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ARTICLE V.
THE GREEK DRAMA.

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The Relation of the Poetry to the Government and Culture of the Greeks.

THE spirit of an age or people is most accurately and surely represented in its poetry. The statesman who would prefer the moulding influence of the ballads to the laws of a nation, indicates that he has not been unobservant of the more hidden influences which govern society. But it is not less true that the diligent and thoughtful student of history can better be ignorant of the legal enactments and penal code of that nation and age, whose inner life he would understand, than of the warblings of its minstrels, or the spontaneous, gushing effusions of its men of song. Indeed, if we desire to have an intimate acquaintance with the spirit of the political institutions, the religion, or culture of any people separated from us by time or distance, we not only *need* but cannot do without their poetical productions. What should we know of the spirit of the old Norsemen but from the productions of their Scalds, their Eddas, and the first rude combinations of their runic alphabet, the gift of their god *Odin*?

The poetry of Greece is perhaps more intimately connected with and descriptive of the state of society in which it arose, than that of any other nation. The history of the religion, civil institutions, and culture of long ages prior to authentic records of actual events, constituted this early poetry. It is true, that the earliest compositions of almost all nations are narrative songs, recited in their festivals, celebrating the exploits of their heroes, and the genealogies of their princes. It was so with our Saxon ancestors before they migrated from their German forests.¹ But all nations have not a Homer or such a past as the Greeks to look back upon. "The divine myths of the Greeks," says Grote,² "the matter of their religion constituted also the matter of their earliest history." Their past, long varied, stirring, earth-wide, heaven-high, their genealogical records none the less certain

¹ Tacitus, Germ. c. 2, says: Germani celebrant carminibus antiquis, quod unum apud illos memoriae et annalium genus est, Tuisconem, etc.

² Hist. Vol. I. p. 71.

because let down from Olympian heights, had the two-fold charm of novelty and reality, marvellousness and certainty. In listening to the recitals of their minstrels, the cravings of the heart for higher revelations, and the desire for national honor and individual glory, was alike satisfied. No wonder, then, that they clung to them with a tenacity not easily destroyed, and built upon them with a confidence not readily shaken. It has been well said that "it was Homer who formed the character of the Greek nation."¹ The Homeric poems were the fountain-heads of all the refinement of the ancients. The Homeric rhapsodists were in fact the priests, the lawgivers and historians of Greece for several ages. They were the especial favorites of the princes, the praises of whose ancestors "of divine descent," they sung, and whose authority was itself heaven-descended.

The Homeric poems were evidently intended for the special gratification of princes, in whose banquets they were often sung. They exhibit "a government founded on divine right as opposed to the sovereignty of the people." The king was superior, in force of body and mind, as was well befitting his descent :

In the midst
Of heroes, eminent above them all,
Stood Agamemnon, with an eye like Jove's
To threaten or command, like Mars in girth,
And, with the port of Neptune, * * *
For he surpasses all, such Jove ordained
* * * the son of Atreus.²

He, to be sure, would sometimes condescend to counsel with his chiefs and elders, and communicate with the assembled people in the Agora, whose assent and submission was demanded by a sort of religious regard for the authority vested in the king. In the Iliad the nod of Agamemnon, king of men, is the end of all controversy. His word is truth,³ his authority is not to be resisted, his wrath no other than Achilles, the son of Thetis, goddess of the silver bow, dares to brave, or his vengeance incur. For woe to him who shall incense a king.⁴ It was Thersites alone, "loquacious, loud, and coarse," who

squinted halted gibbous was behind,
And pinched before, and on whose tapering head
Grew patches only of the flimsiest down,

¹ Heeren's Hist. Res. Greece, p. 115 seq.

² Il. II. 204. Cowper's Transl. and cf. XII. 310 sq.

³ Il. II. 101.

⁴ Il. I. 97.

that dared to inveigh against royal Agamemnon, nor he, without the indignant and severe rebuke of the wise Ulysses, for his want of the "deference due to kings." Many passages might be quoted, illustrative of the fact, that the epic poetry of Greece was the product as well as the representative of a monarchical age :

One and one alone,
Raised and instructed by Saturnian Jove
To govern and to judge, may well suffice,
for "Jove makes the king and loves the king
he makes."¹

The muse, too, who presided over epic poetry, Calliope, "proudly eminent o'er every muse, associate walked with kings magisterial." Even over the infant head of royalty the muses "placid look from high with smiling face," and "on his tongue they shed

A gentle dew, and words as honey sweet
Drop from his lips.²

It matters not, that from one point of view the heroes of the Homeric epic are essentially fictitious; they were not so to the Greek. To him they were as real as his ancestors of the generations succeeding the fall of Troy, and served as a golden chain to unite the living man with his divine progenitor.³ The Atridae were the prototypes of the princes who long ruled in Hellas and its colonies, and the latter demanded of their subjects the same reverent regard that was shown to their god-like ancestors.

Epic poetry, which was probably preceded by the age of short narrative songs as introductory to it, prevailed in Greece from the era of the Homeric poems (probably 850—776 B. C.) until some time in the 7th century B. C. The hexameter,⁴ too, was the only measure much cultivated. There might have been lighter strains and more stirring and sprightly movements used in particular districts, especially in connection with the enthusiasm of religious festivals, but such innovations were probably rare, and worthy of little regard, except as straggling beams darted athwart the sky, as premonitions of approaching light. The appropriateness of the staid and even movement of hexameters is evident, not only if we take into account the subjects, the heroes of a former generation, contemplated with lively interest but without passionate emotion, but also if we consider the causes of this choice of

¹ Il. II. 204.

² Hesiod's Theog. 120 sq.

³ Grote's Greece, Vol. II. p. 73.

⁴ It is a curious fact that the first poem known to have been written in the German language, was in hexameters, the measure selected by the most distinguished heroic poets of modern Germany, by Wieland, for his *Cyrus*, and by Klopstock for his *Messiah*. See Taylor's German Poetry, Vol. I. p. 4.

subjects, the calm veneration of the past and longing for assimilation to it, instead of the stir and agitation of present events and scenes and individual life, which naturally express themselves in shorter and more irregular movement. But the Greek mind was too active and fond of progress, and too many local causes conspired, such as the small size of the petty kingdoms, composed of a city and the adjoining territory, or a few towns, which not only brought the king into close contact with his subjects, so as to expose his human weaknesses, but also gave much occasion for comparison between neighboring provinces, to admit of a long continuance of kingly authority.¹ How the change from monarchy to oligarchy was brought about in every case, we cannot determine, nor need we for our present purpose.² The fact is sufficient. But it is of special importance to note that the decline of epic poetry was coëval with that of kingly authority. "Such oligarchical governments," says Grote, after speaking of their origin in Greece, "varying in their details but analogous in general features, were common throughout the cities of Greece Proper, as well as of the colonies throughout the *seventh century B. C.*"³

Early in the seventh century B. C. the elegy began to be cultivated among the Ionians. It seems not to have been intended to make an entirely different impression from the epos, as the hexameter measure was retained, with the omission of the last thesis from every second hexameter, thus breaking up the even tread which the same feet constantly recurring occasioned, and substituting the "feebler and hesitating gait of pentameters." This innovation undoubtedly had a great influence on subsequent poetic developments, and this first timid step out of the hallowed precincts, to which the muse had previously been restricted, was like the first beginnings of evil, the sure precursor of ruin. It is worthy of note that the elegy was first cultivated among the Ionians, the people among whom liberal principles, although with some violence, soonest gained a firm footing.⁴ Almost contemporaneously with the elegy arose the iambic verse,⁵ totally different from the epos. Whilst calmness, rest, characterizes the latter and emotion the elegy, a succession of iambs produce a light, tripping measure,

¹ See Grote's History of Greece, Vol. III. p. 12 sq.

² Grote, Vol. III. p. 21, 22, says: "As far as we can make out, this change seems to have taken place in the natural course of events, and without violence; sometimes the kingly lineage died out, and was not replaced; sometimes, on the death of a king, his son and successor was acknowledged only as archon, or perhaps set aside altogether to make room for a Prytanis or president out of the men of rank around."

³ Hist. Vol. III. p. 23.

⁴ Müller's Hist. of Gr. Lit. p. 104 sq.

