed I thank thee for thy daring.

ORESTES. Canst thou hide My body in the shrine?

IPHIGENIA. There to abide Till nightfall, and escape?

ORESTES. Even so; the night Is the safe time for robbers, as the light For just men.

IPHIGENIA. There be sacred watchers there Who needs must see us.

ORESTES. Gods above! What prayer Can help us then?

IPHIGENIA. I think I dimly see One chance.

ORESTES. What chance? Speak out thy fantasy.

IPHIGENIA'. On thine affliction I would build my way.

ORESTES. Women have strange devices.

IPHIGENIA. I would say Thou com'st from Hellas with thy mother's blood Upon thee.

ORESTES. Use my shame, if any good Will follow.

IPHIGENIA. Therefore, an offence most high It were to slay thee to the goddess!

ORESTES. Why? Though I half guess.

IPHIGENIA. Thy body is unclean.— Oh, I will fill them with the fear of sin!

ORESTES. What help is that for the Image?

IPHIGENIA. I will crave To cleanse thee in the breaking of the wave.

ORESTES. That leaves the goddess still inside her shrine, And'tis for her we sailed.

IPHIGENIA. A touch of thine Defiled her. She too must be purified.

ORESTES. Where shall it be? Thou knowest where the tide Sweeps up in a long channel?

IPHIGENIA. Yes! And where Your ship, I guess, lies moored.

ORESTES. Whose hand will bear— Should it be thine?—the image from her throne?

IPHIGENIA. No hand of man may touch it save mine own.

ORESTES. And Pylades—what part hath he herein?

IPHIGENIA. The same as thine. He bears the self-same sin.

ORESTES. How wilt thou work the plan—hid from the king Or known?

IPHIGENIA. To hide it were a hopeless thing.. Oh, I will face him, make him yield to me.

ORESTES. Well, fifty oars lie waiting on the sea.

IPHIGENIA. Aye, there comes thy work, till an end be made.

ORESTES. Good. It needs only that these women aid Our secret. Do thou speak with them, and find Words of persuasion. Power is in the mind Of woman to wake pity.—For the rest, God knoweth: may it all end for the best!

IPHIGENIA. O women, you my comrades, in your eyes I look to read my fate. In you it lies, That either I find peace, or be cast down To nothing, robbed for ever of mine own— Brother, and home, and sister pricelessly Beloved.—Are we not women, you and I, A broken race, to one another true, And strong in our shared secrets? Help me through This strait; keep hid the secret of our flight, And share our peril! Honour shineth bright On her whose lips are steadfast … Heaven above! Three souls, but one in fortune, one in love, Thou seest us go—is it to death or home? If home, then surely, surely, there shall come Part of our joy to thee. I swear, I swear To aid thee also home …

[she goes to one after another, and presently kneels embracing the knees of the LEADER.]

I make my prayer By that right hand; to thee, too, by that dear Cheek; by thy knees; by all that is not here Of things beloved, by mother, father, child— Thou hadst a

child!—How say ye? Have ye smiled Or turned from me? For if ye turn away, I and my brother are lost things this day.

LEADER. Be of good heart, sweet mistress. Only go To happiness. No child of man shall know From us thy secret. Hear me, Zeus on high!

IPHIGENIA (rising). God bless you for that word, and fill your eye With light!—

[turning to ORESTES and PYLADES.]

But now, to work! Go thou, and thou, In to the deeper shrine. King Thoas now Should soon be here to question if the price Be yet paid of the strangers' sacrifice.

[ORESTES and PYLADES go in.]

Thou Holy One, that on the shrouded sand Of Aulis saved me from a father's hand Blood-maddened, save me now, and save these twain. Else shall Apollo's lips, through thy disdain, Be no more true nor trusted in men's eyes. Come from the friendless shore, the cruel skies, Come back: what mak'st thou here, when o'er the sea A clean and joyous land doth call for thee?

[she follows the men into the temple.]

CHORUS. [STROPHE I.]

Bird of the sea rocks, of the bursting spray, O halcyon bird, That wheelest crying, crying, on thy way; Who knoweth grief can read the tale of thee: One love long lost, one song for ever heard And wings that sweep the sea.

Sister, I too beside the sea complain, A bird that hath no wing. Oh, for a kind Greek market-place again, For Artemis that healeth woman's pain; ' Here I stand hungering. Give me the little hill above the sea, The palm of Delos fringed delicately, The young sweet laurel and the olive-tree Grey-leaved and glimmering; O Isle of Leto, Isle of pain and love; The Orbed Water and the spell thereof; Where still the Swan, minstrel of things to be, Doth serve the Muse and sing!

[ANTISTROPHE I.]

Ah, the old tears, the old and blinding tears I gave God then, When my town fell, and noise was in mine ears Of crashing towers, and forth they guided me Through spears and lifted oars and angry men Out to an unknown sea. They bought my flesh with gold, and sore afraid I came to this dark East To serve, in thrall to Agamemnon's maid, This Huntress Artemis, to whom is paid The blood of no slain beast; Yet all is bloody where I dwell, Ah me! Envying, envying that misery That through all life hath endured changelessly. For hard things borne from birth Make iron of man's heart, and hurt the less. 'Tis change that paineth; and the bitterness Of life's decay when joy hath ceased to be That makes dark all the earth.

Behold, [STROPHE 2.] Two score and ten there be Rowers that row for thee, And a wild hill air, as if Pan were there, Shall sound on the Argive sea, Piping to set thee free.

Or is it the stricken string Of Apollo's lyre doth sing Joyously, as he guideth thee To Athens, the land of spring; While I wait wearying?

