

bitterness is full: he breaks into a prayer that the gods may hear him, and make this new strife fatal to both brothers alike. And then, turning to the Chorus, he assures them that he is destined to be a deliverer of Attica: for his mind is now made up; he has no longer any doubt where his blessing, or his curse, is to descend. The Chorus, in reply, instruct him how a proper atonement may be made to the Eumenides for his trespass on their precinct; and Ismene goes to perform the prescribed rites in a more distant part of the grove.

Here follows a lyric dialogue between the Chorus and Oedipus. They question him on his past deeds, and he pathetically asserts his moral innocence. (Kommos 510—548.)

Theseus now enters, on the spectator's right hand, as coming from Athens. Addressing Oedipus as 'son of Laius,' he assures him, with generous courtesy, of protection and sympathy; he has himself known what it is to be an exile. Oedipus explains his desire. He craves to be protected in Attica while he lives, and to be buried there when he is dead. He has certain benefits to bestow in return; but these will not be felt until after his decease. He fears that his sons will seek to remove him to Thebes. If Theseus promises to protect him, it must be at the risk of a struggle. Theseus gives the promise. He publicly adopts Oedipus as a citizen. He then leaves the scene.

Oedipus having now been formally placed under the protection of Athens, the Chorus appropriately celebrate the land which has become his home. Beginning with Colonus, they pass to themes of honour for Attica at large,—the olive, created by Athene and guarded by Zeus,—the horses and horsemanship of the land, gifts of Poseidon,—and his other gift, the empire of the sea. Of all the choral songs in extant Greek drama, this short ode is perhaps the most widely famous; a distinction partly due, no doubt, to the charm of the subject, and especially to the manifest glow of a personal sentiment in the verses which describe Colonus; but, apart from this, the intrinsic poetical beauty is of the highest and rarest order¹. First stasimon: 668—719.

¹ Dr Heinrich Schmidt, in his *Compositionslehre*, has selected this First Stasimon as a typical masterpiece of ancient choral composition, and has shown by a thorough