⁵ Invented by the Parian poet Archilochus. See Müller, 128 sq.

fitly expressive of raillery and invective. These two species of poetry form a sort of connecting link between the Homeric epos and the proper lyric poetry of Greece, which marks the period of political struggle, from the first beginnings of oligarchy until the democratic element gained predominance in the Grecian States. This was the age in which the great deep of feeling was broken up. Individuals gave vent to long pent up emotions. "Poetical power had lost its heaven-appointed character, and had become an attribute legally communicable, as well as determined to certain definite ends."¹ The questionings which ensued, the dissatisfaction, the contests between the oligarchy and the despots, and again between the few and the many, kept up a constant succession of changes, which were not without their corresponding emotions. In order to express these emotions, diversity of tones would be required in poetry, and the Greek ear attuned by nature to harmony, seemed to demand the accompaniment of music. Both the emotion and the musical accompaniment would naturally demand rests, which led to the division into strophes, and thus to dancing, which was though not a necessary yet a frequent concomitant of the lyrics of Greece.² Pindar may be named as the most distinguished author in this species of poetry, although belonging to the last part of the era, being indeed contemporary with Aeschylus, but yet unacquainted with the modes of thought at Athens, as exhibited especially after the Persian war. He was a native of a small town in the Theban territory, and the influences under which he arose were rather Dorian and Aeolian, and his *epinikia* were distinctively either Doric, Aeolic, or Lydian in spirit and style.³

From Pindar and the era of lyric poetry, the transfer is natural and easy to the drama, the product and representative of the highest civilization and freedom of Greece. From the time of the Solonian constitution, B. C. 600, love of freedom constantly gained ground in Attica, although during the reign of the Peisistratids 560—510 B. C., "the people were as passive in respect to political rights and securities as the most strenuous enemy of democracy could desire."⁴ But after the expulsion of Hippias, new life and vigor was aroused by the concurrence of two political parties. Kleisthenes, the Alcmeonid who had distinguished himself by opposition to the dethroned despots, as it is said by Herodotus, "took into partnership the people who had before been excluded from everything," and thus founded the Athe-

¹ Grote's Hist. of Greece, Vol. III. p. 24.

² See Müller's Hist. Gr. Lit. p. 149.

³ For an account of him, see Müller's Hist. p. 216.

⁴ Grote's Hist. of Greece, Vol. IV. p. 138.

nian democracy.¹ From this time, Athens shot forth into new life. Before, she had been comparatively little known politically, and had contributed far less than other cities, inferior in wealth and resources, to the intellectual progress of Greece. Her artists, notwithstanding the exertions of the Peisistratida, were inferior to those of Argos, Corinth and a score of other cities. Her poets were not worthy to be ranked with those of the Ionian and Aeolian schools. But now, power, influence, cultivation, refinement, seemed to be tending toward the little Attican province. She contended successfully against the Boeotians, Chalcidians and Aeginetans, and baffled the attempt of Sparta to restore the tyrant Hippias. Thus Herodotus says: "The Athenians when free felt themselves a match for Sparta," and he might have added, compelled the Spartans to feel it too, and to take heed how they attempted to extend their influence beyond the Peloponnesus. The battle of Marathon and Salamis tell the story of their valor, and of their success in repelling foreign invasion. The language of the historian just referred to, in regard to the influence of liberty at Athens, is too much in point to be omitted here. "The Athenians grew in strength. And it is plain not in this one instance only, but every way, that liberty is a brave thing, since the Athenians, so long as they were lorded over, were in no wise superior in arms to their neighbors, but as soon as they were free from the despots, they shot far ahead of them all."²

The Persian invasion gave an opportunity for them to show their ability to take the guidance of affairs in Greece. If this war had not arisen, it cannot be known what would have been the result of the rivalry springing up between Athens and Sparta. The mutual ruin of the two cities would not improbably have ensued.³ The glory of the Athenians, acquired in the battle of Marathon, was not sufficient to awaken the enthusiasm of the other States to a general coöperation against the Persians. But the battle of Salamis gave a new impulse to the spirit of the Greeks, so that in the following year, when the final decision of the contest was effected at Plataea, the greater part of Greece was gathered there.⁴ The victory of these few little districts over the assembled hosts of half a continent, not only gave Greece a character among other nations, but by inspiring a consciousness of its power, gave an impulse to it in every department of cul-

¹ Grote's Hist. of Greece, Vol. IV. p. 169. The passage of Herod. v. 66—69, is as follows: *εσσοίμενος δὲ ὁ Κλεισθένης τὸν δῆμον προσηταιρίζεται—ὡς γὰρ δὴ τὸν Ἀθηναίων δῆμον, πρότερον ὑπισμένον πάντων, τότε πρὸς τὴν ἐωυτοῦ μοίρην προσθήκατο, κ. τ. λ.*

² v. 78—91.

³ Heeren's Hist. Res. Greece, p. 142.

⁴ Ibid. p. 149.

ture. Moreover its internal condition was not less changed. Athens, at first,¹ generously yielded the nominal primacy to Sparta as the strongest of the Dorians, but as Heeren says, "it was actually possessed by the State whose talents merited it." And soon after, Athens was nominally also at the head of Grecian States, which supremacy she endeavored to retain not by power alone, but by being *first* in everything.² Her valor and policy made her the chief of the Grecian confederacy, and the neighboring maritime States became her confederates and dependants; a flourishing commerce ensued with wealth and leisure in its train; "Athens rose again out of the Persian ashes, at once the eye and ornament of Greece."³ Just then when Athens was becoming⁴ the capital of Greece, the home of freedom, and the efficient patron of art and literature, this new kind of poetry, the drama arose, and took precedence of every other species of composition in public favor.

The circumstances in the age which gave rise to the drama, and the causes of the general interest felt in it, demand a passing notice.

Why is the age of Grecian freedom, progress and culture, fitly represented by the Greek drama? In the first place, the epic writer describes distant events, those separated from himself by a great chasm. It may be that he connects them in some way with the present, especially in regard to the results to be effected, yet the events themselves are viewed from afar. In lyric poetry, present feelings are uttered, but they are too often individual feeling, and short bursts of emotion. Now in the drama there is action, and action in the present. The author and his hearers live in the scenes portrayed; their hearts and their souls are in them. They suffer or rejoice, weep or laugh with the persons of the drama. Prometheus is bound at the

¹ In the invasion of Xerxes, before the battle of Salamis.

² Heeren, 149 sq. Müller's *Hist. of Dorians*, Vol. I. p. 208, says, "It is not true that the supremacy over the Greeks was in fact transferred at all from Sparta to Athens, if we consider the matter as Sparta considered it, however great the influence of this change may have been upon the power of Athens." It may be true that there was no formal transfer, but was there not a tacit one? And is there not a significance in the determination of Sparta to yield up the Persian war into the hands of the Athenians, as better fitted for it than herself (*Thucydides* I. 95), and in the refusal to send more expeditions to Asia, "that her generals might not be made worse," and the conclusion that it was not expedient for Sparta to aim at a mastery of the sea?

³ Potter's *Essay on the Grecian Drama*.

⁴ According to Müller's *History of the Dorians*, from about the year 580 B. C., Sparta had acted as the recognized commander not only of Peloponnesus but of the whole Greek nation, although it was rather, he concedes, by tacit acknowledgment than agreement that this precedence belonged to Sparta.

outer limits of the wide earth, on the "extreme cliff" of Caucasus, by the command of Jupiter, when newly raised to supreme dominion; but Scythia, to the assembled multitudes of the theatre, is no longer a pathless wild where human footstep never marked the ground,"¹ nor the sufferer there, the inhabitant of a distant age; but they all surround him as their persecuted friend, and listen to the commands of Strength to "draw close each massy link and bind his adamantine chains," and gnash on him with their teeth.

The constructive spirit of the age is also appealed to in the drama. The cultivation of the arts which preceded and were coëval with dramatic representations, had awakened a spirit which would not be satisfied with the simplicity of mere narrative, or the transientness and singleness of impression in the song. But the *free spirit* of the Athenian democracy is especially exhibited in the drama. It is true that most of the subjects of the drama are taken from the Homeric poems, but even in the treatment of these subjects, the leaven of liberal principles is diffused. The sympathies are enlisted for those who rebel against the Supreme ruler, as in the case of Prometheus, and for those who disobey the unlawful commands of earthly princes, as when Antigone performs the last sad rites upon the corpse of her brother, in opposition to the commands of Creon. There are many separate passages, too, in the drama, that breathe the spirit of liberty. But we must pass with this hasty view of the political relations of Grecian poetry, to a more detailed account of the origin, nature and manner of the exhibition of the drama.

The Origin and Nature of the Greek Drama.

To one whose notions of the drama are formed from the modern stage and the popular dramatists of our own age, it seems scarcely possible that this species of representation should have originated in connection with the ceremonies of religion. It is nevertheless true. If we pass by the sacred Scriptures, in which, according to many modern commentators, we have at least one dramatical composition, portions of a tragedy, on the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, are yet extant in Greek iambics, by Ezekiel, a Jewish dramatic poet who perhaps lived before the Christian era,² if not, soon after it. The early Christians seem also to have countenanced the exhibition of sacred dramas

¹ Prometheus, l. 3.

² Taylor's Hist. Survey of German Poetry, Vol. I. p. 148, where it is also said: perhaps the Spanish mystery: *Las Profetas de Daniel*, has traditionally preserved a canvass more ancient than Christianity.

and mysteries on the Sabbath and other feast days. Gregory Nazianzen, one of the fathers of the church, wrote a tragedy which is still extant, called *χριστός πάσχων*, or Christ's Passion, which was represented for a religious purpose at Constantinople.¹

From Constantinople such religious exhibitions were introduced into the west of Europe "by crusaders and pilgrims, and became favorite shows to an illiterate populace." A play entitled "The death of St. Catharine," was, for instance, performed by the monks of St. Denis, and eagerly listened to by the Parisians. At a later period it was imitated in Spanish by the celebrated poet Calderone; and among the Germans similar plays were almost innumerable. In England, too, "the earliest dramatic attempts were mysteries² and moralities." Even at the council of Constance, the English prelates at an interval between sittings, "entertained their other brethren by a spiritual play in Latin."³ "Christianity," says Taylor,⁴ "was first taught throughout the north of Europe by means of the stage. The mysteries and miracle-plays of the first missionaries, had familiarized the prominent incidents of biblical history, long before the art of reading could have been called in to communicate the chronicles themselves."

