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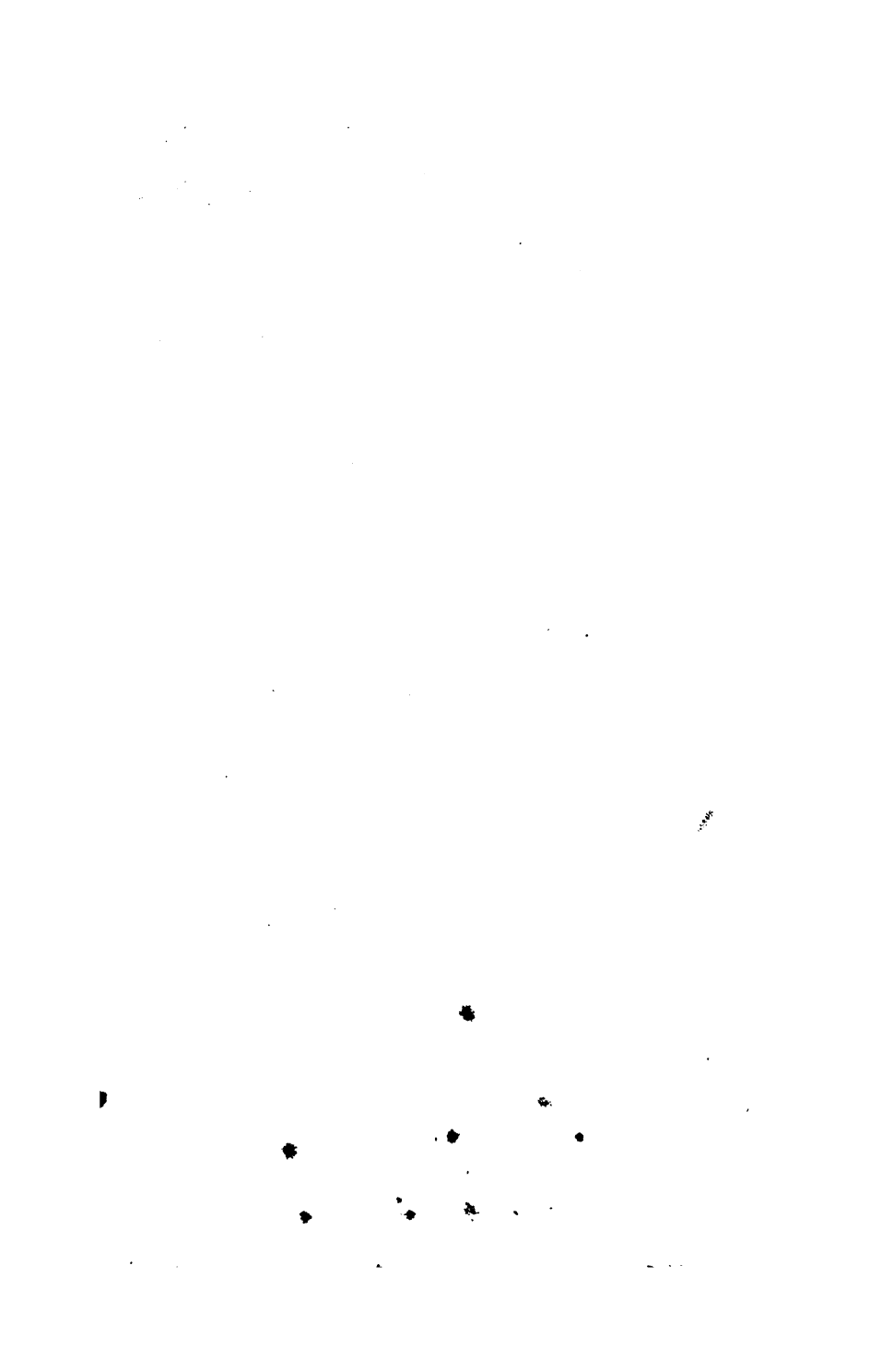
The image shows the front cover of an antique book. The spine, on the left, is bound in a dark, textured material, possibly leather or cloth. The main cover area is decorated with a traditional marbled paper pattern, featuring irregular, organic shapes in shades of cream, light pink, and pale yellow, set against a dark, almost black background with thin, branching veins of reddish-brown. In the lower-left corner of the cover, the number '293' is stamped in gold, with a small 'g.' to its right. Below this, the number '48' is also stamped in gold. A thin, horizontal gold line is visible just above the '293' stamp.

293. g.
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KELLY'S KEYS TO THE CLASSICS.

EURIPIDES: HECUBA,

LITERALLY TRANSLATED.

BY

ROSCOE MONGAN, A.B.,

EX-SCHOLAR, T.C.D.,

Translator of "Euripides, Medea", "Sophocles Oedipus Tyrannus",
"Eschylus Prometheus Chained", etc.

ONE SHILLING.

23.g.45.



THE
HECUBA OF EURIPIDES

LITERALLY TRANSLATED.

BY

ROSCOE MONGAN, B.A.,

EX-SCHOLAR, T.C.D.,

TRANSLATOR OF "EURIPIDES MEDEA," "SOPHOCLES OEDIPUS TYRANNUS," "ÆSCHYLUS
PROMETHEUS CHAINED," ETC.



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A LITERAL TRANSLATION
OF
THE HECUBA OF EURIPIDES.

THE GHOST OF POLYDORUS.

I AM come, having left the vault of the dead and the gates of darkness, where Pluto dwells apart from the gods, [I] Polydorus, the son of Hecuba, Cisseus' [daughter,] and of my father Priam; who when danger held [*i.e.*, threatened] the city of the Phrygians, that it should fall by the Grecian spear, alarmed, in secret sent me from the Trojan land to Polyestor's house, his Thracian friend, who sows the fertile Chersonesian soil, ruling with his spear a people famed for steeds: and with me my father sends in secret a store of gold, that if the walls of Troy should ultimately fall, there might not be a want of sustenance for his surviving children. But I was the youngest of the sons of Priam; on account of which circumstance he sent me forth secretly from the land: for I was not able with my youthful arm to sustain the shield or [hurl] the spear. Wherefore as long indeed as the landmarks of the country stood erect, and the turrets of the Trojan land were unshaken, and my brother Hector prospered with the spear, by the kindly care of the man of Thrace, my father's friend, like some young scion I was growing up to maturity, hapless that I am. But when Troy and Hector's life were now no more, and my paternal mansion was razed to the ground, and he himself falls at the heaven-built altar, having been slain by the blood-stained son of Achilles, for the sake of gold my

father's friend kills me wretched: and having killed me, cast me into the surges of the sea, that he himself may possess the gold in his palace. On the shore I lie [at one time:] at other times amidst the tumults of the deep, tossed by the various ebbings and flowings of the waves, unwept, unburied; but now, for the sake of my dear mother, Hecuba, I hasten, having left my body hovering now the third day, just as long as my wretched mother has been in the land of Chersonese, [after having come] from Troy. But all the Greeks, having their ships [at anchor,] sit inactive on the shore of the Thracian land:—for Achilles, son of Peleus, appearing over his tomb, has detained the entire Grecian host, directing homeward the sea-dipt oar; and my sister, Polyxena, he demands to receive as a dear offering and honour on his tomb. And he shall obtain this [favour:] nor shall he not be gratified by his friends; and fate leads forth my sister to die on this day. My mother shall behold the two corpses of her two children, both mine and that of her ill-fated daughter. For in order that wretched I may obtain interment, I shall appear on a wave before the feet of a female slave: for I have effectually entreated [*i.e.*, I have succeeded in obtaining permission from] the powers [that rule] below, that I may obtain [the rites of] burial, and fall into my mother's hands. As much then as I wished to obtain shall indeed be mine; but I shall withdraw apart from the aged Hecuba; for she now advances beyond Agamemnon's tent, terrified at my vision. Alas, my mother! who from a royal palace hast beheld the day of slavery, how thou now farest ill, as much as once [thou farest] well; some god now ruins thee, counterbalancing thy former happiness.

