

was given by the public.

There are five classes of Grecian poetry, viz. : Epic, Lyric, Iambic, Melos and the Drama.

Of the epic poets we find Homer, Hesiod, and several insignificant versifiers, called the "cyclic bards," who flourished about the time of Homer, much in the same way as did many inferior dramatists contemporary with our own Shakespeare.

Greater than all other Grecian poets was Homer. Of his parentage nothing is known. Seven cities contest for the honor of being his birthplace, but of these Smyrna has been chosen by modern scholars. It is said that he was blind, and in abject poverty. The date of his birth was some time before 800 B. C.

His works are the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The *Iliad* is a tale of the siege and destruction of Troy by the Hellenic peoples. In it we find combined beauty and simplicity of expression, with the most vivid and realistic descriptions. One moment we hear the conflict of armies led on by immortal commanders, and the next we hear the voice of the priest, as before the altar he makes his vows to the gods, or that of the women of Troy, as they wander, moaning, about the streets of their beleaguered city.

Not inferior to this is the *Odyssey*, a tale of the ten years' wanderings on the sea of the Grecian Ulysses after the siege of Troy.

These books were for a Bible to the Greek. In them he put his trust: there he found contained the standard of religion, law and customs of his people.

Next to Homer, and inferior to him, comes Hesiod, about a century later. His works do not deal with great themes such as those of Homer, but rather with fables of the gods and other such material. His greatest work is entitled "Work and Days." Hesiod was the founder and master of the Boeotian school.

With these bards epic poetry reached its highest pitch, and after their time it gave place to the lyric form.

This style originated in chants and songs of wailing, intended to be accompanied by

the flute. Gradually it came to be employed among the Greeks in their noblest war songs, and in songs of conviviality and mirth, till at last almost all Grecian poetry was lyric.

About the seventh century B. C. the lyric reached its height. At this time, indeed, almost everything regarding the state was rendered in song, while even the most minor occurrences of everyday life were described in the same way. Tyrtaeus, decrepit and deformed, who was sent in derision by the Athenians, in answer to an oracular response to lead the Spartans, though unfit as a general, poured forth his fiery elegies in the public ear and inspired them on to victory.

Solon, lawgiver and statesman, sage and philosopher, fired the Athenians by his war songs. Callinus roused Ephesus to success, and Simonides chants of Marathon's fallen brave, while Mimnermos, adopting a less mournful theme, sings of and exalts the shortlived joys of life. But greater than all of these was Pindar, the lyric bard of Boetia. He lived about 500 B. C.

As the epic gave way to the lyric so the lyric yielded to the Iambic. Archilocus seems to have been the first one to employ this style. By the means of this, sarcasm, ridicule, mockery, jest of all kinds were thrown broadcast, and with bitter effect very often. Archilocus made the feast of Demeter a season when the Iambic should be employed freely to the discomfiture of those against whom its jests might be directed.

Hipponax, who lived about the middle of the sixth century B. C., was famous for the same kind of writing.

And now another change takes place. The melos or song followed the iambic. Differing entirely from the former styles, and not dealing with the stronger and more turbulent forms of life, this touched upon lighter and more gentle themes. Nature was its theme, and the joys and sorrows of life, the finer sentiments which come from the heart and the passions of the soul.