Oh, the wind and the oar, When the great sail swells before, With sheets astrain, like a horse on the rein; And on, through the race and roar, She feels for the farther shore.

Ah me, [ANTISTROPHE 2.] To rise upon wings and hold Straight on up the steeps of gold Where the joyous Sun in fire doth run, Till the wings should faint and fold O'er the house that was mine of old:

Or watch where the glade below With a marriage dance doth glow, And a child will glide from her mother's side Out, out, where the dancers flow: As I did, long ago.

Oh, battles of gold and rare Raiment and starred hair, And bright veils crossed amid tresses tossed In a dusk of dancing air! O Youth and the days that were!

[enter KING THOAS, with soldiers.]

THOAS. Where is the warden of this sacred gate, The Greek woman? Is her work ended yet With those two strangers? Do their bodies lie Aflame now in the

rock-cleft sanctuary?

LEADER. Here is herself, O King, to give thee word. enter, from the temple, IPHIGENIA, carrying the image on high.

THOAS. How, child of Agamemnon! Hast thou stirred From her eternal base, and to the sun Bearest in thine own arms, the Holy One?

IPHIGENIA. Back Lord! No step beyond the pillared way.

THOAS. But how? Some rule is broken?

IPHIGENIA. I unsay That word. Be all unspoken and unwrought!

THOAS. What means this greeting strange? Disclose thy thought.

IPHIGENIA. Unclean the prey was that ye caught, O King.

THOAS. Who showed thee so? Thine own imagining?

IPHIGENIA. The Image stirred and shuddered from its seat.

THOAS. Itself? … Some shock of earthquake loosened it.

IPHIGENIA. Itself. And the eyes closed one breathing space.

THOAS. But why? For those two men's bloodguiltiness?

IPHIGENIA. That, nothing else. For, Oh, their guilt is sore.

THOAS. They killed some of my herdsmen on the shore?

IPHIGENIA. Their sin was brought from home, not gathered here.

THOAS. What? I must know this.—Make thy story clear.

IPHIGENIA. (she puts the image down and moves nearer to thoas.) The men have slain their mother.

THOAS. God! And these Be Greeks!

IPHIGENIA They both are hunted out of Greece.

THOAS. For this thou has brought the Image to the sun?

IPHIGENIA. The fire of heaven can cleanse all malison.

THOAS. How didst thou first hear of their deed of shame?

IPHIGENIA. When the Image hid its eyes, I questioned them.

THOAS. Good. Greece hath taught thee many a subtle art.

IPHIGENIA. Ah, they too had sweet words to move my heart.

THOAS. Sweet words? How, did they bring some news of Greece?

IPHIGENIA. Orestes, my one brother, lives in peace.

THOAS. Surely! Good news to make thee spare their lives …

IPHIGENIA. My father too in Argos lives and thrives.

THOAS. While thou didst think but of the goddess' laws!

IPHIGENIA. Do I not hate all Greeks? Have I not cause?

THOAS. Good cause. But now … What service should be paid?

IPHIGENIA. The Law of long years needs must be obeyed.

THOAS. To work then, with thy sword and handwashing!

IPHIGENIA. First I must shrive them with some cleansing thing.

THOAS. What? Running water, or the sea's salt spray?

IPHIGENIA. The sea doth wash all the world's ills away.

THOAS. For sure. 'Twill make them cleaner for the knife.

IPHIGENIA. And my hand, too, cleaner for all my life.

THOAS. Well, the waves lap close by the temple floor.

IPHIGENIA. We need a secret place. I must do more.

THOAS. Some rite unseen? 'Tis well. Go where thou wilt.

IPHIGENIA. The Image likewise must be purged of guilt.

THOAS. The stain hath touched it of that mother's blood?

IPHIGENIA. I durst not move it else, from where it stood.

THOAS. How good thy godliness and forethought! Aye, Small wonder all our people holds thee high.

IPHIGENIA. Dost know then what I fain would have?

THOAS. 'Tis thine to speak and it shall be.

IPHIGENIA. Put bondage on the strangers both …

THOAS. Why bondage? Whither can they flee?

IPHIGENIA. Put not thy faith in any Greek.

THOAS (to ATTENDANTS). Ho, men! Some thongs and fetters, go!

IPHIGENIA. Stay; let them lead the strangers here, outside the shrine …

THOAS. It shall be so.

IPHIGENIA. And lay dark raiment on their heads …

THOAS. To veil them, lest the Sun should see.

IPHIGENIA. And lend me some of thine own spears.

THOAS. This company shall go with thee.

IPHIGENIA. Next, send through all the city streets a herald …

THOAS. Aye; and what to say?

IPHIGENIA. That no man living stir abroad.

THOAS. The stain of blood might cross their way.

IPHIGENIA. Aye, sin like theirs doth spread contagion.

THOAS (to an ATTENDANT). Forth, and publish my command …

IPHIGENIA. That none stir forth—nor look …

THOAS. Nor look.—How well thou carest for the land!

IPHIGENIA. For one whom I am bound to love.

THOAS. Indeed, I think thou hat'st me not.

IPHIGENIA. And thou meanwhile, here at the temple, wait, O King, and …

THOAS. Wait for what?

IPHIGENIA. Purge all the shrine with fire.

THOAS. 'Twill all be clean before you come again.

IPHIGENIA. And while the strangers pass thee close, seeking the sea …

THOAS. What wouldst thou then?

IPHIGENIA. Put darkness on thine eyes.

THOAS. Mine eyes might drink the evil of their crime?

IPHIGENIA.

And, should I seem to stay too long …

THOAS. Too long? How shall I judge the time?

IPHIGENIA. Be not dismayed.

THOAS. Perform thy rite all duly. We have time to spare.