The religious origin of the drama of the Greeks will be plain, if we trace somewhat minutely the rise of the two separate parts, the chorus and the dialogue, of which the Greek tragedies are so manifestly compounded.

The indications of the existence of the chorus are discoverable in the earliest ages of Greece. At first the whole population of a town was accustomed to assemble in some public place, and sing hymns, and perform corresponding dances in honor of a god who had shown some signal favor. This meeting and the ceremony performed, according to some, took its name⁵ from the circumstance that it was first

¹ It has been supposed with some degree of plausibility, that plays upon religious subjects were, at Constantinople, modelled after the old Greek tragedies, in order to counteract their pagan influence. Accordingly, "as the ancient Greek tragedy was a religious spectacle, a transition was made on the same plan, and the choruses were turned into Christian hymns. Gregory wrote many sacred dramas for this purpose, which have not survived those inimitable compositions over which they triumphed for a time."—*Warton's Hist. of English Poetry*, Vol. III. p. 201.

² Mysteries seem to have originated among ecclesiastics, and to have been acted by them as early as the eleventh century A. D. From the monasteries they were transplanted to the schools and universities.—*Warton's Hist. of English Poetry*, Vol. III. p. 201 sq.

³ Schlegel's *Lectures on Dramatic Literature*, p. 369.

⁴ *German Poetry*, Vol. I. p. 154.

⁵ See Donaldson's *Theatre of the Greeks*, p. 7, note.

held in the principal square or open space of the town, i. e. the ἀγορά, or market place, which was emphatically the χοῶρος (χοῖρα), hence, χορός; but more probably, χορός, is kindred with χοροσμός, χοροίτη, and hence is descriptive of the motion of the dancers in a circle.¹ We are not however able to ascribe any exact historical date to the origin of the Greek chorus. Some traces of it are found in Homer and Hesiod, which carry its origin back into the heroic ages.²

There even seems to have been considerable variety in the choral exhibitions of the early ages of Greece. They were attended by young persons of both sexes, the sons and daughters of nobles, who sometimes danced together in rows taking hold of hands.³ The general arrangement was for the citharist to sit in the midst of the dancers who encircled him, with his cithara, or lyre, which he accompanied with his voice. The dancers at this early age did not join in the song, only regulated their movements by it, and when, as on the shield of Hercules, the muses are represented as singing in a chorus, they are to be considered as surrounding Apollo as citharist.

The chorus, which is alluded to in these poets, as employed in lamentations for the dead, and in hymenial processions, is quite different from that of a later age, with which we are at present more immediately concerned. It is among the Dorians in the Peloponnesus and Sicily that the chorus first assumed importance as a branch of literature.

¹ See Liddell and Scott's, and especially Pape's Lexicon, h. v. Perhaps the cities called ἐβούχοροι in Homer, had this appellation, because they had open squares large enough to contain such numerous choruses.—*Müller's Hist. of the Dorians*, Vol. I. p. 334.

² In describing the shield prepared by Vulcan for Achilles, at the request of his mother Thetis. Homer (Il. XVIII. 612), in a hymenial procession, represents youths as dancing in circles to the sound of pipe and harp. Hesiod in describing the shield of Hercules, says:

———But next arose

A well towered city, by seven golden gates

Enclos'd that fitted to their lintels hung.

These men in dances and in festive joys

● Held revelry. * * * *

* * * Gay blooming girls

Preceded, and the dancers followed blithe;

These, with shrill pipe indenting the soft lip,

Breath'd melody, while broken echoes thrilled

Around them; to the lyre with flying touch

Those led the love-enkindling dance.

Elton's Translation.

See also Il. XXIV. 720—722, and Odyssey, VIII. 266, and Müller's *Literature of Ancient Greece*, p. 21 sq.

³ Il. XVIII. 593.

Two principal objects were aimed at in it, worship of the gods and military discipline. Success in war, was the primary object with the Dorians of an early age, and this could not be more certainly accomplished than by celebrating the aid received from gods and deified heroes, together with mimetic illustrations before the assembled people. The music was useful to enable large bodies of men to act in concert, and the dance accustomed the youth to the proper motions and positions for attack and defence.¹ In its origin, then, the chorus was essentially religious and political rather than æsthetic in its character. The deity first celebrated was Apollo, the god of war, music, and civil government.² And the chorus who celebrated his praises was identical, and drawn up in the same order, with the hosts that went out in battle array against the national enemy. Even the different parts of the chorus received the same name with the divisions of the invading army, and to be a good dancer was to be a good warrior.³

We cannot suppose that the chorus in its earlier stages, even among the Dorians, exhibited that perfection of form or harmony of voice and movement, which afterward characterized it. At first it formed a sort of medium between the epos, and the lyrics of the Lesbians,⁴ and so high was the enthusiasm of the people in these celebrations, and so great the demand for songs to be recited, that old traditionary verses were compelled to take the place of more fitting measures. The demand for choral poetry, as was very natural, gave rise to many authors in this species of literature, and even our own poetesses had their prototypes in the fair-haired Megalostrata⁵ and her feminine competitors of that age.

We cannot at present trace minutely the progress of the chorus in its early stages of development. We may however mention, in passing, that it received special encouragement at Sparta, which was for a

¹ Donaldson's Gr. Theatre, p. 7. — "The Spartans even sacrificed to the Muses before an action, these goddesses being expected to produce regularity and order in battle."—Müller, Dorians, Vol. II. p. 263.

² See Müller's Dorians, Vol. II. p. 266 sq.

³ Müller, Hist. Dorians, Vol. II. p. 262—3, says: The agreement which some moderns have found between the Greek chorus and the *lochus* [λόχος] is not a mere creation of the fancy; the large chorus was a pentecostys in number, which was divided into enomoties (hemichoria); it advanced in certain divisions, like an army, and had corresponding evolutions, [see Book IV. ch. 6. § 7]. * * * * * In early times it was a preparation for battle, a use of it which was neglected in a later age; in the soldier heavy-armed for the battle, was also seen the practised dancer of the Pyrrhic. * * * * * Thus also the Thessalians called the soldiers of the front ranks "principal dancers;" and said of a good fighter that "he had danced well."

⁴ See Müller's Lit. of Greece, pp. 164 and 191.

⁵ See Müller's Lit. of Greece, pp. 192—3.

long time the seat of Dorian power and learning.¹ Grote says :² "Everything done there, both serious and recreative, was public and collective, so that the chorus and its performances received extraordinary development. * * * * * The chorus, usually with song and dance combined, constituted an important part of divine service throughout all Greece, and was originally a public manifestation of the citizens generally, a large proportion of them being actively engaged in it, and receiving some training for the purpose, as an ordinary branch of education." But in process of time, as the fine arts were more cultivated, the song and dance became more elaborate, and the duties and expense fell upon a few, and finally upon one, who was called *choragus*, and considered as the religious representative of the whole population. He was accordingly said to do the work of the State or people (*λειτουργεῖν*).³

The choral lyric poetry originally and preëminently belonged to the Dorians. Apollo was first worshipped among them, and his chief temples were in the Doric territory. Consequently in his worship the Doric dialect would naturally be employed.⁴ To such a degree is this true, that Doric and Choral were used as synonymous terms, when applied to Greek poetry; and whenever the Doric dialect occurred in lyric odes, these were generally for the accompaniment of choral dances. The influence of the Dorians upon this species of poetry, is especially conspicuous in the Greek tragedians, where, in the midst of the dialogue in the common dialect of Attica, the choral songs are all Dorian in language. There seems to be a peculiar fitness in this dialect for the expression of feelings of religious reverence and worship. With manliness and dignity, it combines a simplicity which especially belongs to solemn occasions. The peculiarities⁵ of its northern and mountain origin clings to it in its migrations to the more southern part

¹ The poets and sages of Greece were accustomed to frequent certain cities as literary emporiums. "Among these," says Müller, (p. 275), "Sparta stood the highest down to the time of the Persian war," etc.

² Hist. of Greece, Vol. IV. p. 112—13.

³ Derived from *λέως*, *λείρον*, and *ἐργω*, and hence explained by the Grammarians as equivalent to *εἰς τὸ δημόσιον ἐργάζεσθαι*, or *τῷ δημοσίῳ ὑπηρετεῖν*. The origin of our word *liturgy* from the Greek *Λειτουργία* (public service), will not escape notice.

⁴ "Its form was, on the whole, originally a Doric variety of the epic hexameter." —Müller's Dorians, Vol. II. p. 379.

⁵ Some of these peculiarities are the use of *α* for *η*, a concurrence of consonants producing roughness of sound, an aversion to *ζ* and the aspirated consonants, the use of *δ* for *β* and *γ* (as in *δῦ* for *γῦ*, *δένος* for *γένος*, etc.), the omission of letters both in composition and flexion, and the abundant use of the article, etc. See Müller's Hist. of the Dorians, App. V. Vol. II.

of the country, and in every variety of use to which it was put, whether in the simple choral song, or combined with the dialogue in the Attic tragedy.

