

manner which he has chosen, he had a consciously dialectical purpose¹. Such a purpose was wholly consistent, in this instance, with the artist's first aim,—to produce a work of art. It is because Creon and Antigone are so human that the controversy which they represent becomes so vivid.

§ 7. But how did Sophocles intend us to view the result? What is the drift of the words at the end, which say that 'wisdom is the supreme part of happiness'? If this wisdom, or prudence (*τὸ φρονεῖν*), means, generally, the observance of due limit, may not the suggested moral be that both the parties to the conflict were censurable? As Creon overstepped the due limit when, by his edict, he infringed the divine law, so Antigone also overstepped it when she defied the edict. The drama would thus be a conflict between two persons, each of whom defends an intrinsically sound principle, but defends it in a mistaken way; and both persons are therefore punished. This view, of which Boeckh is the chief representative, has found several supporters. Among them is Hegel:—'In the view of the Eternal Justice, both were wrong, because they were one-sided; but at the same time both were right².'

What is the moral intended?

Or does the poet rather intend us to feel that Antigone is wholly in the right,—*i.e.*, that nothing of which the human law-giver could complain in her was of a moment's account beside the supreme duty which she was fulfilling;—and that Creon was wholly in the wrong,—*i.e.*, that the intrinsically sound maxims of government on which he relies lose all validity when opposed to the higher law which he was breaking? If that was the poet's meaning, then the 'wisdom' taught by the issue

¹ This point might be illustrated by contrast with an able romance lately published, of which the title is borrowed from this play of Sophocles. 'The New Antigone' declined the sanction of marriage, because she had been educated by a father who had taught her to regard that institution as wrongful. Such a case was not well suited to do dramatically what the *Antigone* of Sophocles does,—to raise the question of human law against private conscience in a general form,—because the institution concerned claims to be more than a human ordinance, and because, on the other hand, the New Antigone's opinion was essentially an accident of perverted conscience. The author of the work was fully alive to this, and has said (*Spectator*, Nov. 5, 1887) that his choice of a title conveyed 'a certain degree of irony.'

² *Religionsphilosophie*, II. 114.