IPHIGENIA. And God but grant this cleansing end as I desire!

THOAS. I join thy prayer.

IPHIGENIA. The door doth open! See, they lead the strangers from the cell within, And raiment holy and young lambs, whose blood shall shrive the blood of Sin. And, lo, the light of sacred fires, and things of secret power, arrayed By mine own hand to cleanse aright the strangers, to cleanse Leto's Maid.

[she takes up the image again.]

There passeth here a holy thing: begone, I charge ye, from the road, O whoso by these sacred gates may dwell, hand-consecrate to God, What man hath marriage in his heart, what woman goeth great with child, Begone and tremble from this road: fly swiftly, lest ye be defiled.—

O Queen and Virgin, Leto-born, have pity! Let me cleanse this stain, And pray to thee where pray I would: a clean house shall be thine again, And we at last win happiness.—Behold, I speak but as I dare; The rest … Oh, God is wise, and thou, my Mistress, thou canst read my prayer.

[The procession passes out, THOAS and the bystanders veiled; Attendants in front, then IPHIGENIA with the Image, then veiled Soldiers, then ORESTES and PYLADES bound, the bonds held by other veiled Soldiers following them. THOAS goes into the Temple.]

CHORUS. [STROPHE.] Oh, fair the fruits of Leto blow: A Virgin, one, with joyous bow, And one a Lord of flashing locks, Wise in the harp, Apollo: She bore them amid Delian rocks, Hid in a fruited hollow.

But forth she fared from that low reef, Sea-cradle of her joy and grief. A crag she knew more near the skies And lit with wilder water, That leaps with joy of Dionyse: There brought she son and daughter.

And there, behold, an ancient Snake, Wine-eyed, bronze-gleaming in the brake Of deep-leaved laurel, ruled the dell, Sent by old Earth from under Strange caves to guard her oracle— A thing of fear and wonder.

Thou, Phoebus, still a new-born thing, Meet in thy mother's arms to lie, Didst kill the Snake and crown thee king, In Pytho's land of prophecy: Thine was the tripod and the chair Of golden truth; and throned there, Hard by the streams of Castaly, Beneath the untrodden portal Of Earth's mid stone there flows from thee Wisdom for all things mortal.

[ANTISTROPHE.]

He slew the Snake; he cast, men say, Themis, the child of Earth, away From Pytho and her hallowed stream; Then Earth, in dark derision, Brought forth the Peoples of the Dream And all the tribes of Vision.

And men besought them; and from deep Confused underworlds of sleep They

showed blind things that erst had been And are and yet shall follow So did avenge that old Earth Queen Her child's wrong on Apollo.

Then swiftly flew that conquering one To Zeus on high, and round the throne Twining a small indignant hand, Prayed him to send redeeming To Pytho from that troublous band Sprung from the darks of dreaming.

Zeus laughed to see the babe, I trow, So swift to claim his golden rite; He laughed and bowed his head, in vow To still those voices of the night. And so from out the eyes of men That dark dream-truth was lost again; And Phoebus, throneed where the throng Prays at the golden portal, Again doth shed in sunlit song Hope unto all things mortal.

[enter a MESSENGER, running.]

MESSENGER. Ho, watchers of the fane! Ho, altar-guard, Where is King Thoas gone? Undo the barred Portals, and call the King! The King I seek.

LEADER. What tidings—if unbidden I may speak?

MESSENGER. The strangers both are gone, and we beguiled, By some dark plot of Agamemnon's child: Fled from the land! And on a barque of Greece They bear the heaven-sent shape of Artemis.

LEADER. Thy tale is past belief.—Go, swiftly on, And find the King. He is but newly gone.

MESSENGER. Where went he? He must know of what has passed!

LEADER. I know not where he went. But follow fast And seek him. Thou wilt light on him ere long.

MESSENGER. See there! The treason of a woman's tongue! Ye all are in the plot, I warrant ye!

LEADER. Thy words are mad! What are the men to me? … Go to the palace, go!

MESSENGER (seeing the great knocker on the temple door.) I will not stir Till

word be come by this good messenger If Thoas be within these gates or no.—

[thundering at the door.]

Ho, loose the portals! Ye within! What ho! Open, and tell our master one doth stand Without here, with strange evil in his hand.

[enter THAOS from the temple.]

THOAS. Who dares before this portal consecrate Make uproar and lewd battering of the gate? Thy noise hath broke the Altar's ancient peace.

MESSENGER. Ye Gods! They swore to me—and bade me cease My search—the King was gone. And all the while …!

THOAS. These women? How? What sought they by such guile?

MESSENGER. Of them hereafter!—Give me first thine ear For greater things. The virgin minister That served our altar, she hath fled from this And stolen the dread Shape of Artemis, With those two Greeks. The cleansing was a lie.

THOAS. She fled?—What wild hope whispered her to fly?

MESSENGER. The hope to save Orestes. Wonder on!

THOAS. Orestes—how? Not Clytemnestra's son?

MESSENGER. And our pledged altar-offering. 'Tis the same.

THOAS. O marvel beyond marvel! By what name More rich in wonder can I name thee right?

MESSENGER. Give not thy mind to that. Let ear and sight Be mine awhile; and when thou hast heard the whole Devise how best to trap them ere the goal.

THOAS. Aye, tell thy tale. Our Tauric seas stretch far, Where no man may escape my wand of war.

