Brothers and sisters, leagued in pastime sweet,
Around each other twined love's tender bonds.
I will not reckon with the gods; yet truly
Deserving of lament is woman's lot.
Man rules alike at home and in the field,
Nor is in foreign climes without resource:
Him conquest crowneth, him possession gladdens,
And him an honorable death awaits.
How circumscribed is woman's destiny!
Obedience to a harsh, imperious lord,
Her duty and her comfort: sad her fate,
Whom hostile fortune drives to lands remote!
Thus Thoas holds me here, a noble man,
Bound with a heavy though a sacred chain.
Oh, how it shames me, goddess, to confess
That with repugnance I perform these rites
For thee, divine protectress! unto whom
I would in freedom dedicate my life.
In thee, Diana, I have always hoped;
And still I hope in thee, who didst infold
Within the holy shelter of thine arm
The outcast daughter of the mighty king.
Daughter of Jove! hast thou from ruined Troy
Led back in triumph to his native land
The mighty man, whom thou didst sore afflict,
His daughter's life in sacrifice demanding, —
Hast thou for him, the god-like Agamemnon,
Who to thine altar led his darling child,
Preserved his wife, Electra, and his son,
His dearest treasures? — then at length restore
Thy suppliant also to her friends and home,
And save her, as thou once from death didst save,
So now, from living here, a second death.

In the second scene a messenger comes to Iphigenia from the king, Thoas, to bid her prepare everything for the sacrifice that the king wishes to make to Diana in thanksgiving for new and wondrous conquests that he has achieved. The messenger, Arkas, notices that Iphigenia is brooding over some secret grief, and seeks to gain her confidence. She tells him that being an exile and an orphan in this strange land is a sufficient cause for her sadness. He then tells her that the king, Thoas, seeks her favor, and he cautions her to lend the king's purposed words a gracious ear. She is alarmed at his words, fearing that she is in the king's power, and that even her office as priestess of the temple of Diana will not save her from the king's displeasure. She asks Arkas to tell her further what he knows of the king's purposes. He tells her the king is approaching and begs her to meet him kindly and with confidence.

The third scene gives the conversation between Iphigenia and Thoas, in which, acting on the friendly advice of Arkas, she tells him the story of her parentage and of her escape from the knife of the priest who was to offer the sacrifice, by the power of the goddess Diana. When the king knows her story he again proposes to her to give up her office in the temple, to become his wife, and share with him all that he possesses.

Her answer is: —

> How dare I venture such a step, O king?
> Hath not the goddess who protected me
> Alone a right to my devoted head?
> 'Twas she who chose for me this sanctuary,

> Where she perchance reserves me for my sire,
> By my apparent death enough chastised,
> To be the joy and solace of his age.
> Perchance my glad return is near; and how,
> If I, unmindful of her purposes,
> Had here attached myself against her will?
> I asked a signal, did she wish me stay?
>
> *Thoas.* The signal is, that still thou tarriest here.
> Seek not evasively such vain pretexts.
> Not many words are needed to refuse,
> The *no* alone is heard by the refused.

Iphigenia still pleads her sacred office and the displeasure of the gods as a sufficient reason for her refusal, and Thoas, as if satisfied, says: —

> I am a man,
> And better 'tis we end this conference.
> Hear then my last resolve. Be priestess still
> Of the great goddess who selected thee;
> And may she pardon me, that I from her,
> Unjustly, and with secret self reproach,
> Her ancient sacrifice so long withheld!
> From olden time no stranger neared our shore
> But fell a victim at her sacred shrine.
> But thou, with kind affection (which at times
> Seemed like a gentle daughter's tender love,
> At times assumed to my enraptured heart
> The modest inclination of a bride),
> Didst so enthrall me, as with magic bonds,
> That I forgot my duty. Thou didst rock
> My senses in a dream: I did not hear
> My people's murmurs; now they cry aloud,
> Ascribing my poor son's untimely death

To this my guilt. No longer for thy sake
Will I oppose the wishes of the crowd,
Who urgently demand the sacrifice.
Iphigenia. For mine own sake I ne'er desired it from thee.
Who to the gods ascribe a thirst for blood
Do misconceive their nature, and impute
To them their own inhuman dark desires.
Did not Diana snatch me from the priest,
Holding my service dearer than my death?
Thoas. 'Tis not for us, on reason's shifting grounds,
Lightly to guide and construe rites divine.
Perform thy duty: I'll accomplish mine.
Two strangers, whom in caverns of the shore
We found concealed, and whose arrival here
Bodes to my realm no good, are in my power.
With them thy goddess may once more resume
Her ancient, pious, long-suspended rites!
I send them here, — thy duty not unknown.