Another peculiarity of the chorus is the variety and changes of measure found in it. In this particular these compositions furnish a striking contrast with the even tread of the epic hexameter, as well as with the staid and uniform movement of the later dialogue. The irregular metres, depending entirely upon the caprice of the poet, are as suitable for the expression of excited and changing feeling, at one time grave at another cheerful, now lofty then more humble, as uniform feet in equal number for the narrative or the dialogue, whose office is mainly explanation.

The connection of choral song with the dance, on the other hand, gave an artificial and sometimes a highly artistic character to the verse. Even an intricate and somewhat obscure plan of discourse could be understood, since the ear was aided in detecting the rhythm and the change of sentiment, by the eye, which followed the movements in the dance.¹ Thus, while the strophe was recited, the chorus made one movement, and returned to their former position during the antistrophe, and remained motionless there, until the epode had been completed. The public character of the chorus, also, was one ground of distinction between it and the lyric poetry which was so much cultivated among the Aeolians. The thoughts and feelings of private individuals would not be befitting the dignity of a large body of men; hence we find the chorus to be an expression of feeling in reference to the gods or heroes, or the State, whilst poets of the Lesbian school were much more personal in the choice of their themes, and made use of more light and lively metres, with frequent repetitions more nearly allied to the refrain in modern song.

We have already spoken of the celebration of the praises of Apollo, the sun-god, by means of the chorus. And this was continued even in the time of the tragedians. One of the finest lyrical passages in the *Alcestis*² of Euripides, records the blessings conferred upon Admetus, in consequence of the temporary abode of Apollo with him, when compelled to serve a mortal man. But its introduction into the festivals of Dionysius or Bacchus, is of special importance at present. Whether the worship of Dionysius was indigenous to Greece and afterwards modified by connection with Egypt and Asia, as would appear to be the fact from the Homeric Hymn,³ or introduced directly from Egypt

¹ Müller's *Literature of Ancient Greece*, p. 164.

² Line 569 sq.;

³ See Grote's *Greece*, Vol. I. p. 43 sq.

by Cadmus, or from Asia and adopted by the Dorians as kindred with the worship of their own Apollo, is not material at present to inquire.¹ His worshippers seem to have been at first a band of revellers (*καῖμος*), led by a flute-player.² But the song sung in his worship early assumed sufficient importance to receive a special appellation, the dithyramb (*διθύραμβος*).³ We know but little of the manner of its first performance. Archilochus (B. C. 678—629) says that "he can sing the dithyramb, the beautiful strain of Dionysus, when his mind is excited (thunder-stricken) with wine."⁴ But it does not seem to have been performed by the chorus until the time of Arion, about B. C. 600, who was known in Greece as the perfecter of the dithyramb. It previously, probably, consisted in ejaculations and the expression of excited feeling. He gave dignity and a regular character to it in connection with the circular choruses (*κύκλιοι χοροί*), that danced about the altar on which the sacrifice was made. It seems from a passage in Pindar that these improvements were made in Corinth, the city of Periander: "Whence bet from Corinth arose the pleasing festivals of Dionysus, with the dithyramb, of which the prize is an ox."⁵ His style seems to have been of a graver cast than that of his predecessors, as Suidas says that he was the inventor of the tragic style (*τραγικῶν τρόπων εὐρητής*).⁶

Before taking leave of the dithyramb as practised among the Dorians, in order to trace its migration and establishment at Athens, we need to examine a little more closely into the nature of the Bacchic festivals. The high state of excitement in which the worshippers were accustomed to perform their service, is well known. The ac-

¹ Those who are interested in this question, are referred to Grote as above cited, the Greek Theatre, p. 15 sq., and Herodotus' History, B. 2 Euterpe.

² Müller, Hist. Gr. Lit. p. 204.

³ The origin of the name, *διθύραμβος*, is much contested. Perhaps the explanation of Hartung (Classical Museum, No. XVIII.) is the most satisfactory. The first syllable of the word, like *Διόνυσος*, contains the name of Zeus *δι* contracted to *δι*. In *θύραμβος*, the *μ* is euphonic, as in many Greek words, and *θύραμβος* is a cognate of *θύρβος* and *τύρβη*, which latter, according to Pausan. II. 24. 7, was the name of a festival of Dionysus at Argos. *Διθύραμβος* = *Διὸς θύρβος*, signifies the "turbulent disorder of a storm or tempest," and fitly characterizes the hymn to Dionysus, which originally succeeded the calm Paean to Apollo, after the worshippers were heated with wine. See Class. Museum, No. XVIII. p. 375 sq. for a more extended explanation.

⁴ Ὡς Διωνύσου ἄνακτος καλὸν ἐξέρχαι μέλος
Οἶδα διθύραμβον οἶνω συγκεραυνωθείς φρένας.

⁵ Müller, Hist. Gr. Lit. p. 204.

⁶ It has been asked, with some plausibility, whether this tragic style may not have had reference to the introduction of satyrs into the dithyramb, as *τράγος* was another name for *σάτυρος*?—Gr. Theatre, p. 19, note.

tual presence of the god in his temple or at the altar, as was frequently supposed to be the case in Greece, and visible representations of his benefactions to man, and his personal doings and sufferings, would naturally call forth the loudest expressions of *feeling*. These mimic or anthropomorphic representations were frequently carried so far, that some man was made to represent the god,¹ and "thus at the Anthisteria at Athens," (copied from the Dorians,) says Müller,² "the wife of the second archon, who bore the title of queen, was betrothed to Dionysus in a secret solemnity, and in public processions even, the god himself was represented by a man. At the Boeotian festival of the Agronia, Dionysus was supposed to have disappeared, and to be sought for among the mountains; there was also a maiden (representing one of the nymphs in the train of Dionysus), who was pursued by a priest, carrying a hatchet and personating a being hostile to the god."

The worship of Bacchus as the god of the seasons, led perhaps most naturally to that form of the dithyramb from which tragedy was more directly derived. The tendency, in the Greek mind, to impersonate the objects and events of nature is especially conspicuous. The heavenly powers are the gods of earth.

Night

And day, near passing, mutual greeting still
Exchange, alternate as they glide athwart
The brazen threshold vast. This enters, that
Forth issues; nor the two can one abide
At once constrain.³

So Bacchus was supposed to represent the changing seasons. In winter, he was flying, struggling, dying; but with returning spring he was reënimated, joyous, victorious. In order to communicate his life-giving bounties, he was surrounded by ministers, sileni and satyrs,

¹ See Müller's *Hist. Gr. Lit.* p. 238.

² *Hist. Gr. Lit.* p. 288. A stratagem for procuring the return of Peisistratus from exile, recorded by the Greek historians, is illustrative of the belief in the personal appearance of the gods at their festivals. The two conspirators (Peisistratus and Megacles) clothed a stately woman, six feet high, named Phylê, in the panoply and costume of Athênê, surrounded her with the processional accompaniments belonging to the goddess, and placed her in a chariot, with Peisistratus by her side; in this guise, the exiled despot and his adherents approached the city, and drove up to the Acropolis, preceded by heralds, who cried aloud to the people: "Athenians! receive ye cordially Peisistratus, whom Athênê has honored above all other men, and is now bringing back into her own Acropolis." The historian adds that the goddess was received with implicit belief and demonstrations of worship, and the deceptive epiphany was not discovered until Peisistratus and Megacles quarrelled.

— *Grote's Greece*, Vol. IV. p. 140.

³ Hesiod, *Theog.* 992 sq.

through whom he dispensed his blessings, by the medium of whom, life-giving influences went forth from him as a sun, to all vegetative and animate nature. It was not difficult for the fancy of a Greek to people the grove and fountain with these fantastic beings, to witness their sportive dances, and even to identify himself with them as an actual participant. Hence the origin of the chorus of the satyrs, so frequent in the *Dionysia*, dressed in goat skins, painted in various fanciful colors, and otherwise oddly and wildly decorated, or masked. Müller well says: "The intense desire felt by every worshipper of Bacchus, to fight, to conquer, to suffer in common with him, made them regard these subordinate beings as a convenient step by which they could approach more nearly to the presence of their divinity. The custom, so prevalent at the festivals of Bacchus, of taking the disguise of satyrs, doubtless originated in this feeling, and not in the mere desire of concealing excesses under the disguise of a mask; otherwise, so serious and pathetic a spectacle as tragedy could never have originated in the choruses of these satyrs."¹

The testimony of the ancients is explicit in regard to the rise of tragedy out of the dithyrambic chorus. Aristotle (*Poet.* IV. 14) says: "Both tragedy, then, and comedy, having originated in a rude and unpremeditated manner—the first from the leaders in the *Dithyrambic* hymns, the other from those *Phallic* songs which, in many cities, remain still in use,—each advanced gradually towards perfection, by such successive improvements as were most obvious."² It is unnecessary to delay long to decide who has just claim to the originating of the Greek Drama. If the word is taken in its strictest sense, as *action*, i. e. "imitation in the way of action," its origin may be conceded to the Dorians. It is on this ground, according to Aristotle, that they claim "the invention both of tragedy and comedy. For comedy is claimed by the Megarians; — — — And tragedy also by some of the Dori-

¹ Müller, *Hist. Gr. Lit.* p. 289. Cf. also Donaldson's *Greek Theatre*, p. 16: "The heavenly powers became gods of the earth, and it was natural, that the coördinate natural causes of productiveness should also have their representatives, who would form the attendants of the personified primal causes of the same effects. The sun-god, therefore, when he roamed the earth, was properly attended by the Sileni, the deities presiding over running streams; the goddess of the moon by the Naiades, the corresponding female divinities; nay, sometimes the two bands united to form one merry train. To these Sileni were added a mixture of man and goat called satyrs * * * * who were not, like the Sileni, real divinities, but deified representatives of the original worshippers, who probably assumed, as portions of their droll costume, the skin of the goat which they had sacrificed as a welcome offering to their wine god."

