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JEBB'S *ELECTRA*.

IN welcoming the sixth volume of Professor Jebb's great critical work on Sophocles, it is idle to expatiate on the qualities which distinguish it, for they are known to all scholars. If the Greek scholarship of England is able in this generation to 'speak with its enemies in the gate,' there are few men who will have a larger share of the credit for this achievement than the editor of Sophocles, with his fine taste and sober judgment, his full but discriminating knowledge, his detailed thoroughness of work, his unrivalled instinct for the subtleties of Greek expression, and his luminous and forcible exposition.

The introduction contains the history of the legend of Orestes from its first appearance in the *Odyssey* to 1783, when Alfieri published his *Oreste*. Perhaps the most interesting pages are those (xv.-xxii.) where Professor Jebb, following mainly the *Bild und Lied* of Robert, builds up, from evidences scattered about among ancient references and extant vase-paintings, a highly probable restoration of the treatment of the myth in the *Oresteia* of Stesichoros. There could not be a better example either of Professor Jebb's power of lucid statement, or of the unexpected light which the recent study of Greek art, on a thorough and systematic plan, may throw on old literary problems.

In making a full and careful comparison of the three extant *Oresteiai* of the tragedians, Professor Jebb is of course traversing old ground. His most instructive contribution here is the great stress he lays on the question, Why does Sophocles give no hint that Orestes after his matricide was liable to the visitation of the Furies? The editor suggests that it is because the poet chose to adopt the Homeric view of the story, viz. that Orestes' vengeance was entirely laudable. But he argues that this is an incomplete defence for Sophocles, since in the poet's version Apollo is still an element in the story: and the god was introduced not only to command the murder, but to purify the murderer. And if the murderer is not purified, or needs no repentance, is not the presence of Apollo superfluous?

The difficulty is a real one; but it is at least certain that Sophocles could not have been blind to it: if he ignored the Erinyes, he must have done it deliberately. Perhaps the truth may be (as the *Electra* is a late

play) that the higher moral teaching about guilt, so emphatically insisted on in the *Coloneus*, is here implicitly but intentionally applied to the Erinyes. If guilt (as Oedipus passionately pleads) lies *in the evil will, and not in the deed*, then Orestes requires no formal purification when once Apollo, the god of light and justice, has taken the responsibility of the deed.

If this is so, then Sophocles' view is not only not a return to Homer's crude approval of the vengeance: it is the last stage in the moralization of the tale. Justice requires the murder: and in Homer it is therefore done without misgiving. But matricide is horrible guilt: and so from Stesichoros to Aeschylus the Furies punish it, though Apollo saves and purifies the offender. Thus arises a theological 'scheme of salvation' for Orestes, which is worked out in Aeschylus' trilogy. Sophocles' solution is simpler and higher: if Apollo ordered the matricide, it is a just and not a guilty deed. It follows that the Erinyes, who punish unjust homicide (113) and adultery (276), are to be feared by Klytaemnestra and Aigisthos, but not by Orestes: and thus Electra may even invoke them (115) to help in the deed of vengeance.

In the commentary on the text there is no new emendation as brilliant as ὥσπερ ἰάλεμον χέων (*O. T.* 1219) or λυτήριον λώφημα (*Trach.* 554); but there are many places where Professor Jebb's lucid and subtle discussion of difficulties gives material help toward the settlement of disputed questions of reading or interpretation. Such are his notes in favour of reading ὄρκον (47), ἀχέων and not ἄχων (159), τεκέων (187), ἐλάνθαν' ἄν (914), and Musgrave's τᾰφέσει for τῇ φύσει in the well-known *crux* of 686. There is an excellent note and appendix on ἀρχέπλουτον (72), where the editor shows strong ground for translating 'master of my possessions': τοῦμὲ μὴ λυπεῖν (363) is well defended against the numerous corrections: and there is much to be said for the correction θάρσος τι in 495. We are glad to see that Prof. Jebb is converted from his old view of τὸ μὴ καλὸν καθοπλίσασα in 1086: for though the participle is still very doubtful, there can be little question that σοφά τ' ἀρίστα τε παῖς κεκλησθαι must be the praise which the chorus give, and not that which they refuse, to Electra.

On the other hand there are one or two

points on which the editor has not converted us, and where at least an appeal may be made to him for further consideration. One concerns the 'divided attribute,' which occurs three times in the play (133, 284, 1143), and on which the notes give an uncertain sound. On 133 Prof. Jebb says, commenting on the phrase τὸν ἐμὸν πατέρ' ἄθλιον, that 'an adjective, though not a predicate, is sometimes thus placed': but he nowhere clearly says that it is *only where the attribute consists of two elements* (as ἐμὸν ... ἄθλιον here) that *one* may be placed, and more commonly is placed, *after* the substantive. Nor is it needful that *either* of these elements should be adjectives: on 284 (where no reference is made to 133) he correctly quotes Thuc. vii. 23, αἱ πρὸ τοῦ στόματος νῆες ναυμαχοῦσαι, where one element is a preposition-phrase and the other a participle.

