

keepeth not his folly, but repenteth, doeth well; but stubbornness cometh to great trouble."

Then the King answered:

"Old man, I know the race of prophets full well, how ye sell your art for gold. But, make thy trade as thou wilt, this man shall not have burial; yea, though the eagles of Zeus carry his flesh to their master's throne in heaven, he shall not have it."

And when the prophet spake again, entreating him, and warning, the King answered him after the same fashion, that he spake not honestly, but had sold his art for money.

But at the last the prophet spake in great wrath, saying:

"Know, O King, that before many days shall pass, thou shalt pay a life for a life, even one of thine own children, for them with whom thou hast dealt unrighteously,

shutting up the living with the dead, and keeping

the dead from them to whom they belong. Therefore

the Furies lie in wait for thee, and thou shalt see whether or no I speak these things for money. For there shall be mourning and lamentation in thine own house; and against thy people shall be stirred up many cities. And now, my child, lead me home, and let this man rage against them that are younger than I."

So the prophet departed, and the old men were sore afraid, and said:

"He hath spoken terrible things, O King; nor ever since these gray hairs were black have we known him say that which was false."

"Even so," said the King, "and I am troubled in heart, and yet am loath to depart from my purpose."

"King Creon," said the old men, "thou needest good counsel."

"What, then, would ye have done?"

"Set free the maiden from the sepulchre, and give this dead man burial."

Then the King cried to his people that they should bring bars wherewith to loosen the doors of the sepulchre, and hastened with them to the place. But coming on their way to the body of Prince Polynices, they took it up, and washed it, and buried that which remained of it, and raised over the ashes a great mound of earth. And this being done, they drew near to the place of the sepulchre; and as they approached, the King heard within a very piteous voice, and knew it for the voice of his son. Then he bade his attendants loose the door with all speed; and when they had loosed it, they beheld

within a very piteous sight. For the maiden Antigone had hanged herself by the girdle of linen which she wore, and the young man Prince Haemon stood with his arms about her dead body, embracing it. And when the King saw him, he cried to him to come forth; but the Prince glared fiercely upon him and answered him not a word, but drew his two-edged sword. Then the King, thinking that his son was minded in his madness to slay him, leapt back, but the Prince drove the sword into his own heart, and fell forward on the earth, still holding the dead maiden in his arms. And when they brought the tidings of these things to Queen Eurydice, the wife of King Creon and mother to the Prince, she could not endure the grief, being thus bereaved of her children, but laid hold of a sword, and slew herself therewith.

So the house of King Creon was left desolate unto him that day, because he despised the ordinances of the gods.

III

IPHIGENIA

KING AGAMEMNON sat in his tent at Aulis, where the army of the Greeks was gathered together, being about to sail against the great city of Troy. It was now past midnight. But the King slept not, for he was careful and troubled about many things. And he had a lamp before him, and in his hand a tablet of pine wood, whereon he wrote. But he seemed not to remain in the same mind about that which he wrote; for now he would blot out the letters, and then would write them again; and now he fastened the seal upon the tablet and then brake it. And as he did this he wept, and was like to a man distracted. But after a while he called to an old man, his attendant (the man had been given in time past by Tyndareus to his daughter, Queen Clytaemnestra), and said:

"Old man, thou knowest how Galchas the soothsayer bade me offer for a sacrifice to Artemis, who is goddess of this place, my daughter Iphigenia, saying that so only should the army have a prosperous voyage from this place to Troy, and should take the city and destroy it; and how when I heard these words I bade Talthybius the herald go throughout the army and bid them depart, every man to his own country, for that I would not do this thing; and how my brother, King Menelaus, persuaded me so that I consented to it. Now, therefore, hearken to this, for what I am about to tell thee three

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men only know, namely, Calchas, the soothsayer, and Menelaus, and Ulysses, King of Ithaca. I wrote a letter to my wife the Queen, that she should send her daughter to this place, that she might be married to King Achilles; and I magnified the man to her, saying that he would in no wise sail with us unless I would give him my daughter in marriage. But now I have changed my purpose, and have written another letter after this fashion, as I will now set forth to thee: 'DAUGHTER OF LEDA, SEND NOT THY CHILD TO THE LAND OF EUBOEAE, FOR I WILL GIVE HER IN MARRIAGE AT ANOTHER TIME.'

