

‘Slowly the crimson curtains on the right-hand side below the stage are drawn apart, and the Priest of Zeus enters, leaning on a staff, a venerable and striking figure....Behind him come two little children. They are dressed in soft white tunics and cloaks, their hair is bound with white fillets, and they carry in their hands olive branches twined with wool,—

ἐλαίας θ' ὑψιγέννητον κλάδον,
λήνει μεγίστῳ σωφρόνως ἔστεμμένον.

This shows that they come as suppliants. Behind the children come boys, then youths, and then old men. All are dressed in white and carry suppliant boughs; in the costumes of the men, the delicate fabric of the undergarment, the *χιτών*, contrasts beautifully with the heavy folds of the *ἱμάτιον*. With grave, attentive faces the procession crosses the front of the stage, and mounts the steps; the suppliants lay down their branches and *seat themselves on the steps of the altars*. The priest alone remains standing, facing the palace door.

‘The first impression upon the spectators was fortunate. The innocent looks of the children, the handsome figures of the men, the simplicity and solemnity of their movements, set off as they were by the fine drapery of their garments and the striking groups around the altars, had an instant and deep effect. It is safe to say that fears of crudeness or failure began rapidly to vanish. The spectacle presented at this moment was one of the most impressive of the play.

‘After a short pause the great doors of the palace are thrown back, and the attendants of Oedipus enter and take up their positions on each side. They wear thin lavender tunics reaching nearly to the knee. Their looks are directed to the interior of the palace, whence, in a moment, Oedipus enters. His royal robes gleam now with the purple of silk and now with the red of gold; gold embroidery glitters on his crimson tunic and on his white sandals; his crown gives him dignity and height.

‘For an instant he surveys the suppliants, and then addresses them.’

§ 2. *Arrival of Creon from Delphi*: verses 78 ff. ‘Account,’ p. 69. ‘While Oedipus is speaking, the children on the [spectators’] left of the stage have descried some one approaching, and one of them has pointed him out to the priest. It is Creon, who enters with rapid strides, wearing a wreath of bay leaves sparkling with berries, the symbol of a favorable answer. He is dressed in the short salmon-colored tunic and crimson cloak, with hat and staff. A hasty greeting follows; and