² Twining's Translation.

ans of the Peloponnesus. In support of these claims, they allege that the Doric word for a village is *Κώμη*, whilst the Attic is *Δῆμος*; and that comedians were so called, not from *καμάζειν*, to revel, but from their strolling about the *κώμαι* or villages before they were tolerated in the city. They also say that *to do* or *to act*, they express by *δρᾶν*; the Athenians, by *πράττειν*."

Herodotus, too, speaks of tragic choruses, sung in honor of Adrastus, at Sicyon.¹ Epigenes is also mentioned (Suidas, under *Θέσπις*) as the first of a series of nine dramatic poets ending with Thespis. It is evident that in whatever the dramatic element of these poets consisted, it had nothing in common with the dialogue of the Athenian tragedy, and nothing which would give much claim to the appellation dramatic, as used in connection with the modern tragedy.

We have seen that the chorus received its early cultivation and development among the Dorians in the Peloponnesus, of which Sparta gradually became the chief city, and acquired the political and literary primacy. But we must now turn our attention to the Ionian portion of Greece, especially to Athens, and examine a little more closely what preparation is there making, in the meantime, to fit it to become the capital of Greece, and to be known in all succeeding generations as the chosen abode of refinement and culture. From the commencement of authentic Grecian history, 776 B. C., for nearly two centuries, as before intimated, we know little else of Athens than that it, like other Grecian States, was first governed by a series of hereditary kings, and afterwards through an oligarchy, came under the dominion of what Aristophanes petulantly calls "that angry, waspish, intractable, little old man, Demus of Pnyx." Desert indeed is the journey of the antiquarian and annalist through these long years, and he is almost ready to conclude that the barren rocks and shallow soil of Attica, cannot be productive of the fruits of the more fertile plains of Argos and Thessaly. But the natural beauties of hill and plain and blissful clime, are harbingers of the future greatness of the quiet and thoughtful dwellers there. The plaintive tale which the clear voiced nightingale sweetly warbles forth beneath the ivy shade of the dew-besprinkled glade, where the vine in clusters pours her sweets, secure from wintry showers and scorching suns, where Cytherea's goddess quaffs from the gentle flowing stream, breathes over the land in genial

¹ See Herod. V. 67: Οἱ δὲ Σικυώνιοι ἐώθεσαν μεγαλωστί κάρτα τιμῶν τὸν Ἄδραστον . . . τὰ τε δὴ ἄλλα οἱ Σικυώνιοι ἐτίμων τὸν Ἄδραστον καὶ δὴ πρὸς, τὰ πάθεα αὐτοῦ τραγικοῖσι χοροῖσι ἐγέγραυρον, κ. τ. λ. Themistius, Orat. xxvii. 337. B. : τραγωδίας εὐρεταὶ μὲν Σικυώνιοι, τελεσιουργοὶ δὲ Ἀττικοί.

gales, and twines her hair with the fragrant rose and sweet narcissus,¹ will not fail to awaken corresponding notes in many human bosoms, although long vainly breathed upon the desert air.

The legislation of Solon, about 600 B. C., had much influence upon the political relations of Athens. To reconcile the claims of an hereditary aristocracy with the demands of the clamorous, oppressed and suffering multitude, to combine rigid morality and order with freedom of action,² to repress a general mutiny of the poorer class against the rich, was not the work of a weak head or faint heart. The humanity and warm sympathy of the great lawgiver of Athens, were not less conspicuous in his legislative enactments, severe though they sometimes were, than in his elegies and iambics; and it is doubtful whether his example as a writer, and as a patron and encourager of the rhapsodes, had a tythe of the influence upon the subsequent intellectual development of his countrymen, that was exerted by his political regulations.

Solon was succeeded at Athens by Peisistratus, with whom the second period of Grecian history may be said to begin. His dominion with that of his sons, together called Peisistratids, continuing with some interruptions for fifty years, from 560 to 510 B. C., is fraught with interest to the scholar. It is true that the emolument of the reigning family was the ruling motive with this prince, but it was sought by means that could not fail, in one point of view, to bring lasting honor to his native Athens. He extended his territory beyond Attica, and acquired the possession of rich mines, subsequently the source of much wealth to the Athenians. He encouraged industry, and did much for the improvement of the agriculture of his own little province. Works of art were commenced and carried on by him, although it was left for the more democratical age of Cleisthenes to produce artists of any considerable excellence, workers in gold, ivory and brass. The magnificent temple of the Olympian Zeus was begun in his reign, and though not half finished, was yet not without its influence in exciting to works of design. He also commenced the building of a temple to Apollo; and the Lyceum afterwards, in the age of the philosophers, so celebrated, was begun by him.³ The care taken by this family in procuring full and accurate copies of the Homeric poems, and the better recitation of them at the Panathenaic festival, their love and patronage of poets and men of letters, and their works, both native and foreign, such as those of Simonides, Anacreon and Læsus, had a

¹ Sophocles *Oedipus Tyrannus*, 578, sq. ² Müller's *Hist. of Gr. Lit.* p. 278.

³ Thirlwall's *Hist. of Greece*, Vol. II. p. 63, 4.

highly beneficial effect upon the developments of the rising Athens. These all, though but the morning gleams before the meridian light of the era of Pericles, the golden age of Athenian culture, were yet the harbingers, the sure precursors of future glory.

It was during the reign of the Peisistratids, that the first foundations of the tragic drama were laid at Athens. The worship of Bacchus had long been prevalent there, but it does not appear that the Dorian choral songs had been introduced, before the Athenians recognized the authority of the Delphic oracle, which by a response sanctioned this form of worship. A legend in Pausanias¹ also indicates, that Pegasus was assisted by the Delphian oracle in transferring the worship of Bacchus from Eleutheræ to Athens. It cannot be doubted that this form of worship would meet with a ready reception at Athens, just awakening to some interest in literature and the arts, as well as in free institutions. Not less certain is it that the Dorian lyric drama, such as it was, accompanied or soon followed its parent, the dithyramb.²

We must go back a little, in order to explain the other part of the Greek tragedy, the dialogue. There existed in Greece, especially among the Ionians, from a very early age, a class of men called rhapsodes (*ραψωδοί*),³ "the successors of the primitive Aœdi or bards,"⁴ whose profession was much respected until the time of the Socratic philosophers. They differed from the bards by foregoing the use of musical instruments (the cithara or phorminx), as an accompaniment to their recitations. They sometimes held a branch of laurel, *ῥάβδος*, in their hands, and according to Grote, "depended for effect upon voice and manner,—a species of musical and rhythmical declamation which gradually increased in vehement emphasis and gesticulation, until it approached to that of the dramatic actor." Even Hesiod appears to have ranked himself among the rhapsodes,⁵ and the term is equally applicable to those who recited their own poems, and those who merely declaimed a piece a thousand times repeated before. It appears probable, that both the vocation of the bards and rhapsodes, was, for a while,⁶ exercised together. But "before the time of So-

¹ l. 2. 5.

² Donaldson's Gr. Theatre, p. 37.

³ Derived from *ῥάπτειν ἑοιδήν*, to stich, join together verses, i. e. in connected discourse, as distinguished from the strophic and irregular character of lyric poetry.

⁴ Grote's Hist. of Greece, Vol. II. p. 187.

⁵ Ibid. 187, 8.

⁶ According to Müller's Hist. Lit. of An. Greece, p. 33, in the early ages, the cithara was employed at the recitation of epic poetry only in the introduction (*ἀναβολή*), for the purpose of giving the necessary pitch, and hence the expression: *φορμίζων ἀνεβάλλει' αἰδεῖν*, Od. i. 115; viii. 286, etc. The *Guitar*, a stringed instrument of simple construction, is used at the present day, among the

lon, the rhapsode was the recognized and exclusive organ of the old epic; sometimes in short fragments before private companies, by single rhapsodes; sometimes several rhapsodes in continuous succession at a public festival."¹ We are undoubtedly, indebted to these professed reciters, for the preservation of many ancient treasures before the invention of writing, and even until it became somewhat common; for epic poems were rhapsodized for more than a thousand years.²

The office of the chorus was, to express its feeling in reference to some object prefigured by the sacrifice. It would occur that the events symbolized in the sacrifice would need some explanation, and what more natural than that the rhapsode should be called in to officiate in this respect. The first actual occurrence of this kind, of which we have any intimation, is perhaps that recorded in Hesychius, who says, that at Brauron, the Iliad was chanted in connection with the sacrifice of a goat;³ or that in Athenæus, quoted from Clearchus, from which it appears that the rhapsodes came forward and recited in honor of Bacchus. Now, according to Aristophanes,⁴ the festival held at Brauron called Brauronia, was in honor of Bacchus; so that we may suppose, that there was a mingling of the dithyramb and the recitations of the rhapsodes in these celebrations.

