poses of the present work. I may say this here, because,—if I can at all judge from my own feeling in such a case,—it is sometimes of interest for readers to know that works not obviously related to each other have been connected, in the writer's own mind, by a definite unity of purpose. However much he may have failed of his aim in either task or in both, at any rate the point of view from which he approached each may thus be more clearly suggested.

In offering to the public the first part of a new edition of Sophocles, the editor may reasonably be expected to state the general characteristics which he intends to be distinctive of it. In this case, they are chiefly two.

1. First, I aim at showing fully and exactly how the work of Sophocles is understood by me, both in its larger aspects, and at every particular point. For this purpose, the first requisite is a translation, the principle of which shall be absolute fidelity to the original; not to the letter of the original at the cost of the spirit, but to the spirit as expressed in the letter. And, for this end, prose has two advantages over verse, even though the verse be that of a poet. (i) Metre will often exact sacrifices precisely at those points which test the higher fidelity of translation—fidelity to light touches by which the genius and art of the original are most delicately marked. (ii) A modern verse translation has necessarily a more or less modern spirit of its own, due to its very form, and to the associations with which the form is invested. Thus, however little he may desire it, the metrical translator is unavoidably placed in competition with his original.

The value of verse translations as substantive literary works is not here in question. Translation is here being considered solely from the stand-point of the *commentator*, as an indispensable instrument of lucid interpretation. In supplement to a prose translation, a commentary has a special part to perform,