Hecuba. Lead, my children, an aged woman before the doors—raising, lead me on, now your fellow-slave, ye Trojan dames, but formerly your queen. Take me, carry me, conduct me, raise my body, holding my aged right hand; and I, leaning on the bending staff of my hand, will hasten to put forth the slow advances of my limbs. O lightning of Jove!—O gloomy night! why am I thus scared at night with terrors, with phantoms? O venerable Earth! thou parent of black-winged dreams, I dread the midnight vision which I have beheld in my sleep, respecting my son who is preserved in Thrace, and my beloved daughter, Polyxena, a dreadful apparition, I have learnt, understood. O gods of this land! preserve my son, who alone [remaining to me] as the anchor of my house, inhabits snowy Thrace, under the protection of his

father's friend. Some new [calamity] will happen : some melancholy intelligence shall reach us melancholy : never did my soul shudder or tremble so incessantly. Where, I pray, Trojan dames, shall I behold the inspired soul of Helenus, or Cassandra, that they may expound my dreams for me ?—for I beheld a dappled hind slaughtered in the bloody gripe of a wolf, torn with violence from my knees, piteously. And this also was a terror to me ; Achilles' spectre came over the summit of his tomb, and he demanded as an honorary offering some of the afflicted Trojan dames ; from my daughter then, ye gods, I supplicate you, from my daughter avert this [misfortune.]

Chorus. Hecuba, with speed to thee I fly, having left the tents of my lord, where I was allotted, and appointed as a slave, driven from the Trojan city, enthralled by the Greeks with the point of the spear, not alleviating any of thy sufferings, but taking on me a heavy load of tidings, and [being] to thee, O lady, a herald of woes. For it is rumoured that it is resolved in the full council of the Greeks to offer up thy daughter as a victim to Achilles : for you remember when ascending his tomb he appeared in arms of gold, and stopped their sea-passing barks, having their sails suspended by the ropes, exclaiming thus : “ Whither, ye Greeks, do ye speed your course, leaving my tomb unhonoured ? ” The wave of much contention clashed : a twofold opinion pervaded the martial council of the Greeks, some thinking that they should grant the offering to the tomb, and others not. Agamemnon, honouring the bed of the inspired prophetess, was earnest for your interest ; but the sons of Theseus, scions of Athens, were the proposers of two arguments : but they both concurred in one opinion, to crown Achilles' tomb with virgin blood ; and said they never could prefer Cassandra's bed before Achilles' spear. The force of the arguments, strenuously urged, was perhaps equal, until that subtle-minded—that babbler, the sweetly-speaking Laertiades, allurer of the crowd, persuades the army not to slight the bravest of all the Greeks for the sake of a victim slave ; that none of the dead standing near Proserpine should say, that the Greeks, thankless to the Greeks who had died for Hellas' sons, had departed from the plains of Troy. Very soon Ulysses will be here to tear the virgin from thy bosom, and drag her from thy aged arms. But go to the temples, go to the altars : fall suppliant at Agamemnon's knees : invoke the gods, both those of heaven and those

beneath the earth ; for either supplications shall prevent thee from being deprived of thy wretched child, or thou must behold her fallen before the tomb, a virgin purpled with the dark stream of blood from her golden-tressed neck.

Hecuba. Ah, wretched that I am! what shall I exclaim—what lamentation—what wailings? Wretched through wretched old age, and slavery not to be endured nor borne. Alas, me ! who will assist me? what offspring or what city? My aged husband is gone ; my sons are gone : which way do I proceed, this way or that? Whither shall I go? Whether is there any god or demon to assist me? Ye Trojan dames that bring ill news, ye that bring [tidings of] destructive ills, ye have ruined, undone me. No longer is life pleasing by its light. O wretched foot, conduct, conduct me aged to the tent. My daughter, child of a most unhappy mother, come forth—come forth from the house: hear a mother's voice, my child, that that thou mayest know what, what a [terrible] report I hear regarding your life.

Polyzena. Here. Mother, mother, why callest thou? What new tidings to announce hast thou scared me from the house, as a bird, with this alarm?

Hec. Alas, my child!

Pol. Why dost thou thus ominously call me? The prelude is to me ill-boding.

Hec. Alas! alas! thy life.

Pol. Speak out, conceal it no longer. I fear, I fear, my mother. Why, pray, dost thou groan?

Hec. My child, thou child of an unhappy mother.

Pol. What tidings dost thou bear?

Hec. The universal vote of the Greeks is urgent to immolate thee at Peleides' tomb, my child.

Pol. Ah, me! Mother, how do you utter these immeasurable ills? Tell me, tell me, mother.

Hec. I tell, my child, ill-omened tidings; announcing that it is decreed by the votes of the Greeks concerning your life.

Pol. O thou that hast suffered dreadful [afflictions,] O completely wretched, O mother, hapless in thy life, what, what wrongs abominable and unutterable has some power brought on thee? No longer is this child for thee; no longer shall I wretched share captivity with thy wretched old age. For wretched thou shalt behold me as a mountain-fed cub, a hapless victim, torn from thy arms, and sacrificed to Orcus,

sent beneath the darkness of the earth, where amongst the dead unhappy I shall lie. Thee indeed, O mother, wretched in life, I mourn for with sorrowful lamentations: but my own life, my wrongs, my ruin, I mourn not; but to die has befallen me as a superior lot.

Cho. And truly Ulysses comes with haste of foot, Hecuba, about to intimate some new tidings.

Ulysses. Lady, I think that you already know the intention of the army, and the decree that has been passed, but still I shall declare it. It has been resolved on by the Greeks to sacrifice thy daughter Polyxena on the lofty elevation of Achilles' tomb; but us they appoint to be the escorts and conductors of the virgin; and Achilles' son presides as dissector and priest of the sacrifice. Do you know then what you should do? Be not dragged away by violence, nor enter with me into a contest of hands, [*i.e.*, strength;] acknowledge [superior] power, and the presence of thy misfortunes: it is wise even in misfortunes to have the necessary prudence.

Hec. Alas! alas! the mighty conflict, as it seems, approaches, replete with lamentations, nor void of tears. For I too did not die, where I should have died; nor has Jove destroyed me, but he preserves me in order that I wretched may witness other afflictions greater than the [former] afflictions. But if it be lawful for slaves to ask of those free [questions] not rude, nor hurtful to the feelings, it is necessary that you be interrogated, and that we interrogating should hear.

Ulys. It is allowed, ask: for the time I grudge not.

Hec. Dost thou remember when thou camest a spy to Ilium, disfigured in torn garments, and drops of death from thine eyes trickled down thy beard?

Ulys. I do remember; for it touched not [merely] the surface of my heart.

Hec. But Helen knew thee, and told me alone.

Ulys. We remember having come into imminent peril.

Hec. And humble didst thou touch my knees?

Ulys. So that my hand died within thy robe.

Hec. What didst thou say, being then my slave?

Ulys. Inventions of many arguments that I may not die, [*i.e.*, I invented many, &c.]

Hec. Did I save thee then, and send thee from the land?

Ulys. So that I now behold this splendour of the sun.

