

IPHIGENIA AT AULIS.

(Translated from Euripides.)

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"The speech of Iphigenia is remarkable for its pathos; and we seem to feel now at least that we are certainly reading the very words of Euripides, free from any interpolations."—Paley's *Euripides*, vol. III., p. 443.

HAD I the voice of Orpheus, O my Sire,
And could I charm the stones to follow me,
Beguiling hearers sweetly to my will,
Words I would use—but now my only spell
Lies in my tears, for tears are all I have!
I hold no suppliant bough, but touch thy knees
With this frail body which *she* bore for thee:
I pray thee, slay me not before my time,
For sweet it is to look upon the light,*
But thou wouldst thrust me down to nether gloom.
I was the first to call thee Father: thou
Didst call me first thy child, and I did cling
First to thy knees, and shower upon thy lips
Sweet, loving kisses which thy lips returned.
And thou wouldst say: "My darling, shall I live
To see thee blooming in some Chieftain's halls
A joyous bride, an honour to thy sire?"
And I would answer, toying with thy beard,
Which now my hand doth fondly still-caress:
"My Father, shall it be, when thou art old,
That I shall cherish thee within my home,
Repaying thus the nurture of my youth?"
I do remember me of all these words,
But thou, forgetting them, doth seek my death.
Spare me, I pray, by Pelops, by thy sire,
And by my mother, too, who at my birth
Felt pangs less keen than those my death will cause.
What part or lot have I in Helen's loves,
Or why should Paris ruin also me?
Look on me, Father! grant one look, one kiss,
That, if I fail to move thee by my words,
I may, in death, at least remember these.
My brother! weak, I fear me, is thine aid—
Still, weep with me, with me beseech our sire
To spare thy sister—there may be a sense
Of sorrow even in an infant's mind.
Behold, how silently he prays to thee,
My Father—pity me and spare my life.
Two beings dear to thee are at thy feet,
He, still a nursling—I, a maiden grown.
One last, brief plea I urge—'tis very sweet
To live, and look upon the light; but death
Is darkness—they are mad who pray to die:†
Life is more precious than the noblest death!

* Cf. *Ecclesiastes* xi. 7: "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun."

† "Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly long'd for death."—Tennyson's *Two Voices*.