* * * * * * * * *

Iphigenia implores the goddess whom she serves to protect her, and to keep her hands from shedding blood.

The two strangers who have lately landed on the coast of Tauris, and whom Thoas is about to send to the temple of Diana to be put to death, are Orestes, the brother of Iphigenia, and his friend Pylades. The first scene of the second act is a conversation between the two friends; they are in the keeping of the king's guards, and they know that they are condemned to death. Orestes is perfectly resigned to his fate, but Pylades wishes to secure their escape; he even tries to

persuade Orestes that they have been directed to this very spot by the gods in order to rescue the statue of Diana from the temple and bear it to Delphi, there to enshrine it with that of Apollo, that they might be revered together by a noble-thoughted race.

Orestes has no faith in this plot, and when Pylades tells him to wait in peace, to let him contrive, saying: —

"Be still! and when at length
The time for action claims our powers combined,
Then will I summon thee, and on we'll stride
With cautious boldness to achieve the event,"

Orestes answers with some sarcasm,

I hear Ulysses speak.
Pylades. Nay, mock me not.
Each must select the hero after whom
To climb the steep and difficult ascent
Of high Olympus. And to me it seems
That him nor stratagem, nor art defiles
Who consecrates himself to noble deeds.
Orestes. I must esteem the brave and upright man.
Pylades. And therefore have I not desired thy counsel.
One step 's already taken. From our guards
E'en now I this intelligence have gained, —
A strange and god-like woman holds in check
The execution of that bloody law;
Incense and prayer, and an unsullied heart, —
These are the gifts she offers to the gods.
Rumor extols her highly: it is thought
That from the race of Amazon she springs,
And hither fled some great calamity.
Orestes. Her gentle sway, it seems, lost all its power
When hither came the culprit whom the curse,

Like murky night, envelops and pursues.
Our doom to seal, the pious thirst for blood
The ancient cruel rite again unchains:
The monarch's savage will decrees our death;
A woman cannot save where he condemns.
Pylades. That 'tis a woman, is a ground for hope!
A man, the very best, with cruelty
At length may so familiarize his mind,
His character through custom so transform,
That he shall come to make himself a law
Of what at first his very soul abhorred.
But woman doth retain the stamp of mind
She first assumed. On her we may depend
In good or evil with more certainty.
She comes: leave us alone. I dare not tell
At once our names, nor unreserved confide
Our fortunes to her. Now, retire awhile;
And ere she speaks with thee we'll meet again.

* * * * * * * *

The next scene is between Iphigenia and Pylades. She recognizes him as a Grecian by his bearing. She unbinds his chains, but tells him that the freedom she gives him is dangerous. He tells her how dearly welcome are the tones of one's own language in a foreign land. In the conversation that follows he tells her a story, calculated to arouse her sympathy, in which he mentions the fall of Troy. She is greatly interested in this and questions him in regard to several of the Grecian leaders. He mentions Achilles and Ajax before he speaks of her father, and he wonders that she has not heard any of these things before. At last he tells her the whole story of the return of Agamemnon,

of the snare that was laid for him by his faithless wife and Ægisthus who murdered him on the day of his arrival at his palace in Mycene.

Iphigenia finally asks how her father had injured Clytemnestra, her mother, and she hears from Pylades the story of her own doom, which he tells her roused in Clytemnestra such deep abhorrence of her husband that she forthwith plotted against him.

Iphigenia veils herself and withdraws. Pylades realizes that the story has moved her deeply, and he begins to hope that he will find her an ally in his plans for escape.

In the next scene Orestes is brought into the presence of Iphigenia, who looses his bonds as she did those of Pylades, but she tells him this is in token of a still severer doom; that the freedom of the sanctuary which she grants them is but the herald of death. Then she asks him to conclude the tale that his brother, as she calls Pylades, left half told.

Orestes tells her all about Agamemnon's death, and in answer to her questions about her mother, her brother, and her sister, he tells her that Clytemnestra was slain by her own son, and finally that he is the murderer, and that ever since the deed he has been pursued by the Furies, who, until he entered the consecrated grove, had followed him, shaking their serpent locks at him. Iphigenia then tells him that she is his sister, and how she came to be there. He sinks down exhausted by the excitement he has undergone. When he recovers he thinks he is in the regions of the dead;

his madness finally passes away, and he realizes that his own sister is with him and Pylades has everything prepared for their departure.