Hec. Art thou not now acting a base part in these your plans, who from me hast indeed received [the service] which

you own you did receive, whilst you do us no service, but injury as much as you can? Ye are a thankless race—as many of you as court popular applause; may you not be known to me, who heed not injuring your friends, if you but speak to [win] the favour of the crowd. But why have they, holding out this trick as a pretext, passed sentence of death against this child? Whether did necessity induce them to slay a human victim at the tomb, where to slay an ox were more becoming? Or does Achilles, wishing to repay with death those who slew him, with justice intend death for her? But she certainly has done him no wrong. It would be right, that he should demand as an offering on his tomb; for she destroyed him, and brings him to Troy. But if it is meet that some choice captive, and in beauty distinguished, should die, this [attribute] is not ours; for Tyndarus' daughter is in beauty most comely, and has been found not less injurious than we. Against the justice [of the measure] I set off this plea; but what requital you should make, at my suit, [*i.e.*, I demanding,] hear. Falling prostrate, you touched my hand, as you own, and my aged cheek. I in my turn touch these same portions of your body, and demand the return then [promised;] and I supplicate you, do not tear my child from my hands, nor kill her: of dead [we have had] enough. In her I delight, and forget my afflictions. She instead of many is my [only] consolation, my country, my nurse, my staff, the guide of my way. It becomes not those in power to exercise that power in what they should not; nor does it behove the prosperous to imagine that they shall always prosper; for I too was once, but now I am no more: one day snatched from me all my happiness. But, by thy beard, reverence me; pity me; and going to the Grecian host, dissuade them, by saying how invidious [it would be] to kill women, whom heretofore you have not torn from the altars and slain, but have compassionated. But the same law concerning blood prevails amongst you for the free and the slave. Your dignity, even though you speak badly, will persuade them; for the same language proceeding from the ignoble and the illustrious has not the same effect.

Cho. What nature of man is so obdurate, which hearing the cries of thy wailings, and long lamentations, would not shed a tear?

Ulys. Hecuba, be advised; and do not, in thy rage, deem him hostile in spirit who advises kindly. Thy own person,

by which I was fortunately preserved, I am ready to protect, and I speak not otherwise. But what I said before all, I shall not retract—[viz.,] Troy being taken, to give your daughter to the bravest man of the army demanding her; for on this account the generality of states are distressed, when a brave and strenuous man obtains not more than crowds. Achilles is worthy of honour at our hands, lady, a man who has died most gloriously for the Grecian land. Then is it not a shame if we use him as a friend whilst living, but when he is dead, we no longer use him as one? Well, then; what forsooth will any one say, if again there should appear any assembling of an army, and a contest of foes?—Whether shall we fight or spare our lives, seeing him who died not honoured? And for me whilst I live, even though I have but little, may everything be in sufficient supply for daily use; but my tomb I should wish to be seen honoured: for this gratification [lasts] a long time. But if thou sayest that thou sufferest sorrowful [afflictions,] hear me in reply. There are amongst us aged matrons and sires, not less wretched than thyself, and brides widowed of their valiant spouses, whose bodies the Trojan dust conceals. Bear this: but we, if we judge amiss in honouring the dead, shall incur the imputation of folly; but do you, barbarians, neither deem your friends as friends, nor honour those that nobly died, in order that Greece indeed may be successful, whilst you may have [results] corresponding to your resolves.

Cho. Alas, alas! how unfortunate is it to be in the condition of a slave, and to endure what is not right, being overcome by necessity.

Hec. My daughter, my words indeed have vanished in air, having been uttered in vain respecting [*i.e.*, to avert] your death; but do you, if in aught you possess more influence than your mother, exert it, sending forth all your notes, as the mouth of the nightingale, that you may not be bereft of life. Fall pitiously at the knees of Ulysses, and persuade him; you have a plea: for he too has children, so that he may commiserate your mishap.

Pol. I perceive thee, Ulysses, concealing thy right hand beneath thy robe, and turning back thy face, lest I should touch thy beard. Be confident; thou hast escaped my supplicating Jove, as I shall follow thee, both on account of necessity, and desiring [from a wish] to die: but if I were not willing, I should appear base, and a woman fond of life. For why is it

expedient for me to live, whose father was monarch of all the Phrygians? this was the first of my life. Then I was nursed in splendid hopes, a bride for kings, who felt no inconsiderable ardour for marriage, to whose house and palace I should come; but, wretched as I am, I was a queen conspicuous amidst the Trojan dames and virgins, equal to the goddesses, except merely in being mortal; but now I am a slave! In the first place, the name not being familiar, causes me to wish for death: then perhaps I may meet with masters savage in mind, who shall purchase me for gold, the sister of Hector and of many others, and imposing on me the necessity of making bread in his mansion, shall compel me to sweep the house, and to toil at the shuttle, spending a miserable day; then some purchased slave shall pollute my bed, once deemed worthy of monarchs. It shall not be: free I dismiss the light from my eyes in freedom, presenting my body to Orcus. Lead on then, Ulysses, and leading me despatch me; for I do not see with us the confidence of hope or of any thought, that it is necessary that I should ever be prosperous. But, mother, be you no impediment to us by speaking or by acting, [*i.e.*, by word or deed,] but assent to my dying before I meet ignominious treatment not according to my desert. Whoever is not accustomed to taste affliction, placing his neck in the yoke he bears it to be sure, but is galled, and would be more fortunate in dying than living; for to live not honourably were a great hardship.

Cho. It is a strong impress, and one distinguished amongst mortals, to be sprung from illustrious ancestors, and the name of nobility advances still higher with the worthy.

Hec. My daughter, thou hast indeed spoken honourably, but sorrow is attached to that honour; but if, Ulysses, it is necessary that the son of Peleus be gratified, and that you avoid censure, slay not her; but leading us to the tomb of Achilles, strike, spare not; I brought forth Paris, who destroyed the son of Thetis, having pierced him with his arrows.

Ulys. Not thee, aged lady, has Achilles' ghost demanded from the Greeks to die, but her.

Hec. But at least kill me with my daughter, and twice as large a draught of blood will be offered to the Earth, and to the dead man who earnestly demands this [sacrifice.]

Ulys. The death of thy daughter is sufficient; one must not be added to another: would that not even this [were necessary.]

Hec. There is an urgent necessity that I should die along with my daughter.

Ulys. How? for I am not aware of having masters.

Hec. As the ivy [clasps] the oak, so will I clasp her.

Ulys. Not, if you obey those more prudent than yourself.

Hec. [Know] that willingly I will not let go the girl.

Ulys. Nor shall I depart leaving her here.

Pol. Mother, comply with my request; and do you, son of Laertes, be gentle to parents, naturally distracted; but do not you, unhappy [mother,] contend with the strong. Would you fall on the ground, and lacerate your aged body, impelled by violence, and be unseemly treated, dragged by a youthful arm?—which you will suffer. Do not; for it is unbecoming. But, my loved mother, give me your dear hand, and to join cheek to cheek, as never again, but now for the last time, I shall behold the rays and disk of the sun. You now receive the end of my address, [my last address,] O mother! O you that gave me birth, I go to the infernal mansions!

Hec. And shall we, my daughter, be slaves in the light [of life?]

Pol. Unwedded, unmarried, [a lot] which I ought not to have met with.

Hec. My child, thou art to be pitied, and I am a wretched woman.

Pol. There in Orcus shall I lie far from you.

Hec. Alas! what shall I do? where end my life?

Pol. I shall die a slave, though being of a free father.

Hec. And we are bereaved of fifty children.

Pol. What shall I tell from you to Hector, or to your aged husband?

Hec. Tell that I am most wretched of all.

Pol. O breast and bosom, which fondly nourished me!

Hec. O wretched daughter of untimely fate!

Pol. Farewell, my mother: farewell, my Cassandra.

Hec. Others farewell, but for your mother this is not—
[*scil.*, there is nothing well.]