"Ay," said the old man, "but how wilt thou deal with King Achilles? Will he not be wroth, hearing that he hath been cheated of his wife?"

"Not so," answered the King, "for we have indeed used his name, but he knoweth nothing of this marriage. And now make haste. Sit not thou down by any fountain in the woods, and suffer not thine eyes to sleep. And beware lest the chariot bearing the Queen and her daughter pass thee where the roads divide. And see that thou keep the seal upon this letter unbroken."

So the old man departed with the letter. But scarcely had he left the tent when King Menelaus spied him and laid hands on him, taking the letter and breaking the seal. And the old man cried out:

"Help, my lord; here is one hath taken thy letter!"

Then King Agamemnon came forth from his tent, saying:

"What meaneth this uproar and disputing that I hear?"

But even as he spake there came a messenger, saying: "King Agamemnon, I am come, as thou badest me, with thy daughter Iphigenia. Also her mother, Queen

Clytaemnestra, is come, bringing with her her little son, Orestes. And now they are resting themselves and their horses by the side of a spring, for indeed the way is long and weary. And all the army is gathered about them. And men question much wherefore they are come, saying, 'Doth the King make a marriage for his daughter; or hath he sent for her, desiring to see her?'"

King Agamemnon was sore dismayed when he knew that the Queen was come, and spake to himself:

"Now what shall I say to my wife? For that she is rightly come to the marriage of her daughter who can deny? But what will she say when she knoweth my purpose? And of the maiden, what shall I say? Unhappy

maiden whose bridegroom shall be Death! For she will cry to me, 'Wilt thou kill me, my father?' And the little Orestes will wail, not knowing what he doeth, seeing he is but a babe."

And now King Menelaus came, saying that he repented,

"For why should thy child die for me? What hath she to do with war? Let the army be scattered, so that wrong be not done."

Then said King Agamemnon:

"But how shall I escape from this strait? For the whole host will compel me to this deed?"

"Not so," said King Menelaus, "if thou wilt send back the maiden to Argos."

"But what shall that profit," said the King; "for Calchas will cause the matter to be known; or Ulysses, saying that I have failed of my promise; and if I fly to Argos, they will come and destroy my city and lay waste my land. Woe is me! in what a strait am I set! But take care, my brother, that Clytaemnestra hear nothing of these things."

When he had ended speaking, the Queen herself came unto the tent, riding in a chariot, having her daughter by her side. And she bade one of the attendants take out with care the caskets which she had brought for her daughter and bade others help her daughter to alight, and herself also, and to a fourth she said that he should take the young Orestes. Then Iphigenia greeted her father, saying:

"Thou hast done well to send for me, my father."

"'Tis true and yet not true, my child."

"Thou lookest not well pleased to see me, my father."

"He that is a king and commandeth a host hath many cares."

"Put away thy cares awhile, and give thyself to me."

"I am glad beyond measure to see thee."

"Glad art thou? Then why dost thou weep?"

"I weep because thou must be long time absent from me."

"Perish all these fightings and troubles!"

"They will cause many to perish, and me most miserably of all."

"Art thou going a journey from me, my father?"

"Ay, and thou also hast a journey to make."

"Must I make it alone, or with my mother?"

"Alone; neither father nor mother may be with thee."

"Sendest thou me to dwell elsewhere?"

"Hold thy peace: such things are not for maidens to inquire."

"Well, my father, order matters with the Phrygians and then make haste to return."

"I must first make a sacrifice to the gods."

" 'Tis well. The gods should have due honour."

"Ay, and thou wilt stand close to the altar."

"Shall I lead the dances, my father?"

"O my child, how I envy thee, that thou knowest naught! And now go into the tent; but first kiss me, and give me thy hand, for thou shalt be parted from thy father for many days."

And when she was gone within, he cried:

"O fair bosom and very lovely cheeks and yellow hair of my child! O city of Priam, what woe thou bringest on me! But I must say no more."

Then he turned to the Queen, and excused himself that he wept when he should rather have rejoiced for the marriage of his daughter. And when the Queen would know of the estate of the bridegroom, he told her that his name was Achilles, and that he was the son of Peleus and Thetis, daughter of Nereus of the sea, and that he dwelt in Phthia. And when she inquired of the time of the marriage, he said that it should be in the same moon, on the first lucky day; and as to the place, that it must be where the bridegroom was sojourning, that is to say, in the camp. "And I," said the King, "will give the maiden to her husband."

