

towards the polluted State, from which his impiety had alienated the gods above.

In reply to the friendly and earnest warning of Teiresias, Creon angrily accuses the seer of mercenary complicity in a disloyal plot; malcontent Thebans wish to gain a triumph over their king by frightening him into a surrender. Never will he grant burial-rites to Polyneices.

Teiresias, angered in his turn, then declares the penalty which the gods reserve for such obduracy. With the life of his own son shall Creon atone for his twofold sin,—the detention of the dead among the living, and the imprisonment of the living in the abode of the dead. The seer then departs.

Creon is deeply moved. In the course of long and eventful years he has learned a lesson which is present also to the minds of the Theban elders. The word of Teiresias has never failed to come true.

After a hurried consultation with the Chorus, Creon's resolve is taken. He will yield. He immediately starts, with his servants, for the upper part of the Theban plain, where the body of Polyneices is still lying,—not very far, it would seem, from the place of Antigone's prison.

At this point an objection might suggest itself to the spectator. Is there not something a little improbable in the celerity with which Creon,—hitherto inflexible,—is converted by the threats of a seer whom he has just been denouncing as a venal impostor? Granting that experience had attested the seer's infallibility when speaking in the name of the gods, has not Creon professed to believe that, in this instance, Teiresias is merely the mouthpiece of disloyal Thebans? The answer will be found by attentively observing the state of mind which, up to this point, has been portrayed in Creon. He has, indeed, been inflexible; he has even been vehement in asserting his inflexibility. But, under this vehemence, we have been permitted to see occasional glimpses of an uneasy conscience. One such glimpse is at vv. 889 f., where he protests that *his* hands are clean in regard to Antigone;—he had given her full warning, and he has not shed her blood,—‘but at any rate’ (δ' οὐν,—*i.e.*, wherever the guilt rests)—‘she shall die.’ Another such trait