Pol. [Farewell] to my brother Polydore amongst the horse-famed Thracians.

Hec. If he lives; but I doubt it; so unhappy am I in everything.

Pol. He lives, and will close the eyes of you when dead. •

Hec. I have died, before my death, in consequence of my afflictions.

Pol. Convey me, Ulysses, covering my head with my robe; as before I am slain, I melt in heart at my mother's griefs, and I melt her with my wailings. O light; for to address thy name is lawful for me; but I have no share in thee except so long a time as I go between the sword and Achilles' tomb.

Hec. Ah, me! I faint; my limbs are relaxed: daughter, touch thy mother; extend thy hand, give it me; leave me not childless; I am undone, my friends; would I could but see the Spartan Helen [perishing] thus, the sister of Castor and Pollux; for through her bright eyes the most disgraceful lot has befallen [once] happy Troy.

Cho. O breeze, marine breeze, who waftest the sea-passing swift barks over the surges of the deep, whither wilt thou convey me wretched?—to whose abode shall I depart, possessed as a slave?—whether to a port of the Doric land, or of the Phythian [land,] where they say the Apidanus, father of fairest waters, fertilises the soil; or [wilt thou convey] me wretched, impelled by the marine oar, supporting a pitiable life in the house, to the island, where both the primitive palm and the laurel spread their sacred branches for the beloved Latona, as an emblem of her divine throes?—and shall I with Delian maids celebrate the golden fillet and the bow of the goddess Diana? Or in the city of Pallas, shall I harness on the saffron-coloured robe the horses of Minerva, seated in her beauteous car, to her chariot, embroidering [the picture] on the curious saffron-flowered thread; or [shall I describe] the race of the Titans, which Saturnian Jove buries in sleep by his fiery lightning? Alas! my children, alas! my fathers, and my [native] land, which is overthrown, involved in smoke, captured by the Argives; but I in a foreign land am called a slave, leaving Asia Europe's handmaid, taking in exchange for death the [victor's] bed.

Talthybius. Where, ye Trojan damsels, shall I find Hecuba that formerly was queen of Ilium?

Cho. She lies, Talthybius, near you, supine on the ground, wrapped in her robes.

Tal. O Jove, what shall I say? whether that you regard mankind? or that they entertain this false opinion idly to no purpose, supposing that the race of the gods exists, whilst fortune governs all the affairs of mortals? Is not this the queen of the wealthy Phrygians? Is not this the wife of the very happy Priam? And now her entire city is destroyed by

the spear, and she herself a slave, aged, childless, lies on the earth, defiling her wretched head with dust. Alas, alas! I am old indeed; but yet may it be my lot to die, rather than fall into any ignominious fate. Stand up, ill-fated [woman,] and raise erect the body and thy hoary head.

Hec. Let me alone: who art thou that sufferest not my body to lie [quiet?] Why disturbest thou me afflicted, whoever thou art?

Tal. I am come, Talthybius, the messenger of the Greeks, Agamemnon having sent me for thee, O lady.

Hec. Most welcome, hast thou come then, it being resolved by the Greeks to immolate me also on the tomb? What welcome [tidings] you would [in that instance] announce: let us speed on: let us hasten; lead me on, old man.

Tal. I am come to bring thee, in order that thou mayest bury thy deceased daughter, lady; both the two Atreidæ and the Grecian host send me.

Hec. Alas! what wilt thou say? Hast thou not come for us, as doomed to death, but to intimate disasters? Thou art no more, my child, torn from thy mother; but we are childless as to thee: wretched that I am. How did ye despatch her? Whether with reverence? Or did you resort to cruelty, killing her as an enemy, old man? speak, though you may not tell me welcome news.

Tal. O lady, thou desirest to gain from me a double flow of tears, in pity for thy child; for now relating her sufferings I shall moisten these eyes, and [also] at the tomb when she perished. The entire multitude of the Grecian army were present in full assembly before the tomb, at the immolation of thy daughter. But Achilles' son, taking Polyxena by the hand, placed her on the summit of the mound; and I was near her, and chosen youths selected from the Greeks, ready to restrain the struggles of thy daughter, followed: and the son of Achilles, taking in his hand a full goblet all of gold, with his hand poured forth libations to his deceased father: and intimates to me to proclaim silence to the entire army of the Greeks; and I, standing forward, said in the midst,—“Be silent, Greeks, let all the people be silent; silence, be still:”—and I rendered the multitude quite still. And he said,—“O son of Peleus, and my father, receive from me these soothing libations, which conduct the dead; come, that thou mayest quaff the crimson unpolluted blood of the virgin, which we, both the army and myself, [now] offer to thee; and be pro-

pitious to us ; grant us to loose our vessels and the halsers of our ships ; and that we, having obtained a prosperous return from Ilium, may all regain our country." Thus he said ; and all the army joined in the prayer :—then having taken his golden sword by the hilt, he drew it from the sheath, and beckoned to the youths selected from the Argive host to hold the virgin. But she, when she observed it, made this address : " O Argives, who laid waste my city, I die willingly ; let no one touch my person ; for I shall hold my neck undauntedly ; but by the gods letting me go, slay me free, that free I may die : for being a queen, I blush to be accounted a slave amongst the dead." The troops shouted assent, and king Agamemnon ordered the youths to let go the virgin. But they, soon as ever they heard the last voice [of him] whose power also is supreme, released her ; and when she heard the mandate of the sovereign, taking her mantle from the extremity of her shoulder, she tore it to the middle of her waist, and exposed her bosom and her breast, most beautiful, like [that] of a statue ; and bending to the earth her knee, she uttered a sentence most afflicting of all : " See, youth, if this breast thou desirest to strike, strike it ; but if at my neck, here is this throat now ready." But he, not willing, and still willing, through pity for the maid, severs with his steel the passages of breathing. The streams gushed forth ; but she, though dying, had, however, taken much precaution to fall with decency, concealing what it is right to conceal from the eyes of men. But when she breathed her last by the fatal blow, none of the Greeks had the same employment ; but some of them threw leaves from their hands on her when dead ; whilst others rear a pyre, bearing trunks of pines : but he not bringing anything, from him, who brought, such taunts did hear :—" Dost thou stand idle, vile wretch, not having in thy hands for the virgin a robe, or ornament ? Wilt thou bestow nothing on her eminently spirited, and in soul most noble ?" Such things do I declare of thy deceased child ; I behold thee most fortunate in thy children of all women, and still most wretched.

Cho. Some terrible misfortune has fallen on Priam's house, and on my city : such is the inevitable will of the gods.

Hec. Daughter, I know not to which of my misfortunes I shall look, since many are present ; for if I touch on one, this other does not suffer me ; from thence again some other affliction calls me off, bringing on woes in succession to woes. And

now thy sufferings I cannot efface from my mind, so as not to mourn them ; but excess [of sorrow] hast thou spared me, by being announced to me as noble ; is it not then extraordinary if a bad soil, having obtained from heaven good weather, bears well the ear, while the rich soil, destitute of what it should receive, yields bad produce ? But amongst men he that is bad is nothing else but wicked ; and he that is good, is good, nor by misfortune does he corrupt his nature, but is always virtuous. Whether have parents [*i.e.*, birth] or education the advantage ? A good education certainly implies instruction in what is virtuous ; but if one learn this well, he knows what is base, having learnt it by the standard of right ; and these [conjectures] my mind has shot at to no purpose : but do you go and intimate this to the Greeks, that no one touch my child, but that they keep the crowd away ; in a numerous host, an unrestrained crowd and nautical insubordination are more violent, than fire ; and bad is he who acts not badly. But do you, O aged servant, taking this urn and dipping it in ocean's water, bring it hither, that with the last ablution I may lave my child, the unwedded bride, and the affianced virgin, and lay her out : as she deserves, how [can I ?] I am not able ; but as I can, for what am I to do ?—and collecting ornaments from the captives, who as my attendants dwell within these tents, if any, unobserved by their new masters, have secreted aught of their household. O splendid palaces, O once happy domes ! O Priam, who once possessed much wealth, and eminently happy in thy children, and I, the aged mother of these children, how we have dwindled to nothing, stripped of our former spirit. Then forsooth we pride ourselves, one of us in wealthy palaces, and another deemed honoured by his citizens ; these things are nothing, merely the designs of anxious thoughts, and the vaunting of the tongue ; happiest is he to whom no ill befalls from day to day.