The first scene of the fourth act represents Iphigenia in great distress because she has connived at their escape, and prepared to send artful answers to the king if he still urges the sacrifice of the two strangers.

In the second scene, Arkas enters and tells her that the king and people wait impatiently for the conclusion of the sacrifice.

Iphigenia explains to him that she has not performed the mandate of the king because

> "The gods have not decreed it.
> The elder of these men doth bear the guilt
> Of kindred murder: on his steps attend
> The dread Erinnyes. In the inner fane
> They seized upon their prey, polluting thus
> The holy sanctuary. I hasten now,
> Together with my virgin train, to bathe
> The goddess' image in the sea, and there
> With solemn rites its purity restore.
> Let none presume our silent march to follow!
> *Arkas.* This hindrance to the monarch I'll announce;
> Commence not thou the rite till he permit."

She argues with him that she has full authority in such a case. He tries to persuade her to send the king the message he wishes to hear from her. He finally tells her that he will go to the camp with speed and tell the king what has happened. When she is alone

again a strong revulsion of feeling comes over her. Deceit has become doubly detested. While she is communing with herself, Pylades returns to tell her that all is in readiness: he and Orestes have found their friends with a ship and they were imploring him to haste the parting hour. He asks her to guide him to the fane where he may find the image of the goddess and bear it to the vessel on his shoulder. She tells him about the messenger from the king, and that she is awaiting his return. Pylades fears that a new danger will beset them; he cautions her to be firm, and not to betray them. She says:—

> "It is an honest scruple which forbids
> That I should cunningly deceive the king,
> And plunder him who was my second father."

Pylades leaves her, promising to return soon for the seal of safety which he expects at her hands.

In the fifth act, Arkas returns to the king perplexed and suspicious. Thoas sends him at once to summon Iphigenia, and then to search the shore strictly from a certain headland to Diana's grove, and to attack and seize whomever he may find.

Iphigenia goes to the king, who asks her why the sacrifice is so long delayed. She tells him the story of their premeditated flight, and a moment later Orestes appears with his followers, whom he is exhorting to hold their ground and keep a passage open to the ship for him and his sister. Pylades and Arkas follow with drawn swords. Iphigenia begs them not to profane

Diana's sanctuary with rage and blood, and when she tells Orestes that he is in the presence of the king who has been her second father, he sheathes his sword. The king sends Arkas to stop the fight between his people and the followers of Orestes until they can confer. Thoas then asks Orestes to prove that he is the priestess' brother and Agamemnon's son.

Orestes shows him his father's sword and offers to meet in single combat any one of the leaders of Thoas' host.

Thoas tells him such a privilege has never been accorded to strangers in that country. Orestes proposes that they should introduce the custom then and there.

Thoas proposes to oppose his own strength and skill to Orestes, but Iphigenia persuades him to take her testimony, assuring him that she has already demanded proofs of her brother's identity and that all her doubts and scruples have been satisfied.

Thoas answers: —

E'en though thy words had banished every doubt,
And I had curbed the anger in my breast,
Still must our arms decide. I see no peace.
Their purpose, as thou didst thyself confess,
Was to deprive me of Diana's image.
And think ye I will look contented on?
The Greeks are wont to cast a longing eye
Upon the treasures of barbarians, —
A golden fleece, good steeds, or daughters fair;
But force and guile not always have availed
To lead them, with their booty, safely home.

Orestes. The image shall not be a cause of strife!
We now perceive the error which the god,
Our journey here commanding, like a veil,
Threw o'er our minds. His counsel I implored,
To free me from the Furies' grisly band.
He answered, "Back to Greece the sister bring,
Who in the sanctuary on Tauris' shore
Unwillingly abides; so ends the curse!"
To Phœbus' sister we applied the words,
And he referred to thee. The bonds severe,
Which held thee from us, holy one, are rent;
And thou art ours once more. At thy blest touch,
I felt myself restored. Within thine arms,
Madness once more around me coiled its folds,
Crushing the marrow in my frame, and then
Forever, like a serpent, fled to hell.
Through thee the daylight gladdens me anew:
The counsel of the goddess now shines forth
In all its beauty and beneficence.
Like to a sacred image, unto which
An oracle immutably hath bound
A city's welfare, thee she bore away,
Protectress of our house, and guarded here
Within this holy stillness, to become
A blessing to thy brother and thy race.
Now when each passage to escape seems closed,
And safety hopeless, thou dost give us all.
O king, incline thine heart to thoughts of peace!
Let her fulfil her mission, and complete
The consecration of our father's house;
Me to their purified abode restore,
And place upon my brow the ancient crown!
Requite the blessing which her presence brought thee,
And let me now my nearer right enjoy!
Cunning and force, the proudest boast of man,

