

occurs at v. 1040, where he says that he will not bury Polyneices, though the throne of Zeus in heaven should be defiled,—quickly adding, ‘for I know that no mortal can pollute the gods.’¹ It may further be remarked that a latent self-mistrust is suggested by the very violence of his rejoinder to the Chorus, when they venture, with timid respect, to hint the possibility that some divine agency may have been at work in the mysterious tribute paid to Polyneices (278 f.). A like remark applies to the fury which breaks out at moments in his interviews with Haemon and with Teiresias. The delicacy of the dramatic tact which forbids these touches to be obtrusive is such as Sophocles, alone of the Attic masters, knew how to use. But they suffice to indicate the secret trembling of the balance behind those protestations of an unconquerable resolve; the terrible prophecy of Teiresias only turns the scale.

Hypor-
cheme:
(taking the
place of
the fifth
stasimon)
1115—
1154.

The Chorus is now gladdened by the hope that Creon’s repentance, late though it is, may avail to avert the doom threatened by Teiresias. This feeling is expressed in a short and joyous ode, which invokes the bright presence of Dionysus. May the joyous god come with healing virtue to his favourite Thebes! The substitution of this lively dance-song (‘hyporcheme’) for a choral ode of a graver cast here serves the same purpose of contrast as in the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the *Ajax*, and the *Trachiniae*. The catastrophe is approaching².

VI. Exo-
dos: 1155
—1352.

A Messenger now enters,—one of the servants who had accompanied Creon to the plain. The words in which he briefly intimates the nature of his tidings (v. 1173) are overheard, within the house, by Eurydicè, then in the act of going forth with offerings to Pallas; and she swoons. On recovering consciousness, she comes forth, and hears the full account from the Messenger. He says that, when they reached the plain, Creon’s first care was for the funeral rites due to Polyneices. After prayer to Pluto and Hecatè, the remains—lacerated by birds and dogs—were washed, and solemnly burned; a high funeral-mound was then raised on the spot. Creon and his followers then repaired to the tomb of Antigone. They found her already dead; she

¹ See note on v. 1044.

² See note on v. 1115.