Cho. It was doomed that calamity, it was doomed that destruction, should befall me, when first Alexander cut down the pine of the Idæan forest, when going to sail over the ocean's surge to Helen's bed, the fairest whom the gold-resplendent sun illumines. For toils, and fate more powerful than toils, encircle us. A common evil came from private folly, destructive to the land of Simois, and distress from others. The contest was decided, which the shepherd adjusted on Ida between the three daughters of the happy gods, for war and death and the destruction of my palace. Some Spartan

virgin also laments in her house with many tears around the beautifully-flowing Eurotas, and some [aged] mother applies her hand to her hoary head, her sons being slain, and tears her cheek, rendering her nails bloody by her lacerations.

Attendant. Ladies, where is the utterly-wretched Hecuba, she who surpasses the entire male and female race in misery? No one shall take from her the crown.

Cho. What, O wretch, the ill-boding cry! how thy afflicting tidings never sleep.

Attend. To Hecuba I bring affliction, but in calamities it is not easy for mortals to use auspicious words.

Cho. And now she happens to be coming from her apartment; and she presents herself in seasonable time for your tidings.

Attend. O completely wretched, and even still more than I can tell; my queen, thou art undone, and no longer art thou beholding the light, deprived of child, of husband, and of country, and utterly destroyed.

Hec. Thou hast announced no strange intelligence; but thou hast reproached me already knowing it. Why dost thou come, bringing the corse of my Polyxena, whose tomb was reported to me to engage the manual exertions of all the Greeks?

Attend. She nothing knows, but mourns Polyxena; on recent ills she does not touch.

Hec. Ah, wretched me! whither dost thou bring hither the frantic head of the prophetic Cassandra?

Attend. Thou hast spoken of one still living; him that is dead thou dost not mourn; but survey the naked body of the dead, if to thee it shall seem wonderful and beyond thine expectation.

Hec. Alas! I now behold my son Polydore dead, whom the man of Thrace was sheltering in his house. Wretched I am undone, and no longer do I exist. My child, my child! Alas, alas! I commence the frantic dirge, having recently learned these calamities from an avenging deity.

Attend. Knowest thou then, unhappy woman, thy son's fate?

Hec. Incredible, things incredible—sights new, quite new. I now behold, from one misfortune others spring. Never will a day await me free from tears and without groans.

Cho. Wretched woman, dreadful, dreadful evils do we suffer.

Hec. Child, child of an ill-fated mother, by what destiny

art thou dead? by what fate dost thou lie? by whom of men?

Attend. I know not; on the sea-shore I found him.

Hec. Cast out, or slain by the fatal spear?

Attend. The marine wave had cast him on the level sand of the sea.

Hec. Ah, me, alas, alas! I understand the dream, the vision of my eyes, the spectre with sable wings did not escape me, which I, I saw respecting thee my son, no longer being in the light of Jove.

Cho. Who slew him? Knowest thou, so as to tell it, O thou that art skilled in dreams?

Hec. My friend, my friend, the horse-famed Thracian, where his father placed him in secrecy.

Cho. Ah, me! What wilt thou say? Was it in killing him he may possess the gold?

Hec. [A deed] unutterable, without a name, beyond all wonder, impious, and not to be endured. Where [are] the laws of hospitality? Accursed of men, how thou hast severed his body, having with thy knife of steel cut the limbs of the boy, nor didst thou commiserate him.

Cho. Unhappy woman, how has some demon, who is hostile to thee, rendered thee the most wretched amongst mortals. But I behold the person of our lord Agamemnon; wherefore, my friends, let us be silent.

Agamemnon. Hecuba, why dost thou delay to go and consign thy daughter to the tomb, since Talthybius brought me word that none of the Greeks should touch thy child? We indeed then comply, nor do we touch her: but thou art remiss, so that I wonder at it. I come then to bring thee; for matters there are well performed, if any of such things can be well. Ha! what man of the Trojans do I see dead in the tents?—for that he is not of the Greeks, the garb encompassing his body tells me.

Hec. Thou unhappy woman, for myself I mean when I say thou, O Hecuba, what shall I do? Whether shall I fall at the feet of Agamemnon here, or bear my misfortune in silence?

Agam. Why dost thou lament, turning thy back upon me, and dost not mention what has happened? Who is this?

Hec. But if, considering me a slave or foe, he spurns me from his knees, we should augment our affliction.

Agam. I am no prophet, so as, without hearing it, to trace the bent of thy resolves.

Hec. Whether do I rather judge of his feelings in an unfriendly light, he not being unfriendly ?

Agam. If you wish me to know none of these matters, you agree with me ; for neither [do I wish] to hear them.

Hec. Without him I cannot avenge my children. Why do I deliberate thus ? To be bold is necessary, whether I succeed or not. Agamemnon, by thy knees I supplicate thee, and by thy beard, and by thy prosperous right hand.

Agam. What object desiring [dost thou implore me ?] Is it to spend your age in freedom ?—for that is easy for thee.

Hec. Not that : but taking vengeance on the wicked, I am willing to live a slave all my life.

Agam. Well, then, to what aid dost thou call us ?

Hec. In none of these matters which thou thinkest, O king. Seest thou this corse over which I drop the tear ?

Agam. I see it ; the purport still I cannot learn.

Hec. Him I once brought forth, and carried in my bosom.

Agam. But is this any of thy sons, unhappy woman ?

Hec. One of Priam's offspring, who died at Ilium.

Agam. Didst thou bring forth any other than these, lady ?

Hec. [I brought forth] in vain, as it appears, him whom thou beholdest.

Agam. Where happened he to be when the city was destroyed ?

Hec. His father sent him away, dreading lest he should die.

Agam. Whither, having separated him alone of the children that then lived ?

Hec. To this land, where he has been found dead.

Agam. To the man who rules this land, Polymestor [by name ?]

Hec. He was sent hither ; the keeper of most fatal gold.

Agam. By whom, and what fate having met, is he dead ?

Hec. By whom else ?—his Thracian host destroyed him.

Agam. Wretched man, did he covet to obtain the gold ?

Hec. Even so, when he learnt the destruction of the Phrygians.

Agam. Where didst thou find him, or who brought the corse ?

Hec. She, having met with it on the sea-shore.

Agam. Whether searching for it, or having been employed in another task ?

Hec. She went to bring the laver from the sea for Polyxena.

Agam. His host, as it appears, having slain him, has cast him out.

Hec. Yes, so as to be tossed on the waves ; mangling his body in this manner.

Agam. Unhappy thou, from woes immeasurable !

Hec. I am ruined, Agamemnon, and no more afflictions now remain.

Agam. Alas, alas ! what woman was born so unfortunate !