MESSENGER. Soon as we reached that headland of the sea, Whereby Orestes' barque lay secretly, We soldiers holding, by thine own commands, The chain that

bound the strangers, in our hands, There Agamemnon's daughter made a sign, Bidding us wait far off, for some divine And secret fire of cleansing she must make. We could but do her will. We saw her take The chain in her own hands and walk behind. Indeed thy servants bore a troubled mind, O King, but how do else? So time went by. Meanwhile to make it seem she wrought some high Magic, she cried aloud: then came the long Drone of some strange and necromantic song, As though she toiled to cleanse that blood; and there Sat we, that long time, waiting. Till a fear O'ertook us, that the men might slip their chain And strike the priestess down and plunge amain For safety: yet the dread our eyes to fill With sights unbidden held us, and we still Sat silent. But at last all spoke as one, Forbid or not forbid, to hasten on And find them. On we went, and suddenly, With oarage poised, like wings upon the sea, An Argive ship we saw, her fifty men All benched, and on the shore, with every chain Cast off, our strangers, standing by the stern! The prow was held by stay-poles: turn by turn The anchor-cable rose; some men had strung Long ropes into a ladder, which they swung Over the side for those two Greeks to climb.

The plot was open, and we lost no time But flew to seize the cables and the maid, And through the stern dragged out the steering-blade, To spoil her course, and shouted: "Ho, what way Is this, to sail the seas and steal away An holy image and its minister? What man art them, and what man's son, to bear Our priestess from the land?" And clear thereon He spoke: "Orestes, Agamemnon's son, And brother to this maid, whom here in peace I bear, my long lost sister, back to Greece."

We none the less clung fast to her, and strove To drag her to thy judgment-seat. Thereof Came trouble and bruised jaws. For neither they Nor we had weapons with us. But the way Hard-beaten fist and heel from those two men Rained upon ribs and flank—again, again… To touch was to fall gasping! Aye, they laid Their mark on all of us, till back we fled With bleeding crowns, and some with blinded eyes, Up a rough bank of rock. There on the rise We found good stones and stood, and fought again.

But archers then came out, and sent a rain Of arrows from the poop, and drove us back. And just then—for a wave came, long and black, And swept them shoreward—lest the priestess' gown Should feel the sea, Orestes stooping down Caught her on his left shoulder: then one stride Out through the sea, the ladder at the side Was caught, and there amid the benches stood The maid of Argos and the carven wood Of heaven, the image of God's daughter high.

And up from the mid galley rose a cry: "For Greece! For Greece, O children of the shores Of storm! Give way, and let her feel your oars; Churn the long waves to foam. The prize is won. The prize we followed, on and ever on, Friendless beyond the blue Symplegades." A roar of glad throats echoed down the breeze And fifty oars struck, and away she flew. And while the shelter lasted, she ran true Full for the harbour-mouth; but ere she well Reached it, the weather caught her, and the swell Was strong. Then sudden in her teeth a squall Drove the sail bellying back. The men withal Worked with set teeth, kicking against the stream. But back, still back, striving as in a dream, She drifted. Then the damsel rose and prayed: "O Child of Leto, save thy chosen maid From this dark land to Hellas, and forgive My theft this day, and let these brave men live. Dost thou not love thy brother, Holy One? What marvel if I also love mine own?"

The sailors cried a paean to her prayers, And set those brown and naked arms of theirs, Half-mad with strain, quick swinging chime on chime To the helmsman's shout. But vainly; all the time Nearer and nearer rockward they were pressed. One of our men was wading to his breast, Some others roping a great grappling-hook, While I sped hot-foot to the town, to look For thee, my Prince, and tell thee what doth pass.

Come with me, Lord. Bring manacles of brass And bitter bonds. For now, unless the wave Fall sudden calm, no mortal power can save Orestes. There is One that rules the sea Who grieved for Troy and hates her enemy: Poseidon's self will give into

thine hand And ours this dog, this troubler of the land— The priestess, too, who, recking not what blood Ran red in Aulis, hath betrayed her god!

LEADER. Woe, woe! To fall in these men's hands again, Mistress, and die, and see thy brother slain!

THOAS. Ho, all ye dwellers of my savage town Set saddle on your steeds, and gallop down To watch the heads, and gather what is cast Alive from this Greek wreck. We shall make fast, By God's help, the blasphemers.—Send a corps Out in good boats a furlong from the shore; So we shall either snare them on the seas Or ride them down by land, and at our ease Fling them down gulfs of rock, or pale them high On stakes in the sun, to feed our birds and die.

Women: you knew this plot. Each one of you Shall know, before the work I have to do Is done, what torment is.—Enough. A clear Task is afoot. I must not linger here.

[While THOAS is moving off, his men shouting and running before and behind him, there comes a sudden blasting light and thunder- roll, and ATHENA is seen in the air confronting them.]

ATHENA. Ho, whither now, so hot upon the prey, King Thoas? It is I that bid thee stay, Athena, child of Zeus. Turn back this flood Of wrathful men, and get thee temperate blood. Apollo's word and Fate's ordained path Have led Orestes here, to escape the wrath Of Them that Hate. To Argos he must bring His sister's life, and guide that Holy Thing Which fell from heaven, in mine own land to dwell. So shall his pain have rest, and all be well. Thou hast heard my speech, O King. No death from thee May share Orestes between rocks and sea: Poseidon for my love doth make the sore Waves gentle, and set free his labouring oar.