But we have explicit testimony to the fact that Thespis introduced an actor, in order to rest the Dionysian chorus.⁵ This circumstance more than any other, perhaps, has been the ground of the general ascription of the honor of inventing Greek tragedy to him. There is good evidence to believe that he was a rhapsode, and that he was generally if not always himself the actor, *ὑποκριτής*, spoken of. But he made some advance upon the recitations which may be supposed to have been held at Brauron and elsewhere. He did not confine himself to mere narration, but held a dialogue with the chorus by means of its coryphæi. He also invented a disguise for the face, by means of a pigment prepared from the herb purlain, and afterwards constructed a linen mask, in order to be able to personate more than one

Sorvians by wandering minstrels for a similar purpose. But even the cithara was not necessary to the rhapsode, as appears from the fact that Hesiod did not make use of it; and later, it belonged exclusively to the bards.

¹ Grote, Vol. II. p. 189.

² For an account of the office of the rhapsode in the preservation of the Iliad and Odyssey, see Grote, Vol. II. p. 189 sq.

³ Βραυρωνίαις· τὴν Ἰλιάδα ἤδον ραψῳδοῖ ἐν Βραυρῶνι τῆς Ἀττικῆς, καὶ Βραυρωνία ἐστὶν Ἀρτέμιδι Βραυρωνία ἕγεται καὶ θύεται αἰξί.

⁴ Pax, 874 and Schol.

⁵ Diog. Laert. Plat. LXVI.: Ὑστερον δὲ Θέσπις ἐπεὶ ὑποκριτὴν ἐξέτερον ἔπει τοῦ διαναπαύεσθαι τὸν χορὸν.

character.¹ According to Themistius, he invented a *prologue* and a *rhapsis*; the former of which "must have been the Proemium which he spoke as exarchus of the dithyramb; the latter, the dialogue between himself and the chorus, by means of which he developed some myth relating to Bacchus or some other deity."² We have, then, a kind of drama, composed of two distinct elements, the first and most important, the basis of the representation, the modified Doric dithyrambic chorus, and the other, at first brief and secondary in importance, gradually usurping the place of the former, an offshoot of the Ionian epical *rhapsody*. The office of the actor, at first, was merely to present subjects or occasions on which the chorus expressed its feeling. Thus it was an ally of the action, which was previously exhibited in the sacrifice and mimetic gesticulation. But while the actor merely told the story of the piece in a series of monologues, the Attic tragedy could scarcely be said to differ from the choral songs of the Dorian cities.

We see from the above representation, the necessity of divesting ourselves of the notions of the drama as it appears among us, in estimating that of the Greeks. It is diverse in nature, origin, and design, as well as adapted to an entirely different state of society; and in order to appreciate it, we must place ourselves in the position of a Greek of the age of Peisistratus or Pericles. The effect of a misunderstanding of Greek tragedy, is especially conspicuous in the French tragedians, who, while they made the Greeks their models, struck out, to a great extent, the lyrical parts from their pieces, retaining the absurd law of the unities, especially those of time and place, thus rendering the plot insufficient to fill up the play, without the addition of irrelevant and puerile intrigues, and superabundant rhetoric. This is more evident when we examine the *Athalie* of Racine and the *Cid* of Corneille, which, according to Frederic Schlegel, are "the two most glorious productions of French poetry." In the former, the ancient chorus is restored, and the latter is intensely lyrical, which alone gives it such a magical power, that envy and criticism are of no avail against it.³

To the three Greek tragedians who, after Thespis, preceded Aeschylus, we can give but a passing glance. Phrynichus, a pupil of Thespis, was the most celebrated of these, and in great repute upon the Athenian stage, from 512 B. C. until even after the appearance of Aeschylus. His one actor personated different and even female characters, who had not before been brought upon the stage. His great excellence lay in the lyrical parts of his performance, and "his tender, sweet, and plaintive songs were still much admired in the time

¹ Donaldson's Gr. Theatre, p. 41.

² Donaldson's Gr. Theatre, p. 42.

³ See Schlegel's Lectt. on the Hist. of Literature, p. 296 sq.

of the Peloponnesian war, especially by old fashioned people."¹ Phrynichus also took one further step in advance towards the perfecting of Greek tragedy. He broke up the chorus into parts, in order to produce variety in the lyrical portions of the piece. He also frequently chose, instead of mythical subjects, those connected with the history of his own time. And although he even moved to tears, according to Herodotus, in a representation of the disaster of the Milesians, colonists of Athens, yet, subjected himself to a considerable fine "for representing to them [the Athenians] their own misfortunes;" "a remarkable judgment of the Athenians," says Müller, "concerning a work of poetry, by which they manifestly expected to be raised into a higher world, not to be reminded of the miseries of the present life."²

The two contemporaries of Phrynichus, Choerilus, who commenced his career a little earlier (B. C. 524), and Pratinas, perhaps a little later (before 500 B. C.), were most celebrated for their satiric dramas, which, even at this early date, were developed as a separate branch of dramatic composition. Subsequently, those pieces called "sportive tragedies" by Demetrius,³ assumed considerable importance, as forming a connected whole with a trilogy of regular tragedies, which we shall have occasion hereafter to speak of, in connection with Aeschylus.

*The Greek Theatre and Manner of representing Plays in it.*⁴

The manner of representation is not of little importance for the right understanding of the Greek drama. We must at once divest ourselves of the idea of a theatre as arranged and decorated by modern art. The difference between the Athenian and English theatre is certainly not less than between a Greek dwelling of the age of Pericles and one in the most fashionable part of a modern city. The place of representation, as with the English drama, began with the rising art, and grew with its growth and strengthened with its strength. In England, before the accession of queen Elizabeth (1558), no theatre had been established. Plays were at first publicly⁵ acted in the court yards of great inns, uncovered in fair weather, and protected by an awning in bad. The "Gorboduc" of Sackville, and "Damon

¹ Müller, *Lit. of Ancient Greece*, p. 293.

² Müller's *Hist. of the Lit. of Greece*, p. 294.

³ *De Elocut.* § 169 : *παιζουσα τραγωδία*.

⁴ In this part of our subject, we have relied especially upon Donaldson's *Greek Theatre*, pp. 31—50, and have found much advantage in referring to the *Plate*, representing the Theatre of Bacchus at Athens, in the beginning of that volume.

⁵ They had previously been represented in the Monasteries and Universities.— See *Warton's History of English Poetry*, Vol. III. p. 193 sq.

and Pythias," by R. Edwards, were represented before the queen at Whitehall in 1562, and a translation from the Phœnissæ of Euripides, by Gascoigne, called *Jacosta*, was acted in the refectory of Gray's Inn, in 1566. The first theatre was built in 1570, and a company of players licensed in 1574, a little after Shakspeare first went to London, and several years before the representation of his first play.¹

In Greece, the first scene of representation was about the altar of Bacchus in the Agora, or in some open and level space in the city, large enough for the free movements of the chorus. Here they first moved in a circle around the altar. Subsequently, a platform was raised about the altar, called the *thymele*, which was the resting place of the chorus; and when temples were consecrated to the god, they of course stood in the place of a theatre. But the union of the dialogue with the chorus, gave rise to structures arranged more in accordance with the nature of the piece to be represented. It should be borne in mind, however, that theatres in Greece were not confined to dramatical representations, but were used for all sorts of public spectacles and popular assemblies, and yet, the general arrangement was accommodated to the drama. It seems that at first, temporary seats were raised for spectators at Athens, as in England; and the falling of a wooden scaffolding² was (B. C. 500) the immediate cause of the building of the stone theatre of Bacchus,³ where the plays of the great tragedians were performed, and where many a prize was won and lost. This theatre, of which the ruins are now discoverable, may be taken as a representative of the whole class, although many splendid structures subsequently arose in various parts of Greece and Sicily.

This structure was beneath the south wall of the acropolis, on the east. It was of colossal dimensions,⁴ so as to be able to contain the

¹ About 1589 or 1590; see Warton's *Hist. of English Poetry*, Vol. IV. p. 179 sq., Drake's *Life and Times of Shakspeare*, 2 vols. 4to. London, 1817, and Hallam's *Lit. of Europe*, Vol. I. p. 367.

² According to Smith's *Antiquities*, Art. *Theatrum*, this disaster occurred at the representation of the first play that Æschylus exhibited.

³ This theatre was not *perhaps* wholly finished for 150 years; but, according to Müller, "must very soon have been so far completed, as to render it possible for the master-pieces of the three great tragedians to be represented in it."