Hec. It is not [possible,] unless you should name misfortune herself. But hear the reasons, on account of which I fall down, embracing thy knees. If indeed I seem to thee to suffer just treatment, I shall be content ; but if otherwise, be you my avenger on the man, this most impious host, who, dreading neither the gods beneath the earth, nor those above, has perpetrated a most unholy deed, having frequently participated in my common board, and being the foremost of my friends in the rank of hospitality ; but having received such [kindness] as was necessary, and preconcerted the deed, he slew him ; but with a tomb, even though he wished to kill him, he did not honour him, but cast him into the deep. We indeed are slaves, and weak perchance ; but the gods are strong, as is the law that rules [even] them ; for by the law we judge that the gods [exist,] and by it we live, having the bounds of justice and injustice defined ; which ascending to you, if it shall be disregarded, and if they shall not suffer punishment, who kill their guests, or dare to violate the sacred ordinances of the gods, there is nothing just in the affairs of men. These things then considering in an ignominious light, revere me, pity me, and, as a painter standing at a distance, [to view a painting,] observe me, and view the afflictions which I suffer. I was once a queen, but now thy slave ; once blessed with children, but now old, and childless too, exiled, abandoned, the most wretched of mortals. Wretched that I am, whither dost thou draw my foot ? I seem likely to affect nothing : ah ! wretched me. Why then do we mortals toil at all other arts, as it is necessary, and investigate them ; but Persuasion, the sole empress of mankind, we do not study more [than other arts] to perfection, bestowing rewards, so as to learn it, that occasionally it may be in our power to persuade what one would wish, and at the same time be successful ? How then any longer can one expect to be prosperous ? These so many sons I now no longer have ; and I myself am going off a

captive for menial [offices :] and I now see the smoke rising over the city. And perhaps indeed this were an idle argument to make a plea of love ; but still it shall be urged. By thy side my daughter sleeps, the prophetess, whom the Phrygians call Cassandra. Where then, O king, wilt thou acknowledge those rapturous nights, or what return shall my daughter have for the fond embraces in the bed, and I for her?—for from darkness and the embraces of the night, the greatest interest results to mortals. Hear me now. Do you see that corse ? Acting kindly towards him, you will act so to one who is your kinsman. My language is still deficient in one point. Would that a voice were in my arms, and hands, and hair, and in my feet, by the arts either of Dædalus, or of some god, that all combined may cling to your knees, weeping, urging various arguments. O my lord, O thou greatest luminary of the Greeks, comply, lend thy avenging hand to an aged woman, though she be a [mere] nothing, yet still : for it is the good man's duty both to minister to justice, and to annoy the wicked on all occasions.

Cho. It is wonderful how all things happen to mortals, and how the laws define the ties of amity, making friends of those who were most hostile, and rendering enemies those who were before friendly.

Agam. Thyself, Hecuba, and thy son, and thy fortunes, and supplicating hand, I hold in commiseration, and am desirous, both for the god's sake and of justice, that this impious friend should give you satisfaction, if [a method] could at all present itself, so that thy wishes might be gratified, and [if] I might not seem to the army to contrive destruction for the king of Thrace for Cassandra's sake. For there is [a reason] for which alarm has fallen on me : the army considers this man a friend, but the deceased an enemy ; but though he is beloved by you, this is a separate consideration, and not participated in by the army ; wherefore consider that you have me willing to co-operate with you, and quick to assist you, but slow if I shall be brought into disrepute with the Greeks.

Hec. Well ! of mortals there is not [one] who is free : for he is the slave either of wealth or of fortune, or the people of his state, or the enactments of laws, constrain him to direct his conduct not according to his will. But since thou art afraid, and payest too much attention to the multitude, I shall render thee free from that fear ; for if I contrive any mischief against the man who slew him, be conscious of it ; but co-operate

not. But if from the Greeks any tumult or aid should spring, the man of Thrace suffering what he shall suffer, restrain it, not seeming to do so for my sake. As to the rest be confident, all I shall well arrange.

Agam. How then?—what wilt thou do? Whether taking the sword in thy aged hand, wilt thou kill the barbarian, or by poisons, or by what aid? What hand will assist thee? Whence wilt thou procure friends?

Hec. These tents contain a crowd of Trojan dames.

Agam. The captives do you mean, the prizes of the Greeks?

Hec. With these I shall have vengeance on my murderer.

Agam. And how shall women have the advantage over men?

Hec. Numbers are strong, and with stratagem resistless.

Agam. Strong; still the female race I object to.

Hec. What? did not women slay the children of Ægyptus, and unpeople Lemnos entirely of the males? But be it so. This consideration forego: but for my sake conduct this woman safely through the army: and do you, approaching the Thracian host, tell him; Hecuba, once queen of Ilium, calls thee, not less for thy advantage, than her own, and thy sons too, as it is necessary, that thy children too should know her communications; but, O Agamemnon, suspend the interment of the late slain Polyxena, that both brother and sister, a double [source of] anxiety to their mother, may be placed near [each other] in the earth by one flame.

Agam. These things shall be so; for if the army had a possibility of sailing, I could not grant you this favour; but now, for the god sends not prosperous gales, it is necessary to remain, watching for a tranquil voyage. May matters go on well: for this is the common interest of all, both of each in private, and of the state, that the wicked man should suffer vengeance, and that the virtuous man should prosper.

Cho. Thou, indeed, my native Ilium, shalt no longer be considered as [one] of the cities undestroyed, such a cloud of Greeks surrounds thee with the spear, with the spear having laid thee waste: of thy crown of turrets thou hast been stripped, and with a most dismal stain of smoke thou hast been defiled, unfortunate [city,] nor shall I enter thee more. At midnight I was ruined, when after the banquet balmy sleep is diffused over the eyes; and my husband having ceased from song and from the mirthful feast, in his bed was lying, his spear on its receptacle, no longer seeing the naval host entering Trojan Ilium: my ringlets I was adjusting with

fillets bound on the top [of my head,] looking into the round resplendent surface of the golden mirror, in order that I may enter into the well-covered bed. But a tumult pervaded the city; and this exhorting shout went through the city of Troy, "Sons of the Greeks, when now, when having laid waste the Trojan citadel, will ye return home?" and having left my dear bed in a single garment, as a Spartan maid, approaching the august Diana, I availed not, wretched that I am. And having seen my husband slain, I am borne over the watery deep, and casting a distant look upon the city, when the ship raised her returning sail, and separated me from the Trojan land, wretched I am exhausted with affliction: consigning to my curses Helen, the sister of the twin-born sons of Jove, and the Idæan shepherd the unlucky Paris, since the marriage, not a marriage, but some affliction of a demon, destroyed me from my native land, and banished me my home; whom [*scil.*, Helen] may not the watery deep bring back again, nor may she reach her paternal home.

Polymestor. O Priam, dearest of men, and thou my dearest Hecuba, I weep while looking on thee, and [thinking of] thy city and thy recently-slain offspring. Alas! there is nothing to be relied on, neither fame, nor that he who now fares well will not fare ill: but the gods mingle things back and forwards, causing confusion, that through ignorance we may worship them; but these things what need is there to mourn, availing nothing to [the remedy] of past misfortunes? But if thou censure in any way my absence, forbear: for I happened to be absent in the inland borders of Thrace, when thou camest hither; but when I arrived, this thy servant just meets me hastening my pace forth from my house, announcing a message, on hearing which I came.

Hec. I am ashamed to look thee in the face, Polymestor, [while I am] overwhelmed with such misfortunes; for being in the distress in which I now am, shame possesses me [of one] by whom I was [formerly] seen prosperous, and I cannot look at thee with eyes direct; but do not consider this as hatred of thee, Polymestor; and besides the law also [is] some reason [for this conduct; since it ordains] that women should not look in the face of men.

Polym. There is nothing wonderful in this. But what occasion have you for my presence? For what purpose didst thou solicit my departure from my house?

