

'Twas black night when 'twas done, and terrors thickened round,
The impact of the ships resounded as the crash of doom ;
The surge's beating rain like dumb brutes lashed them on,
Till driven round and round in pain they fled away.
The white dawn broke, the Ægean main we saw
All corpse-bellowered, and strewn with wreckage far and near.

In the use of a large, pregnant, picturesque phraseology Æschylus was abundantly masterful. Prometheus from his post of observation beholds the 'countless dimpling of ocean'; in *Agamemnon* the Chorus speak of Helen as the 'bride of the spear,' the course of the fateful expedition to Troy 'along the vanishing track of oars.' The whole description of Helen, in fact, is a wonderful example of poetical *multum in parvo*, every epithet being instinct with suggestion. A study of the great Father of Tragedy cannot fail to reveal those qualities which proved his accepted passports to that revered assemblage which Mrs. Browning saw in her imaginative *Vision of Poets*.

In making a comparative study of the art of Shakespeare and of Æschylus it is inevitable that we should be impressed first with the points of contrast, both in respect to the externalities of form and the representation of action and character. We must remember many things in this connection; that the audiences which listened to the *Agamemnon* or the *Persæ* consisted not of a few hundreds, but frequently of several thousands, composed of every class in Athens; that consequently the distance of most of the spectators from the actors was such as to require only the greatest simplicity and a certain largeness of effect; that the performances were seen in the open day, not under the glare of footlights; that the nature of the subjects from which the Greek dramatist could draw his material was closely circumscribed, and more than all else that the purposes of the Greek and the English drama are essentially distinct — Æschylus, deeply imbued with religious convictions, seeking to portray their realization in life, Shakespeare seeking 'to hold the mirror up to Nature.'

The religious element in Æschylus is an outgrowth of his belief in Nemesis, or retributive justice, an idea which is plainly discoverable in all Greek literature from Homer, whose tale of Troy hinges upon the sin of Paris and the necessary consequent