⁴ According to Plato (*Sympos.* 175. E.), more than thirty thousand persons could be assembled in it: *παρὰ σοῦ νέων ὄντος οὐτω σφόδρα ἐξέλαμψε καὶ ἐφανῆς ἐγένετο πρόην ἐν μάρτυσι τῶν Ἑλλήνων πλεονὴ τρισμύριοις*. Wordsworth (*Athens and Attica*, p. 94, note) contends that *τρισμύριοι* was used as a general term, to designate the free adult population of Athens, and, in the passage of Plato cited, is no more to be taken literally, than Juvenal's phrase: *Totam hostie Romam circus capit*. The term *τρισμύριοι* is still retained as a general designation of the population of the whole of Greece.

assembled citizens, as well as strangers who flocked to Athens at the time of the festival of the "Great Dionysia" *Διονύσια ἐν ἄσται, αἰστικά* or *μέγα*,¹ as much as, in modern days, to the carnival at Rome. The form of the building was that of a large segment of a circle, of which the centre was occupied by a raised square platform, called *thymele* [*θυμᾶλη*], originally an altar of Bacchus, but afterwards, according to the nature of the tragedy, occupied as a funereal monument, or anything about which the chorus might naturally cluster, and where they took their station when at rest. Around this was the orchestra, adapted to the motions of the chorus, a circular level space, and the lowest part of the building. From this platform, the leader of the chorus, as a representative of the whole, held discourse with the actors, using either the singular or plural number. The orchestra was not, however, strictly confined to the semicircle formed by the seats, but extended across the whole building back of this altar, to the outer wall on the side. This was called the *δρόμος* (Roman *iter*), and its extremities, beyond the concavity formed by the seats, was named *πάροδοι*, and the entrances into these, on either side, the *εἰσοδοί*.

Around the orchestra arose the rows of seats for the auditors, one above another, in the theatre of Bacchus, cut out of solid rock and forming an amphitheatre, surmounted and enclosed by a lofty portico adorned with statues, and encircled by a terrace with a balustrade. In these, the lowest being the seats of honor, the body of the citizens were arranged according to their tribes; whilst the young men sat apart in the *Ἐφηβίων*, and strangers also had a separate place allotted to them.² On a level with the lowest tier of seats and over against them, was the part of the stage³ called *logeum*, *λογεῖον* (*pulcrum* in Latin), connected by two flights of steps with the *δρόμος*, where the actors in the dialogue were placed, thus affording facility of intercommunication between them and the chorus. The width of the *λογεῖον* was small compared with its length, which extended beyond the circle of the orchestra, since in stage representations as well as in the plastic arts, grouping was little attended to, actors as well as figures in sculpture

¹ Theatrical exhibitions also took place at the "country Dionysia," *Διονύσια κατ' ἀγρούς* or *μικρά*, and at the "Lenæa," *τὰ Λήναια*; but the "Great Dionysia" was, *par eminentia*, the time for the exhibition of new pieces, and indeed none but new plays could then be brought out. This festival occurred in the month Elaphebolion, corresponding to the last of March and beginning of April, in our calendar.

² Donaldson's *Gr. Theatre*, p. 139.

³ In the time of Thespis this was a mere table, *ἐλεός*. Thus Pollux, IV. 123, *μῆναι: ἐλεός ἦν τράπεζα ἀρχαία ἐφ' ἣν πρὸ Θεσπίδος εἰς τις ἀναβὰς τοῖς χορευταῖς ἀπεκρίνετο*.

being arranged in long lines. This *logeion* raised twelve feet above the orchestra, was ornamented in front and at the ends by pillars, called τὰ ὑποσκήνια, between which statues were placed. Behind the *logeion* was the *προσκήνιον*, built of stone for the support of the heavy decorations placed there, whilst the front part of the stage (the *logeion* and *προσκήνιον* together were called *σκηνή*) was of wood, so as to reverberate the voice in speaking.

It seems probable that no curtain was employed to conceal the stage from the spectators in the earlier representations of tragedy. In all of the plays of Aeschylus, and generally, if not always, in those of Sophocles, the stage was empty at the beginning of the play, and left unoccupied at the end. But not so in Euripides, and especially in the Comedians where the scene often changed. A curtain drawn up from between the Proscenium and *Logeion*, not let down as now, was probably employed. It however, of course, only concealed the Proscenium, not the Logeum.

Back of the Proscenium was a high wall representing generally the exterior of a mansion (never the interior) with its colonnades, roofs, towers and accessory buildings, and a temple into which were three entrances. By means of these, the rank of the persons approaching upon the stage from this direction was readily known, since royal personages always approached by the middle and highly ornamented entrance, but manials and those of inferior rank, by those at the side. A principle of stage scenery seemed to be, that the most important and nearer objects should occupy the back ground, whilst openings into the distance were at the sides. Hence there were two other spacious entrances at the ends of the *logeum*, called *παρασκήνια*, the one through the *εἰσόδος* on the right, leading to the country, and the other on the left, from the town, and both connected by two halls with the *πάροδοι* of the orchestra, and with the portico around the highest range of seats. It was accordingly known by the spectators, whether the persons approaching were from the town, or from the country, or foreign parts. The principal actors might then approach from the back of the stage, or sides, according to the nature of the piece. For illustration, in the *Alcestis* of Euripides, the king Admetus would come upon the stage, which represents the area in front of his palace, from the middle entrance, which would be the main approach to it. The old servant (*θεράπων*) would make her appearance from one of the side entrances, probably the left one, as leading to the apartments of the women on the back of the stage. Hercules would approach by the right *εἰσόδος*, whilst the chorus, con-

sisting of old men of Pherae, would, if belonging to the city itself, appear upon the left side. Hercules, on the other hand, when sent to the apartments of guests separate from the main body of the house, would enter by the door to the right of the royal entrance.

It must not be forgotten that the Proscenium was not always a representation of architectural scenes. These would only be appropriate when the front of a palace was the scene of action. Of the seven extant plays of Sophocles, only four could be performed without a change of the proscenium. The Philoctetes required a representation of a desolate island (Lemnos) with its rock and cavern; the scene of the Oedipus Coloneus was a grove, the Prometheus of Aeschylus was bound to the rocks upon Mount Caucasus, and in the Furies, Orestes went from Delphos to the temple of Minerva at Athens; and from thence, the scene changes to the court of the Areopagus, where he is tried and acquitted. In comedy, still more variety of scenery was required than in tragedy. This was effected in various ways, as by introducing decorations in front of the proscenic buildings, to conceal them, or modify their appearance when it could be done, in accordance with the scene of the play. Indeed much trouble and expense seems to have been bestowed upon these scenic representations, and the skill of a Phidias and Zeuxis was called into requisition in their respective arts, in order to give new cause for the gratulation of national pride, or new pomp and splendor to the services of an imposing religious worship; but art seems not in its best productions to have satisfied them, for even living trees were probably introduced to give effect to the scenery.

The exposed state of the theatre without roof or awning, would appear to us to be a great hindrance to the comfort of those assembled to witness dramatic representations. But it should be recollected, that the climate of Greece was mild and delightful at the season of the year when plays were represented, and the people much more accustomed to exposure and out-door life than we are. Besides, their dramatic exhibitions were works of the day and not of the night, usually commencing when a trilogy was to be performed, in the morning, and lasting until evening. When a heavy shower came up, the auditors fled to the portico above the seats, and to the one back of the proscenium called *Eumenic*, for shelter, and even the inconvenience of a slight drenching, would not compare in the estimation of a Greek, with that of obscuring the sunny cheerfulness of a national festival, or breathing the air corrupted by contact again and again with the lungs of assembled thousands. Furthermore, it was at least thought

disgraceful, if not impious, to incarcerate gods and god-like heroes within closed walls.¹

There were besides, positive advantages connected with this exposure to the heavens above, and with numerous objects of interest around. It gave scope to the conceptions, and appropriateness to many of the allusions of the poet. It is only when we take into account both the situation and construction of the theatre, that we can fully appreciate much of the metaphorical language of the Greek dramatists. Thus Wordsworth well says:² "It will be found that most of the metaphorical expressions of Aeschylus are derived from objects which were *visible* to the audience, while they listened to the recital of those expressions in the theatre. Seas and storms, the building of ships and their navigation, the feeding of flocks on the hills, hunting in the woods, fishing on the sea, walls and fortifications, the Stadium and its course, all immediately in view or in close connection with the theatre, were almost the natural elements of which the poetical atmosphere of that place was composed, and the dramatic poet breathed them as his native air."

We do not, for example, feel the full force of the exhortation of the chorus in the *Eumenides*:³

Hail ye denizens who sit
Ranged beneath the throne of Jove
To the dear virgin-goddess dear,
By Time instructed to be wise.
You who dwell beneath the wings
Of Pallas, doth her sire revere,⁴

until we recollect, that the theatre was immediately under the Acropolis, the most sacred and beautiful structure in the city, with the temple of Minerva and the statue of Jupiter, guardian of the city (*Zeús Προλιεύς*) looking down upon them, and, as it were, overshadowing them with the wing of protection. The scene of Athenian glory, Salamis, seems not to have lent more aid to the orator beholding it in the Pnyx, than to the poet, when he beheld the peaks of its high hills in the distant west, and exclaimed:

O noble Salamis, thou indeed
Buoyed on the wave, dost happy dwell
Conspicuous ever, in the eyes of men.