Fade in the lustre of her perfect truth;
Nor unrequited will a noble mind
Leave confidence, so childlike and so pure.
Iphigenia. Think on thy promise; let thy heart be moved
By what a true and honest tongue hath spoken!
Look on us, king! an opportunity
For such a noble deed not oft occurs.
Refuse thou canst not, — give thy quick consent.
Thoas. Then go!
Iphigenia. Not so, my king! I cannot part
Without thy blessing, or in anger from thee:
Banish us not! the sacred right of guests
Still let us claim: so not eternally
Shall we be severed. Honored and beloved
As mine own father was, art thou by me;
And this impression in my soul abides,
Let but the least among thy people bring
Back to mine ear the tones I heard from thee,
Or should I on the humblest see thy garb,
I will with joy receive him as a god,
Prepare his couch myself, beside our hearth
Invite him to a seat, and only ask
Touching thy fate and thee. Oh, may the gods
To thee the merited reward impart
Of all thy kindness and benignity!
Farewell! Oh, turn thou not away, but give
One kindly word of parting in return!
So shall the wind more gently swell our sails,
And from our eyes with softened anguish flow
The tears of separation. Fare thee well!
And graciously extend to me thy hand,
In pledge of ancient friendship.

The king takes her hand and simply says, "Fare thee well!"

NOTE. — Do you consider this ending of the play artistic? What do you most admire in the character of the heroine?

PROTESILĀ'US.

IMMEDIATELY after the sacrifice of Iphigenia, the wind proving fair, the fleet made sail and brought the Grecian fleet to the coast of Troy. The Trojans met them and opposed their landing. Great hesitation prevailed among the troops as to who should be the first to set foot upon the enemy's soil, for the oracle had predicted that the one who did so would fall a sacrifice; but it had also been foretold by the oracle that victory should finally come to that party which gave the first victim to the war. Protesilā'us, however, disregarding the prediction, leaped on shore, and was slain by Hector. Protesilā'us had left at home his wife Laodameia, who was most tenderly attached to him. When the news of his death reached her, she implored the gods to be allowed to converse with him only three hours. The request was granted, and this interview between the living and the dead is the subject of the following poem by Wordsworth.

Hazlitt wrote of it: "It is a poem that might be read aloud in Elysium, and the spirits of departed heroes and sages would gather round to listen to it."

The original source of the story is found in the second book of the "Iliad," as follows: —

"The men of Phylace, of Pyrasus, —
Sacred to Ceres and o'erspread with flowers,
And of Itona, mother of white flocks,
Antrona on the sea, and Pteleum green
With herbage, — over these while yet he lived
The brave Protesilaus ruled; but now
The dark earth covered him, and for his sake
His consort, desolate in Phylace,
Tore her fair cheeks, and all unfinished
Stood his palace, for a Dardan warrior slew
Her husband as he leaped upon the land,
The foremost of the Achaians."

LA-OD-A-ME'-IA.

WORDSWORTH.

"With sacrifice, before the rising morn
Performed, my slaughtered lord have I required,
And in thick darkness, amid shades forlorn,
Him of the infernal gods have I desired:
Celestial pity I again implore.
Restore him to my sight, great Jove, restore!"

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
With faith, the suppliant heavenward lifts her hands;
While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
Her countenance brightens and her eye expands;
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows;
And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror! what hath she perceived? O joy!
What doth she look on? whom doth she behold?
Her hero slain upon the beach of Troy?
His vital presence? his corporeal mould?
It is — if sense deceive her not — 'tis he!
And a god leads him, wingèd Mercury!

Mild Hermes spake, and touched her with his wand
That calms all fear: "Such grace hath crowned thy prayer,
Laodameia, that at Jove's command
Thy husband walks the paths of upper air;
He comes to tarry with thee three hours' space;
Accept the gift, behold him face to face!"

Forth sprang the impassioned queen her lord to clasp;
Again that consummation she essayed;
But unsubstantial form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made.
The phantom parts, but parts to reunite,
And reassume his place before her sight.

"Protesilaus, lo! thy guide is gone!
Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice:
This is our palace, yonder is thy throne;
Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will rejoice.
Not to appall me have the gods bestowed
This precious boon, and blest a sad abode."

