

ture, and questions her for more minute details of the death of Laius. His voice sometimes sinks to a trembling gasp of apprehension, as the identity of the two events becomes more and more evident. He seems to be battling with fate.'

With a modern audience, the moment at which the self-blinded Oedipus comes forth is that which tests the power of the ancient dramatist; if, at that sight, repugnance overpowers compassion, the spell has been imperfect; if all other feelings are absorbed in the profound pathos of the situation, then Sophocles has triumphed. We have seen the issue of the ordeal in the case of the representation at Harvard. On the Paris stage, the traditions of the French classical drama (represented on this point by Corneille and Voltaire) were apt to make the test peculiarly severe. It is the more significant that the moment is thus described in the excellent account which we have cited above:—

'Oedipus enters, and in the aspect of the man, his whole history is told. It is not the adjunct of the bleeding eyes which now most deeply stirs the spectators. It is the intensity of woe which is revealed in every movement of the altered features and of the tottering figure whose bearing had been so majestic, and the tone of the voice,—hoarse, yet articulate. The inward struggle is recognised in its necessary outward signs. The strain on the audience might now become too great but for the relief of tenderness which almost immediately succeeds in the parting of Oedipus from his children. Often as pathetic farewells of a similar kind have been presented on the stage, seldom has any made an appeal so forcible.'

Conclu-
sion.

In the presence of such testimonies, it can no longer be deemed that the Tragedy of ancient Greece has lost its virtue for the modern world. And, speaking merely as a student of Sophocles, I can bear witness that the representation of the *Ajax* at Cambridge (1882) was to me a new revelation of meaning and power. Of that performance, remarkable in so many aspects, I hope to say something in a later part of this edition. Here it must suffice to record a conviction that such revivals, apart from their literary and artistic interest, have also an educational value of the very highest order.