And thou, O far away—for, far or near A goddess speaketh and thy heart must hear— Go on thy ways, Orestes, bearing home The Image and thy sister. When ye come To god-built Athens, lo, a land there is Half hid on Attica's last boundaries, A little land, hard by Karystus' Rock, But sacred. It is called by Attic folk Halae. Build

there a temple, and bestow Therein thine Image, that the world may know The tale of Tauris and of thee, cast out From pole to pole of Greece, a blood-hound rout Of ill thoughts driving thee. So through the whole Of time to Artemis the Tauropole Shall men make hymns at Halae. And withal Give them this law. At each high festival, A sword, in record of thy death undone, Shall touch a man's throat, and the red blood run— One drop, for old religion's sake. In this Shall live that old red rite of Artemis. And them, Iphigenia, by the stair Of Brauron in the rocks, the Key shalt bear Of Artemis. There shalt thou live and die, And there have burial. And a gift shall lie Above thy shrine, fair raiment undefiled Left upon earth by mothers dead with child.

Ye last, O exiled women, true of heart And faithful found, ye shall in peace depart, Each to her home: behold Athena's will.

Orestes, long ago on Ares' Hill I saved thee, when the votes of Death and Life Lay equal: and henceforth, when men at strife So stand, mid equal votes of Life and Death, My law shall hold that Mercy conquereth. Begone. Lead forth thy sister from this shore In peace; and thou, Thoas, be wroth no more.

THOAS. Most high Athena, he who bows not low His head to God's word spoken, I scarce know How such an one doth live. Orestes hath Fled with mine Image hence … I bear no wrath. Nor yet against his sister. There is naught, Methinks, of honour in a battle fought 'Gainst gods. The strength is theirs. Let those two fare Forth to thy land and plant mine Image there. I wish them well.

These bondwomen no less I will send free to Greece and happiness, And stay my galleys' oars, and bid this brand Be sheathed again, Goddess, at thy command.

ATHENA. 'Tis well, O King. For that which needs must be Holdeth the high gods as it holdeth thee.

Winds of the north, O winds that laugh and run, Bear now to Athens Agamemnon's son: Myself am with you, o'er long leagues of foam Guiding my sister's hallowed

Image home.

[she floats away.]

CHORUS. SOME WOMEN.

Go forth in bliss, O ye whose lot God shieldeth, that ye perish not!

OTHERS.

O great in our dull world of clay, And great in heaven's undying gleam, Pallas, thy bidding we obey: And bless thee, for mine ears have heard The joy and wonder of a word Beyond my dream, beyond my dream.

NOTES TO IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS

P. 3, 1. 1.—Oenomaus, King of Elis, offered his daughter and his kingdom to any man who should beat him in a chariot race; those who failed he slew. Pelops challenged him and won the race through a trick of his servant, Myrtilus, who treacherously took the linchpins out of Oenomaus's chariot. Oenomaus was thrown out and killed; Pelops took the kingdom, but in remorse or indignation threw Myrtilus into the sea (1. 192, p. 11). In some stories Oenomaus killed the suitors by spearing them from behind when they passed him. Pelops was the son of Tantalus, renowned for his pride and its punishment.

P. 3, 1. 8, For Helen's sake.—i.e. in order to win Helen back from the Trojans.

P. 4, 1. 23, Whatever birth most fair.—Artemis Kalliste ("Most Fair") was apparently so called because, after a competition for beauty, that which won the prize ([Greek Text]) was selected and given to her. This rite is made by the story to lead to a sacrifice of the fairest maiden, and may very possibly have sometimes done so.

P. 4, 1. 42.—She tells her dream to the sky to get it off her mind, much as the Nurse does in the Medea (p. 5,1.57).

P. 5, 1. 50, One … pillar.—It is worth remembering that a pillar was among the earliest objects of worship in Crete and elsewhere. Cf. "the pillared sanctities" (1. 128, p. 9) and the "blood on the pillars" (1. 405, p. 20).

P. 8, 1. 113, A hollow one might creep through.—The metopes, or gaps between the beams. The Temple was therefore of a primitive Dorian type.

P. 8, 11. 124-125.—The land of Tauris is conceived as being beyond the Symplegades, or, as here, as being the country of the Symplegades.

As these semi-mythical names settled down in history, Tauris became the Crimea, the Symplegades, or "Clashing Rocks," or "Dark- Blue Rocks," became two rocks at the upper end of the Bosphorus, and the Friendless or Strangerless Sea became the Euxine. The word Axeinos, "Friendless," has often been altered in the MSS. of this play to Euxeinos, "Hospitable," which was the ordinary prose name of the Black Sea in historical times.

P. 9, l. 133, The horses and the towers.—The steppes of the Taurians would have no gardens or city walls, but it is curious that Hellas should seem specially a land of horses by comparison. Cf. p. 86, l. 1423, where Thoas has horses.

P. 10, l. 168, The golden goblet, &c.—She evidently takes jars of libation from the Attendants and pours them during the next few lines into some Eschara, or Altar for the Dead. Most of the rite would probably be performed kneeling.

P. 11, ll. 192 ff., The dark and wheeling coursers.—i.e. those of Pelops. The cry of one betrayed: Myrtilus, when he was thrown into the sea. (See on l. 1.) For the Golden Lamb and the Sun turning in Heaven, see my translation of Electra, p. 47, l. 699 and note.

P. 12, l. 217, The Nereid's Son.—Achilles, son of Peleus and the Nereid Thetis.

P. 13, l. 238, The Herdsman's entrance.—Observe how Iphigenia is first merely disturbed in her obsequies: then comes the sickening news that there are strangers to sacrifice: then lastly, her worst fear is realised; the men are Greeks. This explains

her exasperated tone in l. 254, "The sea! What is the sea …" and "Go back!"—The Herdsman is merely jubilant and obtuse.

P. 15, l. 263.—The murex or purple-fish could only be collected in very late autumn or early spring; consequently the fishers made encampments for the winter and returned to Tyre and Sidon, or wherever else they came from, after the spring fishing. See Berard, Pheniciens et Odyssee, i. 415.