"Great Jove, Laodameia, doth not leave
His gifts imperfect. Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive;
But in reward of thy fidelity.
And something also did my worth obtain;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

"Thou knowest the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan strand
Should die; but me the threat could not withhold.
A generous cause a victim did demand;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain;
A self-devoted chief — by Hector slain,"

"Supreme of heroes — bravest, noblest, best!
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
Which then, when tens of thousands were deprest
By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore;
Thou found'st, and I forgive thee — here thou art —
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

"But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave;
And he whose power restores thee hath decreed
Thou shouldst elude the malice of the grave:
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian air."

"This visage tells thee that my doom is past:
Know, virtue were not virtue, if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish. Earth destroys
Those raptures duly, Erebus disdains;
Calm pleasures there abide, majestic pains.

"Be taught, O faithful consort, to control
Rebellious passion: for the gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul;
A fervent, not ungovernable, love.
Thy transports moderate; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn."

"Ah, wherefore? Did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian monster of the tomb
Alcestis, a reanimated corse,
Given back to dwell on earth in beauty's bloom?
Medea's spells dispersed the weight of years,
And Æson stood a youth 'mid youthful peers.

"The gods to us are merciful, and they
Yet further may relent; for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic potent over sun and star,
Is love, though oft to agony distrest,
And though his favorite seat be feeble woman's breast.

"But if thou goest, I follow." — "Peace!" he said.
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered.
The ghastly color from his lips had fled;
In his deportment, shape, and mien appeared
Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
Brought from a pensive though a happy place

He spake of love, such love as spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away, no strife to heal,
The past unsighed for, and the future sure;
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued;

Of all that is most beauteous imaged there
In happier beauty: more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the soul shall enter which hath earned
That privilege by virtue. "Ill," said he,
"The end of man's existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry
Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight,
While tears were thy best pastime, day and night:

"And while my youthful peers before my eyes
(Each hero following his peculiar bent)
Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
By martial sports, or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in counsel were detained,
What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchained.

"The wished-for wind was given: I then revolved
The oracle, upon the silent sea;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
The foremost prow in pressing to the strand,
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

"Yet bitter, ofttimes bitter was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, beloved wife!
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life,
The paths which we have trod — these fountains, flowers;
My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

"But should suspense permit the foe to cry,
'Behold, they tremble! haughty their array,
Yet of their number no one dares to die'?
In soul I swept the indignity away:
Old frailties then recurred; but lofty thought,
In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

"And thou, though strong in love, art all too weak;
In reason, in self-government too slow;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
Our blest reunion in the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sympathized;
Be thy affections raised and solemnized.

"Learn by a mortal yearning to ascend
Towards a higher object. Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end;
For this the passion to excess was driven —
That self might be annulled: her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love."

Aloud she shrieked! for Hermes reappears!
Round the dear shade she would have clung — 'tis vain,
The hours are past, too brief had they been years —
And him no mortal effort can detain.
Swift, toward the realms that know not earthly day,
He through the portal takes his silent way,
And on the palace floor a lifeless corse she lay.

Ah, judge her gently who so deeply loved!
Her, who in reason's spite, yet without crime,
Was in a trance of passion thus removed;
Delivered from the galling yoke of time
And these frail elements, to gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

Yet tears to human suffering are due;
And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
Are mourned by man; and not by man alone,
As fondly he believes. Upon the side
Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
From out the tomb of him for whom she died;
And ever when such stature they had gained
That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
The trees' tall summits withered at the sight:
A constant interchange of growth and blight.

ORPHEUS.

Music took very high rank among the arts most loved and cultivated by the ancient Greeks; their poets have rendered the fame of Orpheus, as a musician, second only to that of his father, Apollo.

Frequent allusions to this myth are made by the greatest of our English poets. Milton closes both "L'Allégro" and "Il Penseroso" with some fine lines relating to Orpheus, which we quote:—

"And ever against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal verse
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
In notes, with many a winding bout
Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out,
With wanton heed and giddy cunning;
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus' self may heave his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heap'd Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains, as would have won the ear
Of Pluto, to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurydice." — *L'Allégro.*

"But, O sad Virgin, that thy power
Might raise Museus from his bower!
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes, as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made hell grant what love did seek." — *Il Penseroso.*

Shakspeare also shows his appreciation of the old story in two of his plays.

Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto to have quite set free
The half-regained Eurydice."