

the slave girl belonging to one of the other kings. Achilles resents this as unfair. Agamemnon then declares he will take away Briseis, the slave girl given to Achilles from among the captives. "Then taking heart to speak, thus said the excellent prophet":—

"Not for vow unpaid is he wroth or hecatomb stinted,

But for his priest whom late the king Agamemnon insulted,—

Neither releasing his daughter, nor yet accepting the ransom,

Therefore sends the Far-Darter plagues, and still will he send them,

Nor will he stay at all his heavy hand in his anger,

Till that the bright-eyed maid be sent once more to her father,—

Sent without ransom or price, and a sacred hecatomb offered

There at Chrysa's shrine, and thus alone can we please him."

King Agamemnon is angry.

He having said these things, thereupon sat down; but amongst them

Rose the hero Atrides, the king of men—Agamemnon,

Full of wrath, in his heart the black blood worked in his fury,

Waxing fierce, and his eyes were like to coals that are kindled,

Calchas first, with look of bitter hate, did he speak to :

"Prophet of evil! for never yet good word hast thou spoken!

Ever it glads thy soul to bring the tidings of mischief;

Never promise of good hast thou given, or brought its fulfilment;

Now thou declarest the will of the god to the Danaan army,

As if for this in sooth hath risen the wrath of Apollo,

Only because I would not release the daughter of Chryses,—

Would not, because of a truth I much prefer that the maiden

Bide in my house, since I to Clytemnestra prefer her,

Wife though she be and Queen, for not less fair is the maiden,

Peerless in face and form and grace, and skill with the needle,

Yet I will send her home again, if this be the better,

Since thou I wish the people safe, nor love that they perish.

Achilles, threatened by Agamemnon with the loss of his slave girl, Briseis, is angry,—

Then, with angry look, replied fleet-footed Achilles,

"Ah me, sordid soul! with impudence clad as a garment,

How shall any obey thy word of all the Achaians,

Either to march on the way, or bravely fight with the foemen?

I came not aggrieved in aught by the warrior Trojans,

Hither to fight, since they in naught against me have offended,—

Never in hostile raid have they driven my oxen or horses,

Nor in the fertile fields of far-off populous Phthia

Have they the crops destroyed, for far and wide intervene there

Shadows of mountains high, and sounding billows between us,

But for pleasure of thine, O shameless one, have we followed,

Fighting in feud of thy brother and thee, O thou that art dog-faced!"

Achilles threatens that he will return home to the island of Phthia; Agamemnon rejoins:

"Well, then, fly if thou wilt! nor think that I will on my part

Pray thee for my sake to stay, with me there are others abiding

Who will pay honour due, and Provident Zeus to protect me,—

Hatefullest art thou to me of all the kings in the army;