

## PREFACE.

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The present play, the last of the seven which I have edited<sup>1</sup>, brings to an end the labour of more than twenty years, during which I have applied myself to the task of purifying the text and explaining the sense of the great Tragedian. How far I have succeeded in my attempt I must leave to the judgment of others. My chief endeavour, as the reader will at once perceive, has been to restore as far as possible the original text. With a view to this I have carefully collated anew or for the first time several important mss.<sup>2</sup>, and have well considered the readings of the various mss. which have been published. I have also attentively perused those ancient authors with which our Tragedian appears to have been most familiar and to have most closely copied, as well as those which seemed most likely to throw light upon him. I have besides availed myself of every edition of our author of any note, and have collected from many sources native and foreign at the expense of much labour everything that in a critical or explanatory point of view seemed likely to be of any use. My own conjectural emendations, the result of much anxious

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<sup>1</sup> The three first plays, the *Œdipus Rex*, the *Œdipus Coloneus*, and the *Antigone*, were published in one vol. large 8vo in the *Bibliotheca Classica*, by Bell and Daldy, London. 1859. The remaining four, owing to the unforeseen length of the notes and for other reasons, it was found more convenient to publish independently in separate volumes, by Williams and Norgate, London.

<sup>2</sup> I have myself carefully and verbatim collated A. (Par. 2712) in all the seven plays — B. (Par. 2787) in *Œd. Rex*, *Œd. Col.*, *Trach.*, and *Phil.* — K. (Par. 2886) in *Œd. Col.*, *Ant.*, *Trach.*, and *Phil.* — T. (Par. 2711) less carefully in all. The various readings in *Œd. Rex*, *Œd. Col.*, and *Ant.*, as also those of A. in *Ajax* and the latter half of the *Electra*, will be published in future editions or elsewhere.