Hec. I wish to impart to thee and to thy children some-

thing peculiar to myself ; but direct thy attendants to retire from the tents.

Polym. Retire ; this solitude is in security, [*i.e.*, is quite secure :] friendly indeed art thou, and friendly to me is the army of the Greeks : but it is requisite, that thou shouldst intimate, in what it is necessary that I, who fare well, should assist my friends who fare not well ; as I am ready.

Hec. First tell me of my son Polydore, whom you have in your house from my hand and his father's, whether he lives ; of other matters I shall ask you afterwards.

Polym. Most certainly ; with respect to him thou art most fortunate.

Hec. My dearest friend, how kindly thou speakest, and in a manner worthy of thyself.

Polym. What next dost thou wish to learn from me ?

Hec. Whether does he still remember me, who gave him birth ?

Polym. Yes, and he was anxious to come hither to thee in private.

Hec. Is the gold safe, with which he came from Troy ?

Polym. Safe ; being indeed secured in my own palace.

Hec. Preserve it now, and covet not the [property] of thy friends.

Polym. By no means ; may I enjoy my present wealth, my lady.

Hec. Dost thou know, then, what I am anxious to tell to thee and to thy children ?

Polym. I know not ; this thou wilt explain in thy discourse.

Hec. Let him be loved, as thou art now loved by me.

Polym. What is the circumstance, which it is expedient that I and my children should know ?

Hec. The ancient buried treasures of gold belonging to the descendants of Priam.

Polym. Is this what thou desirest to intimate to thy son ?

Hec. Certainly, through thee indeed ; for thou art a pious person.

Polym. What is there occasion, pray, for the presence of these children ?

Hec. It is better that, if you should die, they should know.

Polym. Well hast thou spoken in that, and with more prudence.

Hec. Thou knowest then, where [stands] the temple of Minerva at Ilium.

Polym. Is the gold there?—what is the sign?

Hec. A black stone rising above the earth.

Polym. Dost thou wish then to mention to me anything further of matters there?

Hec. I wish you to keep the gold, with which I departed [from Troy.]

Polym. Where, pray? Hast thou concealed it within thy robes?

Hec. Amidst a heap of spoils it is kept in these tents.

Polym. Where?—these are the naval enclosures of the Greeks.

Hec. The tents of the captive women are separate.

Polym. Is all within safe, and is there a solitude from men?

Hec. None of the Greeks are within, but we are alone. But enter the tents; for the Greeks are impatient to loose the sheets of their barks [*i.e.*, to set sail] homeward from Troy; that having performed everything, which it behoves thee, thou mayest proceed back with thy children [to the place] where thou hast lodged my son.

Cho. Not yet hast thou suffered, but perhaps thou shalt suffer punishment: as one who has fallen precipitate into the harbourless deep, thou shalt lose thy dear soul, deprived of life: for wherever obnoxiousness both to [human] justice and to the gods coincides, there destructive, destructive ruin [falls.] The hope [entertained] from this journey, shall deceive thee, which brings thee, wretched man, to fatal Orcus; and by a feeble hand thou shalt relinquish life.

Polym. Alas! wretched I am bereft of the light of mine eyes.

Semichorus. Heard ye, my friends, the shrieks of the Thracian?

Polym. Ah, me! again your horrid murder, my children.

Semich. My friends, strange deeds of violence have been perpetrated within the tents.

Polym. But you shall not escape by swiftness of foot; for by striking I shall burst the recesses of these tents.

Semich. Behold the weapon [*i.e.*, the blow] of his ponderous hand is brandished. Do you wish that we rush on him, as the crisis calls us to be present as assistants to Hecuba and to the Trojan dames?

Hec. Strike, spare nothing, demolishing the gates; for never shalt thou place bright vision in those pupils, nor see alive thy sons, whom I have slain.

Semich. Hast thou then, my mistress, destroyed the Thracian, and prevailed over thy host, and achieved what thou sayest?

Hec. Thou shalt see him presently before the tents blind, advancing with blind unsteady foot, and the bodies of his two children whom I have slain, [aided] by the noblest dames of Troy; atonement he has rendered to me; he now comes forth, as you see, from the tents; but I shall go out of the way, and retire from the irresistible Thracian, boiling with resentment.

Polym. Ah, me! Where am I to go? where am I to stand? where move, groping on hands and feet with the pace of a four-footed mountain beast? Which way shall I turn, this or that, wishing [as I do] to seize those murderous Trojan dames, who have destroyed me? Accursed, accursed daughters of the Phrygians! impious wretches, into what recesses do they run from me in flight? Would, O Sun, that thou wouldst heal, that thou wouldst heal for me the bleeding lids of my eyes, dispelling gloomy darkness. Ah, ah; hush! I hear the cautious tread of these women. In what direction rushing on them, shall I glut myself with their flesh and bones, preparing a repast for furious beasts, avenging my injury, as a retribution for my sufferings? Alas, me! whither, where am I borne, leaving my children deserted for those Bacchanals of hell to mangle, as a horrid bloody banquet torn by dogs, and a cast-off on the mountains? Where shall I stand, where bend [my steps,] where proceed, as a bark setting her yellow canvas sails by her sea-washed halsters, forced into this fatal lair, as a guardian of my children.

Cho. Unhappy man, what insufferable evils have been committed by thee. The divinity, whoever he be, that is severe on thee, has inflicted dreadful retribution on thee for having acted basely.

Polym. Alas, alas! spear-bearing, well-armed, horse-famed Thracian race, inspired by Mars. Ye, Greeks, and ye, O sons of Atreus, a cry, a cry I raise, a cry; come, come, approach me, by the gods. Does any one hear me? or will no one aid me? Why loiter ye? these women have destroyed me, the captive women. Horrid, horrid [outrages] have we suffered. Ah, me! my [foul] reproach. Whither shall I turn myself? whither proceed? Whether soaring through the celestial æther into the sublime abode, where Orion or Sirius dart the flaming rays of fire from their eyes? or wretched shall I haste to Pluto's sable flood?

Cho. When one suffers misfortunes heavier than he can bear, it is pardonable that he should free himself from a miserable existence.

Agam. Having heard the shriek I came ; for Echo, child of the craggy mountain, shouted in not gentle accents through the camp, causing confusion : but had we not known that the towers of the Phrygians have fallen by the spear of Greeks, the uproar would have caused alarm in no ordinary degree.

Polym. Dearest Agamemnon, for having heard thy voice I knew thee, dost thou see what we suffer ?

Agam. Ah ! ill-fated Polymestor, who has destroyed thee ? —who has rendered thine eye blind, having blooded the pupils, and [who] has slain thy children ? Certainly whoever it was, felt great resentment towards thee and thy children.

Polym. Hecuba, in concert with the female captives, has destroyed me ; not destroyed, but [even] more.

Agam. What sayest thou ? hast thou perpetrated the deed, as he says ? hast thou, Hecuba, dared this outrageous boldness ?

Polym. Ah, me ! what wilt thou say ? Is she near at hand ? Intimate to me : tell me where is she, that seizing her in my hands, I may tear and mangle her flesh.

Agam. Ha ! what meanest thou ?

Polym. By the gods I supplicate you, let me impel my frantic arm against her.

Agam. Hold ; and having expelled this wildness from thine heart, speak, that having heard both thee and her in turn, I may decide fairly, why thou sufferest thus.