Euripides would hardly have given so vivid a representation of some

¹ A. W. Schlegel's *Lectures on Dramatic Literature*, Lect. III. init.

² *Athens and Attica*, p. 95.

³ l. 1064 sq.

⁴ Quoted from Wordsworth's *Athens and Attica*, p. 98.

of the tenets of his philosophy, if the open sky of Attica had not been over his head, and the soil of Attica under his feet. Many other passages might be given from the tragedians, illustrative of this influence of the construction and locality of the Greek theatre. I will, however, refer to but one more. In Sophocles' *Electra*, when the daughter of Agamemnon came upon the stage, she, undoubtedly, made her invocation to the open heaven above her, beginning with the lines :

ὦ φάος ἀγνόν, καὶ γῆς
 ἰσόμοιρος ἀἴθρ, ὡς μοι
 πολλύς, μὲν, κ. τ. λ.

In the comedies of Aristophanes, many of the imaginative flights would be extravagant and unmeaning in the close theatre of modern days, without a view of the hills of Athens around, a part of the city below, and the infinite blue of the sky above. Passages almost innumerable, did our limits allow it, might be cited from the "*Clouds*," for example, illustrative of this fact. One must suffice :

O air despotic king, whose boundless chain
 Girds the suspended earth, and thou, bright aether,
 Ye clouds too, venerable deities,
 Who breed the thunder and the lightning's bolt,
 Appear on high to your philosopher.¹

There were several contrivances used by the ancients for giving effect to their theatrical exhibitions, which deserve a passing notice. In the first place the size of the theatre rendered some device necessary for aiding the eye and ear, by increasing the power of the voice and the size of the features,² aside from the desire to represent gods and godlike heroes as of a stature and bearing far above mortals. The mask (*ὄγκος*) first deserves mention. When originally invented, perhaps it was merely intended to enable one person to appear in several characters, but it was subsequently employed, together with the well known cothurnus, to give a height to the actor, corresponding to the size of the theatre. Proper proportion was preserved by padding and stuffing the arms, chest and other parts, to a size corresponding to the height. But these were not the only uses of the mask. It was not sufficient for the actor (*ὑποκριτής*) that he dieted

¹ line 267 sq. Wheelwright's Translation. Similar invocations to the clouds, air, etc. occur on almost every page.

² Donaldson's *Greek Theatre*, p. 142, says: If as we are assured 30,000 persons could be seated on its benches, the length of the *δρόμος* could not have been less than 400 feet, and a spectator in the central point of the topmost range, must have been 300 feet from the actor in the *Αογειόν*.

and used much bodily exercise, in order that his voice might be strong and clear. He was aided by his mask of bronze or copper, in throwing his voice to the extremities of his audience. "This was effected, says Donaldson,¹ by connecting it with a tire or periwig (*πηνίκη, φενάκη*), that covered the head and left only one passage for the voice, which was generally circular (the *os rotundum*), so that the voice might be said to sound through it—hence the Latin name for a mask—*persona a personando*." How much aid was furnished to the voice by cavities and receptacles for sound about the building, mentioned by Vitruvius, it seems difficult to determine.

The intercourse between heaven and earth in the Greek tragedy is so frequent, that we should naturally expect much stage machinery for facilitating it. In this respect, the open theatre would furnish considerable aid, by allowing free motion and view upward. Thus to exhibit the gods in converse aloft, a platform surrounded and concealed by clouds, called *Θεολογεῖον*, was employed, and ropes, *Αἴωραι*, aided in supporting or conveying the celestial being aloft, or facilitating his descent. The *Μηχανή*,² a sort of crane turning upon a pivot on the right or country side of the theatre, when occasion required, snatched up a god or hero before the eyes of the auditors, and held him hovering in the air, until his part was performed, and the *Γέρας*,³ of a somewhat similar construction, caught up persons from the earth and whirled them into the circle of the scenic clouds. Thus a dead body might be conveyed from the stage. They also had means of representing artificial lightning playing among clouds, and thunder was produced under the stage, scarcely distinguishable to an Athenian ear from the genuine Vulcanian. There were also other pieces of frame-work, to represent action taking place merely on the earth, as the *Σκοπή*, a look-out, *Τείχος*, a fortress wall, *Πύργος*, a tower, *Φρουρώριον*, a beacon, and several others. In the opening scene of the Agamemnon, where the watchman complains that he is

Fix'd as a dog on Agamemnon's roof
To watch the live-long year,

and when he after the appearance of the signal fire, exclaims :

¹ Greek Theatre, p. 147. Great care was taken in the construction of the mask. There were, for example, twenty-six kinds of tragic masks, and those for comedy were still more numerous.

² Ἐ μηχανή δὲ θεοῦς δείκνυσσι, καὶ ἥρωας τοῦς ἐν ἀέρι. It was called κράδη. Pollux, IV. 19.

³ Ἡ δὲ γέρας, μηχανήμ τι ἐστὶν ἐκ μετεώρου καταφερόμενον, ἐφ' ἄρπαγῃ σώματος φέρεται ἢ Ἦδὲς ἄρπύζουσι τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Μέμνονος.—Pollux IV. 19.

— Hail thou auspicious flame,
That streaming through the night denonnest joy,
Welcomed with many a festal dance in Argos,

it is not improbable, that both the *Σκοπή* and the *Φρονκτώριον* were brought into requisition upon the stage. Perhaps also the *ἡμικύλιον* was used, when in that same play Clytemnestra exclaims :

— A Herald from the shore
I see; branches of olive shade his brows, etc.

It has been said, that the back ground of the Proscenium represented frequently the exterior of a palace, but not the interior. They had a device, however, for changing the scene to the interior, by making the front wall of a temporary house to turn on hinges, so as, when drawn back, to expose the proceedings within an apartment of the house. Some such device would naturally be used in the *Electra* of Sophocles, when the dead body of Clytemnestra is exposed to view, and the discovery of her murder is revealed to Aegistheus by removing the veil from the corpse, supposed by him to be that of Orestes ; and also when Orestes compels Aegistheus "to go to the place where his own dear father fell, and perish there." So, near the beginning of the "Furies" of Aeschylus, where the temple of Apollo is opened to view.

We have spoken of stage devices that relate to human and super-human personages. But as Tartarus and the regions below furnished its representatives on the stage, means were sought for their convenient approach. A door under the stairs leading from the orchestra to the lowest range of seats, was reached from a vault below, by means of a flight of stairs called *Χαράνιοι κλίμακες*, "Charon's stairs." By these the shades of the departed arose and disappeared. A little distance in front of these steps was a trap-door, communicating with the vault below, called *Ἀφανίσμα*, "by means of which any sudden appearance, like that of the furies, was effected." From another similar door, on the right or country side of the *Ἀργεῖον*, marine and river gods and the like, presented themselves when the occasion demanded.

The manner of preparing dramatic representations, deserves a few words of explanation. We have already spoken of the dissimilarity of the parts of the Attic drama. A distinction corresponding to the nature of the parts was also retained in preparing for the exhibition. The chorus was collected, the teacher (*χοροδιδάσκαλος*) procured, and the whole provision, equipage (often splendid) and pay of the singers furnished by the choragus, who was appointed by the people. But the actors belonged to the poet and not to the people, and conse-

quently came not within the jurisdiction of the choragus, either in respect to training or pay.¹ When the author of a play proposed to bring it upon the stage, he applied to the archon, and if this dignitary approved the piece, a chorus was assigned (*Χορὸν δίδουσι*) and immediately put under training, whilst actors designated by lot, and exercised by the poet, were ready on the appointed day. Thus the prize was striven for by a union of the best taught actors with the most sumptuously dressed and most diligently trained chorus. And it should seem that the acting had no little influence upon the judges, who were appointed by lot, and generally five¹ in number, since the best dramatists were so often unsuccessful. The fortunate competitor chose his own actors for the following year.² The victorious poet was crowned, and his actors adorned with ivy, and the choragus generally received a tripod as a reward for superior excellence.

ARTICLE VI.

THE SPIRIT OF A SCHOLAR.

By Professor S. G. Brown, Dartmouth College.

THE term scholar has a broad and somewhat varied meaning. We apply it to him who learns with readiness, who performs his intellectual tasks with rapidity and beauty. In a higher sense, we mean by it one who invents or discovers, who makes original and independent investigation, who enlarges the boundaries of knowledge. Most liberally, however, we use the term with reference to all whose attention is devoted to science or letters. Homer and Dante and Chaucer were scholars. In this grandest sense, the calling is among the noblest that the earth affords. We venture no comparison between great thinkers and great actors, the Shakespeares and the Cromwells, the Goethes and the Napoleons. The question of supremacy between them we are willing to let remain in abeyance; but, without controversy, the eye of the world fixes not last on those whose investigations have determined the laws of its action; who, priests of nature, have

¹ Boeckh's Public Econ. of Athens, p. 454 sq.

¹ In the first contest of Sophocles with Aeschylus, the judges were Cimon with his nine colleagues, who happened to appear in the theatre and were impressed into the service by the archon.—*Donaldson's Gr. Theatre*, p. 78.

² *Donaldson's Gr. Theatre*, p. 136.