P. 15, 1. 270, Son of the White Sea Spirit, &c.—The man is, of course, made to use the names of Greek not of Taurian gods. He thinks first of Palaemon, a sea-god, son of Leucothea ("White- Goddess"), then of the Dioskori, Castor and Polydeuces; then vaguely of some spirits beloved of Nereus, the Ancient of the Sea.

P. 17, 1. 328 f., Of all those shots not one struck home.—The object of this statement must be to explain why the two heroes do not make their appearance bruised and dishevelled as the Second Messenger does after his fight with the Greeks. Of course there is no great harm in making the Taurians bad shots as well as cowards, and possibly there is some value in the suggestion of a supernatural protection which is only saving its object for a crueller death. But very likely the two lines are interpolations.

Pp. 17, 18, 11. 342 ff.—A wonderful speech, illustrating the gradual breaking-up of the ice in Iphigenia's nature.—The Herdsman's story has, of course, been horrible to her; all the more so because he expects her to enjoy it and recalls wild words she has uttered in the past, when brooding on her wrongs. She controls her feelings absolutely till the man is gone. Then she feels like one turned to stone, pitiless; then, if only it were Helen or Menelaus that she had to kill! Then vivid thoughts of the misery and horror of Aulis and the poor foolish hopes and tremors in which she had come there; then the thought that Orestes, the one man whom she could love without resentment, is dead. Then a rage of indignation against the bloody rites and the infamy of the thing she has to do. She goes into the Temple broken in nerve and

almost ready for rebellion.

P. 19, 11. 385 ff.—Leto, beloved of Zeus, was the mother of Artemis and Apollo, who were born in the holy island of Delos.— One legend, already rejected by Pindar, said that the crime of Tantalus was that he had given his child Pelops to the gods to eat.

P. 19, 1. 392, Dark of the sea.—The Dark-Blue of the Symplegades is meant. Sometimes it is only the Argo that has ever passed through them; here it is only Io, daughter of Inachus, loved by Zeus and hunted by the gadfly, who fled outcast through the East. Her story is told in Aeschylus' Prometheus and in a magnificent chorus of his Suppliant Women. (See Rise of the Greek Epic, pp. 247 ff.)

The present lyric begins by wondering how and why the strangers have come: then come thoughts of the voyage and places they must have passed; the coast, where Phineus was haunted by the Harpies, the enchanted sea beyond the Symplegades, and the mysterious Isle of Leuce ("White") where Achilles lives after death.—Then comes a thought of Iphigenia's longing for revenge on Helen: but revenge is no use. It is home they crave, or, if that is impossible, then sleep and dreams of home.

P. 21, 1. 431, The steering oar abaft;—The steering was done by an oar, or sometimes two oars, projecting into the sea from a hole in the stern. Cf. 1. 1356, p. 83, "And through the stern dragged out the steering-blade." If this oar was left free, it would ripple and beat against the side.

P. 23, 1. 472, What mother then was yours, &c.—Not very like a woman "turned to stone" or "without a tear." She had miscalculated her own feelings.—Observe how Orestes sternly rejects her sentimental sympathy. He needs all his strength.

P. 25, 1. 512, A kind of banishment.—He was driven by his Furies, not legally banished.

Pp. 26, 27, 11. 515 and 529, "Oh how sweet to see thee here!" and "Oh, give me this hour full. Thou wilt soon die."—Iphigenia is more than tactless. She is so starving

for home or anything that brings her into touch with home, that neither this Stranger's death nor anything else matters to her in comparison. A fine dramatic stroke.

The people of whom she asks are, first, her enemies—Helen; Calchas, the prophet, who had commanded her sacrifice; Odysseus, who had devised the plot by which she was brought to Aulis (11. 16, 24); then Achilles, who had been the hero of her dreams; then, with fear and hesitancy, those for whom she cares most.—Observe, at 1. 553, how, on hearing of her father's murder, her first thought is pity for her mother. Her father is already in her mind "he that slew." But in every line of this dialogue there is fine drama and psychology.

P. 28, 1. 538, "Small help his bridal brought him; he is dead."— It has been thought curious that the mention of Achilles should immediately suggest to Orestes the bridal at Aulis, though of course it does so to Iphigenia. But after all it was Orestes' sister that Achilles was to marry at Aulis; and secondly, a large part of Orestes' troubles came from the carrying off of his betrothed, Hermione, by Achilles' bastard son, Pyrrhus. If the marriage at Aulis had taken place and Achilles left a true-born son, that would all have been different.

P. 31, 1. 569, Light dreams farewell! Ye too were lies.—This does seem a wrong conclusion. The dreams only suggested that Orestes had died the day before, long after this man had left Argos. But perhaps it is not unnatural.

P. 32, 11. 576 f., We too have kinsmen dear.—A most characteristic Euripidean saying. It also leads up to the personal interest in the Chorus which we feel after 1. 1075, p. 63, when they are taken into the conspiracy and then abandoned.

P. 32, 1. 578, Listen; for I am fallen upon a thought.—It must not be supposed that this use of the tablet is an obvious or easy thing. It is a daring project that crosses her mind, as one possible way of avoiding the death of this Stranger. Her hesitation at 1. 742—where a pause is indicated in the Greek— shows that she is only trusting to

her special influence over the King to get him to relax the law. Presumably merchants sometimes were admitted to the Tauri; for instance, those who brought the Chorus. The safe way to use the tablet would have been to make sure of the friendship of one of these. But such questions lie outside the play.

P. 34, 1. 618, This altar's spell is over me.—I translate the MS. reading [Greek text]. In my text I accepted the usual emendation [Greek text]. But [Greek text] means "spell" or "infection." See Rise of the Greek Epic, p. 86.