Polym. I wish to speak : there was one Polydore, the youngest of Priam's sons, the child of Hecuba, whom his father Priam consigns to me from Troy to nurture in my palace, suspecting forsooth the capture of Troy ; him have I slain : but why I slew him, hear how justly, and with prudent foresight. I feared lest the boy, being left an enemy to thee, may assemble Troy and people it once more : and the Greeks learning that one of Priam's sons still lived, may again undertake an expedition against the land of the Phrygians, and then lay waste the fields of Thrace, driving away booty, and [we] the neighbours of the Trojans might feel the distress, under which we were just now suffering. But Hecuba, having learnt her son's fatal destiny, led me on by this pretence, as if intending to disclose the treasures of gold belonging to Priam's race buried in Troy ; she then leads me alone with my chil-

dren to the tent, that none else may know of this. I sit in the middle of a couch bending my knee; and many damsels of the Trojans, some on the left hand, and others on the opposite sat, as with a friend no doubt, holding the woof of an Edonian hand, and viewing my robe by the light, they admired it; whilst others, observing my Thracian spear, bereft me of my twofold garb. As many as were matrons, as if admiring, dandled my children in their hands, giving them alternately from hand to hand in succession, that they may be far from their father. And then after their kind caresses, [can you imagine it?] immediately snatching knives from somewhere beneath their robes, they stab my children; whilst others, like foes, grasping me, held my hands and feet: and being desirous to aid my children, if I raised my head, they held me down by the hair; if I stirred my hands, unhappy being that I am, I was able to do nothing in consequence of the number of the women; but finally, an injury more than injury, they perpetrated a horrid [act;] for taking their clasps, they pierce and bleed the miserable pupils of my eyes; then they fled through the tents; but I, starting up like a wild beast, chase those blood-stained hounds, searching each wall, as a huntsman, dashing, breaking: such treatment have I suffered for zealously advancing thy interest, and for killing thy enemy, Agamemnon. But not to extend a long harangue, if any one of former days has spoken ill of women, or any one now speak ill, or will hereafter speak so; all this I now briefly shall express; such a race neither sea nor earth sustains; he that constantly converses with them, knows it.

Cho. Be not audacious, nor censure the whole female sex, confounding them in consequence of thy sufferings; for there are many of us, some indeed to be envied, but others are ranked with the number of the vicious.

Hec. Agamemnon, for men it never was expedient that the tongue should have more influence than deeds; but if one has acted well, he should speak well: if on the other hand ill, [it would be proper] that his arguments should be unsound, and that he never should be able to speak unjust things well, [*i.e.*, *by specious words to colour over injustice.*] Wise then indeed are they who have studied this [art,] but wise they cannot prove to the end, but perish miserably; nor has one ever yet escaped. And in this preface [my address] to thee is contained. To him I now shall go, and answer to his arguments, who say that thou didst murder my child, to free the Greeks

from a double toil, and for the sake of Agamemnon. But first, vile wretch, the barbarian race nor ever was, nor ever can be friendly to the Greeks. But what object promoting wert thou so zealous? Whether [wert thou] disposed to form some alliance? or from ties of kindred, or what cause having? Whether was it probable that they, having sailed back again, would waste the produce of your land? The gold, if thou wouldst speak the truth, and thy gains, murdered my son. For tell me this: why, when Troy was prosperous, and the towers still encompassed the city, and Priam lived, and Hector's spear still flourished, why, if thou didst wish to ingratiate thyself with him, [*scil.*, *Agamemnon*,] nurturing my child and having him in thy house, [why] didst thou not kill him, or go bringing him alive to the Greeks? But when we are no longer in splendour, and it was intimated by its smoke that the city [was captured] by the enemy, thou didst slay a guest that had come to thy hearth. Besides this, now hear how base thou shalt appear. If thou really wert a friend to the Greeks, the gold which you say you keep, not for your own sake, but for his, [Agamemnon's,] thou shouldst have brought and given to them distressed, and a long time exiled from their native land: but not even yet dost thou dare to free it from thy gripe, and thou dost still persevere in keeping it in thy palace. And truly nurturing my child, as thou shouldst have nurtured him, and having protected him, thou wouldst have gained great renown; for in adversity the good are the most certain friends, whilst prosperity has in every instance its own friends. If thou wert in want of money, and he were prosperous, my son would have to thee a great treasure; but now thou neither hast him as thy friend, the enjoyment of thy gold is gone, as [are] thy children, and thou thyself art in this plight: but to thee, Agamemnon, I declare, if him thou wilt assist, thou wilt appear culpable; for thou wilt serve one neither pious, nor faithful [to those] to whom he ought, nor religious, nor an honest friend; and we will say that thou being such, delightest in wickedness: but my lords I do not revile.

Cho. Strange! strange! how noble deeds always afford to mortals the means of noble language!

Agam. To decide on the evils of others is indeed burdensome to me, but still it is necessary; for it reflects disgrace on one having taken a thing in hands to give it up. Now that thou mayest know it, thou appearest to me to have slain

thy guest neither for my sake nor that of the Greeks ; but that thou mayest have the gold in thy possession ; but being in affliction, thou sayest what serves thy purpose. Perhaps then with ye to murder guests is a slight [offence ;] but with us Greeks this is disgraceful. How then, having decided that thou art not wrong, shall I escape reproach ? I cannot : but since thou daredst to perpetrate what was not fair, endure what is not agreeable.

Polym. Vanquished, as it seems, by a female slave, I shall render atonement to the ignoble.

Agam. Is it not with justice ; since thou hast perpetrated wicked deeds ?

Polym. Ah, me ! wretched that I am, in my children and my eyes.

Hec. Thou grievest ; but what of us ? Thinkest thou not that I grieve for my son ?

Polym. Thou delightest in taunting me, wicked woman.

Hec. Ought I not to rejoice, having vengeance on thee ?

Polym. But perhaps you [shall] not [rejoice] when the watery deep—

Hec. Shall waft me, is it, to the frontiers of the Grecian land ?

Polym. Shall overwhelm thee, having fallen from the shrouds.

Hec. From whom receiving the violent leap ?

Polym. Thou thyself shalt climb the mast of the ship with thy foot.

Hec. With pinioned back, or by what means ?

Polym. Thou shalt become a dog having fiery eyes.

Hec. How knowest thou the change of my form ?

Polym. Dionysus, the Thracian seer, told me this.

Hec. Did he not unfold any of the sufferings which thou endurest ?

Polym. [No.] For [in that case] thou wouldst never have entrapped me by thy stratagems.

Hec. Shall I fulfil this life after I have died, or while living ?

Polym. After having died ; and a name shall be imposed on thy tomb.

Hec. Wilt thou mention one corresponding to my form ?

Polym. The tomb of a wretched dog, a sign to mariners.

Hec. I care not, since thou at least hast given me vengeance, [i.e., hast satiated my revenge.]

Polym. It is necessary that thy daughter Cassandra too should die.

Hec. I reject with scorn [thy words;] I give them to thyself to enjoy.

Polym. His wife, a fatal guardian of his house, shall slay her.

Hec. May not the daughter of Tyndaris ever be so mad.

Polym. And then raising up the axe, she shall slay this man himself.

Agam. Thou, sir, art mad, and courtest to meet perdition.

Polym. Slay me [so surely] as the murderous bath awaits thee in Argos.

Agam. Servants, will ye not drag him away by force?

Polym. Thou art annoyed at hearing [this.]

Agam. Will ye not close his mouth?

Polym. Stop it, for I have spoken.

Agam. Will ye not, with all possible speed, cast him somewhere on the desert islands, since he thus extravagantly indulges in insolent language? But do thou, unfortunate Hecuba, go and bury these two corsers: but it is necessary that ye, Trojan dames, repair to the tents of your lords; for I now perceive the breezes favourable for home. May we sail happily to our country, and, having been released from these labours, may we behold affairs at home in a prosperous condition.

Cho. Go to the ports and tents, my friends, about to experience the hardships imposed by your lords; for destiny is inexorable.

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