

'as one sacred and pious,'—the suppliant of the Eumenides, the disciple of Apollo (287).

In the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, when the king pronounces a ban on the unknown murderer of Laius, he charges his subjects that no one shall make that man 'partner of his prayer or sacrifice, or serve him with the lustral rite' (239 f.). Ceremonial purity thus becomes a prominent idea at an early point in the *Tyrannus*; and rightly so; for that play turns on acts as such. In the *Oedipus Coloneus* we have a description of the ritual to be observed in the grove of the Eumenides; but, as if to mark the difference of spirit between the two plays, it is followed by the striking words of Oedipus, when he suggests that a daughter shall officiate in his stead:—'I think that one soul suffices to pay this debt for ten thousand, if it come with good-will to the shrine' (497). When eternal laws are broken by men, the gods punish the breach, whether wilful or involuntary; but their ultimate judgment depends on the intent. That thought is dominant in the *Oedipus Coloneus*. The contrast between physical blindness and inward vision is an under-note, in harmony with the higher distinction between the form of conduct and its spirit.

The  
Oedipus  
of this  
play.

§ 4. The Oedipus whom we find at Colonus utters not a word of self-reproach, except on one point; he regrets the excess of the former self-reproach which stung him into blinding himself. He has done nothing else that calls for repentance; he has been the passive instrument of destiny. It would be a mistake to aim at bringing the play more into harmony with modern sentiment by suffusing it in a mild and almost Christian radiance, as though Oedipus had been softened, chastened, morally purified by suffering. Suffering has, indeed, taught him endurance (*στέργειν*), and some degree of caution; he is also exalted in mind by a new sense of power; but he has not been softened. Anger, 'which was ever his bane,' blazes up in him as fiercely as ever; Creon rebukes him for it; his friends are only too painfully conscious of it. The unrestrained anger of an old man may easily be a very pitiful and deplorable spectacle; in order to be that, it need only be lost to justice and to generosity, to reason and to taste; but it requires the touch of a powerful dramatist