"But where," answered the Queen, "is it your pleasure that I should be?"

"Thou must return to Argos, and care for the maidens there."

"Sayest thou that I return? Who then will hold up the torch for the bride?"

"I will do that which is needful. For it is not seemly that thou shouldst be present where the whole army is gathered together."

"Ay, but it is seemly that a mother should give her daughter in marriage."

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"But the maidens at home should not be left alone."

"They are well kept."

"Be persuaded, lady."

"Not so; thou shalt order that which is without the house, but I that which is within."

But now came Achilles, to tell the King that the army was growing impatient, saying, that unless they might sail speedily, they would return each man to his home. And when the Queen heard his name—for he had said to the attendant, "Tell thy master that Achilles, the son of Peleus, would speak with him"—she came forth from the tent and greeted him, and bade him give her his right hand. And when the young man was abashed she said:

"But why art thou abashed, seeing that thou art about to marry my daughter?"

And he answered:

"What sayest thou, lady? I cannot speak for wonder at thy words."

"Often men are ashamed when they see new friends, and the talk is of marriage."

"But lady, I never was suitor for thy daughter. Nor have the sons of Atreus said aught to me of the matter."

The Queen was beyond measure astonished, and cried:

"Now this is shameful indeed, that I should seek a bridegroom for my daughter in such fashion."

But when Achilles would have departed, to inquire of the King what this thing might mean, the old man that had at the first carried the letter came forth, and bade him stay. And when he had assurance that he would receive no harm for what he should tell them, he

unfolded the whole matter. And when the Queen had heard it, she cried to Achilles:

"O son of Thetis of the sea! help me now in this strait, and help this maiden that hath been called thy bride! 'Twill be a shame to thee if such wrong be done under thy name; for it is thy name that hath undone us. Nor have I any altar to which I may flee, nor any friend but thee only in this army."

Then Achilles made answer:

"Lady, I learnt from the most righteous of men to be true and honest. Know, then, that thy daughter, seeing that she hath been given, though but in word only, to me, shall not be slain by her father. For if she so die, then shall my name be brought to great dishonour, since through it thou hast been persuaded to come with her to this place. This sword shall see right soon whether anyone will dare to take this maiden from me."

And now King Agamemnon came forth, saying that all things were ready for the marriage, and that they waited for the maiden.

"Tell me," cried the Queen, "dost thou purpose to slay thy daughter and mine?" And when he was silent, not knowing, indeed, what to say, she reproached him with many words, that she had been a loving and faithful wife to him, for which he made an ill recompense slaying her child.

And when she had made an end of speaking, the maiden came forth from the tent, holding the young child Orestes in her arms, and cast herself upon her knees before her father, and besought him, saying:

"I would, my father, that I had the voice of Orpheus, who made even the rocks to follow him, that I might persuade thee; but now all that I have I give even these

tears. O my father, I am thy child; slay me not before my time. This light is sweet to look upon. Drive me not from it to the land of darkness. I was the first to call thee father; and the first to whom thou didst say 'my child.' And thou wouldst say to me, 'Some day, my child, I shall see thee a happy wife in the home of a husband.' And I would answer, 'And I will receive

thee with all love when thou art old, and pay thee back for all the benefits thou hast done unto me.' This I indeed remember, but thou forgettest; for thou art ready to slay me. Do it not, I beseech thee, by Pelops thy grandsire, and Atreus thy father, and this my mother. And thou, O my brother, though thou art but a babe, help me. Weep with me; beseech thy father that he slay not thy sister. O my father, though he be silent, yet, indeed, he beseecheth thee. For his sake, therefore, yea, and for mine own, have pity upon me, and slay me not."

But the King was sore distracted, knowing not what he should say or do, for a terrible necessity was upon him, seeing that the army could not make their journey to Troy unless this deed should first be done. And while he doubted came Achilles, saying that there was a horrible tumult in the camp, the men crying out that the maiden must be sacrificed, and that when he would have stayed them from their purpose, the people had stoned him with stones. Nevertheless, he said that he would fight for the maiden, even to the utmost; and that there were faithful men who would stand with and help him. But when the maiden heard these words, she stood forth and said:

"Hearken, my mother. Be not wroth with my father, for we cannot fight against Fate. Also we must take