P. 34, 1. 627, My sister's hand.—i.e. Electra's.

Pp. 35-39, 11. 645-724.—Observe that all through this scene it is Pylades who is broken and Orestes strong. Contrast their first entrance, pp. 6-8.

P. 45, 1. 804, Argos is bright with him.—Literally, "is full of him." I am not sure that I understand the expression, but I think she feels Orestes as a magnificent presence filling all his home.

P. 46, 11. 809 ff.—The "signs" are clear enough. He remembers that there was an embroidery of the Golden Lamb story worked by Iphigenia; that when she started for Aulis she had cut off her hair for her mother and her mother had given her some Inachus water to use in the sacred washing before her marriage; also, there was an old spear belonging to Pelops in Iphigenia's room.— Apparently Pelops carried a spear in the chariot race, just as Oenomaus did.

Pp. 47-50, 11. 827-900.—In this scene Iphigenia simply abandons herself to one emotion after another, while Orestes, amid all his joy, keeps his head and thinks about the danger that still surrounds them. When he reminds her that they are "not yet fortunate," she thinks only of Aulis and her old wrong. At last Orestes gets in the word, "Suppose you had murdered me to-day," and she is recalled by a rush of horror at her own conduct: she has nearly killed him, and he is still in imminent danger. She tries passionately and despairingly to think of ways of escape, but it needs the intervention of Pylades (which she rather resents) to bring her into a mood

for sober thinking.

P. 51, 1. 915, A wife and happy.—The last we heard of Electra was that she lived "unmated and alone" (1. 562, p. 31). But that was said when Pylades was regarded as practically a dead man. Electra was apparently betrothed to Pylades, but was not actually his wife.—There is no mention of the Peasant husband of the Electra.

P. 52, 1. 818.—Anaxibia (?), sister of Agamemnon, was wife to Strophios. See genealogical table.

P. 53, 11. 930 ff., That frenzy on the shore!—It is only now that Iphigenia fully realises her brother's madness. His narrative immediately following makes her feel it the more, and it is evidently in her mind while she speaks 11. 989 ff.

P. 54 f., 11. 940 ff., Orestes' Trial at Athens.—According to one legend Orestes was finally purified of his guilt by a trial at the Areopagus, in which Apollo championed him, and Athena, as President, gave a casting vote for mercy. (This is the story of Aeschylus' Eumenides.) By another, he was healed when he had brought this Image of Artemis to Attica. Euripides combines the two.—It must often have happened in a blood-feud that some of the kindred of the slain man would accept the result of a trial and obey the law, while some cared for no law but clung to their vengeance. Euripides makes the Furies do the same. Some accept the judgment and stay as "Eumenides" in Athens; others know no law nor mercy.

P. 55, 11. 949-960, Mine evil days are made a rite among them.—At the Feast of the Anthesteria, each family summoned its ghosts from the grave and after the feast sent them back again. While they were about, it was very important that each man should keep his ghosts to himself: there must be no infection of strange or baleful ghosts. Hence a rite in which each man ate and drank his own portion, holding no communication with his neighbour. The story then went that this was done in commemoration of Orestes' visit to Athens with the stain of blood upon him. (See Miss Harrison's Prolegomena, chap, ii.) There was a similar feast in Aegina.

P. 56, 11. 990-1006.—Iphigenia's speech. We must realise that Iphigenia has been suddenly confronted by a new and complicated difficulty. She was prepared to make some plot to save her brother's life. She now realises that he is on the verge of madness; that he is determined to commit an act of what will be considered desperate sacrilege by stealing the image of Artemis; and that he expects her to help him to get the image to his ship. —She might hope to send him away safe and be forgiven by the King: if she helps him to steal the image, she cannot possibly be forgiven. Again, she might very possibly fly with him secretly, if she went alone; but to steal the statue and fly seems impossible.

Confronted with this problem, she deliberately abandons both her thoughts of vengeance and her hope of escape, and agrees to give her life for Orestes.

P. 59, 1. 1029, I think I dimly see.—Compare Electra, translation, p. 42, where Electra suddenly solves the difficulty of slaying Clytemnestra.

P. 63, 11. 1075 ff., Be of good heart, sweet Mistress.—The women of the Chorus are indeed "true of heart and faithful found," as Athena says later. And one feels that Iphigenia, after her first gush of gratitude, does not think of them much. She will save her brother, and they will be left with very little hope of ever seeing Greece, if indeed they are not fatally compromised by their share in the plot.—One can hardly blame Iphigenia; but it is like her.

P. 64, 1. 1089, Bird of the sea rocks.—A wonderful lyric, as spoken by these exiles waiting on the shore.—In their craving for home the island of Delos becomes the symbol for all that is Greek. Delos, the birth-place of Apollo and of a kinder Artemis than that which they now serve, was the meeting-place of all the Ionians. The palm-tree, the laurel, the olive, and the Orbed Lake of Delos were all celebrated in ritual poetry. The singing Swan is not a myth; it is a migratory swan, with a bell-like cry, which comes in the winter down from South Russia to Greece.

Isle of Pain and Love.—Literally, "Beloved birth-pang of Leto." When Leto was

about to give birth to her twin children and no land would receive her, the little rock of Delos pitied her and gave her a resting-place.

P. 64, 11. 1106 ff., Ah the old tears.—The singer's mind goes back to her old grief, when her city was taken and she sold as a slave from market to market till she reached Thoas. Then comes the thought of Iphigenia's happy voyage to Greece and freedom; then a dream-like longing to fly home, to watch the dances where once she danced for the prize of beauty.