In 155, οὔτοι σοὶ μόνῃ... ἄχος ἐφάνη... πρὸς ὃ, τι σὺ τῶν ἔνδον εἶ περισσά, Prof. Jebb's note 'in respect to whatever grief' seems misleading: the ὃ, τι is due to the *negative* (as in οὐδέν... ὃ, τι) and means (as the editor gives it in his translation) 'not to you alone has any grief come wherein.' And εἰ περισσά can hardly mean 'less moderate in *showing*,' but simply 'thou dost exceed': so that the whole clause practically contains *two* points, 'you are not the *only* one afflicted' and 'you are not *more* afflicted than your sisters.'

In 443 why should δέξασθαι not be right, even if it be the only Sophoclean instance of the well-known use of the *aorist* infinitive with verbs of thinking? There are many other examples besides those which Professor Jebb quotes: e.g. Thuc. ii. 2 ἐνόμισαν ῥαδίως κρατῆσαι, *id.* vi. 24 νομίζων ἢ ἀποτρέψειν ἢ... ἐκπλεύσαι, Eur. Or. 1527 μῶρος εἰ δοκεῖς με τλῆναι, and Aias 1082 (where some editors strangely take it *gnomic*) νόμιζε τῷ χρόνῳ πεσεῖν.

In 564 it is surely better to translate 'she kept those many winds at Aulis': we cannot feel it natural that the expression 'those many winds' should be used of the winds that did *not* come: they must be the *adverse* winds which Artemis held or kept at Aulis.

For the corrupt τὸν αἰὲ πατρός δειλαία στενάχουσα in 1075 Prof. Jebb prefers (though he does not adopt) the ingenious ἀ παῖς οἶτον αἰὲ πατρός of Heath. But does he not go too far in saying that Dindorf's τὸν ἐὼν πότμον 'is excluded by the comparison with ἀηδών, which indicates that the doom she

mourns is not her own'? There is no incompatibility in Electra lamenting *her own* fate and her *father's* too: she does both constantly in the play. Nor does the comparison exclude it: the chorus in *Agamemnon* 1142 say to Kassandra

ἀμφὶ δ' ἂν τᾶς θροεῖς
νόμον ἄνομον, οἷά τις ξουθὰ
ἴτυν ἴτυν στένουσ' ἀηδών,

where the very same comparison of the nightingale mourning for Itys is applied to the prophetess lamenting for herself.

Lastly, in 1106, is it not both more dramatic and more natural that Orestes should not recognize his sister until he hears her lamentation over the urn? Prof. Jebb says that he would be 'dull' not to make the discovery sooner, and that he is acting a part. But it must be remembered that he has not before set eyes on her, and that she is not dressed as a princess but as a slave. When he does recognize her he is shocked at her σῶμ' ἀτίμως κἀθέως ἐφθαρμένον: there is indeed nothing to suggest to him who she is, until her sorrow over the supposed ashes reveals her. The coldness of οὐκ οἶδα τὴν σὴν κληδόν' (1110) and the dramatic irony of δόθ' ἦτις ἐστὶ (1123) lose their point if Orestes is acting a part.

In the appendix on 780 Professor Jebb has an excellent analysis of the uses of ὥστε οὐ with infinitive. The only comment we should like to add is that in the two passages under class III. which he quotes from Dem. 53 and *Phoenissae*. 1357 ὥστε οὐ stands not for ὥστε μὴ (as the editor says) but rather for ὥστε μὴ οὐ. This suggests that we should insert μὴ in the Demosthenes passage, and perhaps read ὥς μὴ οὐχ ἅπαντα in *Phoenissae*.

In conclusion a word of thanks should be given to the editor for the firm stand he has made here as elsewhere against the tendency of critics to suspect interpolation on perfectly inadequate grounds. The worst offender in the *Electra* is Nauck, who excises twenty-two lines altogether: and, as a specimen of his literary taste, it will be enough to quote the two beautiful lines which (if he had his wicked will) would no longer be read in Electra's lament over the urn:—

νῦν μὲν γὰρ οὐδὲν ὄντα βαστάζω χερσίν·
δόμων δέ σ', ὦ παῖ, λαμπρὸν ἐξέπεμψ' ἐγώ.

A. S.