P. 67, 1. 1156, Iphigenia enters, carrying the Image.—It would probably be a sort of Palladion—a rough figure with a shield (originally typifying the moon?), not very large. She would probably hold it in a robe of some sort, that her bare hand might not touch a thing so holy. At sight of Thoas she would probably cover it up altogether. It is not quite clear when she puts the image down.

P. 67, 1. 1161, I unsay that word.—It was a bad omen for Thoas to say at so critical a moment that a rule was broken. The priestess declares the word unsaid—just the opposite of "accepting" an omen.—Dr. Verrall, however, suggests to me that the line means, "I ask Hosia (the spirit of Holiness) to take in charge what I am going to say"; i.e. all the falsehoods into which she is about to plunge.

This scene of the fooling of Thoas is full of wit and double meanings. The end of it is rather like the famous scene in Forget- me-not, where the Corsican avenger is induced to turn his back in order to let a lady pass out of the room without being seen and compromised, the lady in question being really the person whom he has sworn to kill.

P. 72, 11. 1203 ff.—This change of metre denotes increasing tension of excitement.

Each individual invention of Iphigenia seems clearly to have its purpose. She wants to combine a great appearance of precaution against the escape of the strangers—hence the soldiers, the bonds, &c.—with the greatest possible reality of precaution against any one preventing their escape: hence she takes the soldiers

without an officer, the townsfolk are forbidden to follow or even to look, and the King is left at the Temple. The exact motive of all the veiling I do not see; perhaps it adds to the effect to represent Thoas as deliberately hiding his eyes while he is deceived. But in any case her precautions all seem sound according to ancient theology.

P. 77, 11. 1235, 1282, Oh, fair the fruits of Leto blow, &c.—A curious and rather difficult little ritual hymn explaining how Apollo came from Delos to Delphi. It acts more as an interlude than anything else, to fill the time until we learn the issue of the attempt at escape.

All Delphi originally belonged to Mother Earth. The oracles were given by her daughter Themis, and the place guarded by an ancient earth-born Dragon. Apollo came, slew the Dragon, and turned Themis away. Earth took revenge upon him in a curious manner: she invented Dreams, which told the future freely, though, it would seem, confusedly, and, so to speak, spoiled the trade of Delphi until Apollo appealed to Zeus for protection.—The story is not very creditable to the gods, and is expressly denied by Aeschylus on that ground. According to them there was never any strife; Earth, Themis, Phoebe peacefully succeeded one another at Delphi, and Phoebe gave it as a birth-gift to Phoebus or Apollo.

I think the story is probably a case of the infant Sun slaying the Serpent of darkness. The ancient identification of Phoebus Apollo with the sun and Artemis Hecate with the moon seems to me to withstand all modern criticisms, though of course there are many other elements combined with the Sun and Moon elements.

P. 79, 1. 1284, Messenger.—This excited rush upon the stage of a man clamouring for the King is very clever as a next step in the story. One sees at once the sort of thing that has happened, and wants to know what exactly.

P. 80, 1. 1302, "This good messenger."—There is nothing to tell us what the good messenger is. Probably a large sacred knocker, such as were often on temple doors.

(They served for suppliants to catch hold of as well as for summoning the people inside.) But it may be a gong or a horn hanging by the door, or the like.

P. 82, 1. 1325, Aye tell thy tale.—It is perhaps a little awkward that Thoas should ask for the whole story before taking any steps to pursue Iphigenia. But partly he is so amazed that he wants to hear all he can before moving; partly, he is represented as being really sure of his prey, as king of all the Taurian seas.

P. 83, 1. 1350, The prow was held by stay-poles.—The ship was afloat, having been just dragged off the shore, bow forwards. The men were raising the anchor, and holding the prow steady by long punt-poles. The ladder seems to have been a rope-ladder; but the Greek is difficult, and I do not know of any mention of a rope-ladder elsewhere in Greek literature.

P. 84, 1. 1384, The Maid of Argos and the carven wood of Heaven— Observe how closely Iphigenia and the image are united. She appears with it in her arms; she must fly together with it, or die; she and the image enter the ship together. There is religion behind this. Perhaps there was some old statue of the goddess carrying her own image, as Athena sometimes carries a Palladion; when Iphigenia became the priestess and Artemis the goddess, this was interpreted as the priestess carrying the goddess' image.

P. 85, 1. 1415, There is One who rules the sea.—Poseidon, the sea god, was traditionally a friend of Troy. See the first scene of The Trojan Women.

P. 86, 1. 1435, ATHENA.—Modern readers complain a good deal of this appearance of the God from the Machine. Some day I hope to discuss the Deus ex Machina at length, but in the meantime I would point out the following facts: 1. A theophany or appearance of a god seems to have been in the essence of the original conception of Greek Drama; a study of the fragments of Aeschylus will illustrate this. What Euripides did, apparently, was to invent, or use when invented, an improved kind of stage machinery for introducing the god in the air. 2. The

theophany seems to have been effective with the Greek audience, and I believe it would usually be so with any audience that was not highly sophisticated and accustomed to associate such appearances with pantomime fairies. 3. In nearly all cases the god who appears not only speaks lines of great beauty and serenity, but also comes with counsel and comfort which have something of heaven about them. The Dioscori of the Electra are most typical, healing the agony of revenge by sheer forgiveness; the beautiful Artemis of the Hippolytus is different, but divine also. But every case needs its special treatment.

P. 87, 1. 1457, Artemis the Tauropole.—On the rite of Artemis Tauropolos at Halae, see Preface, p. vi. There is a play on words in "Tauropole"; it is interesting to see that Euripides has prepared for it as early as Orestes' first speech, 11. 84 f., though I did not think it worth representing in English there.

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