

estly, and with careless touches of pathos and humor, while he floods his whole scene with that gorgeous Sicilian air like one of Titian's pictures, and all this is told in a language and metre which shapes itself almost unconsciously, wave after wave, into the most luscious joy."

*Theocritus
and Vergil
compared.*

Vergil's Eclogues, on the other hand, can hardly be said to be true pictures of pastoral life. His shepherds and shepherdesses belong to the island of Sicily rather than to the district of Mantua. Often, too, he makes the shepherd's dress a mere pretext for discussing some political event, or for paying some compliment to Pollio, Varro, or Gallus. His characters are too conventional, his representation of life is too artificial. In the Roman Eclogue we miss that individualizing the character which so strongly marks the Greek Idyl. Still the earlier poems of Vergil have beauties. Their melodious diction, their soft and easy flowing style,¹⁶ were admired by Horace, no mean judge of the poet's art.

*Division of
Eclogues.*

Dunlop divides the Eclogues into *two* classes: (1) those in which, by a sort of allegory, some events or characters of the time are drawn under the image of pastoral life as in 1, 4, 5, 10: (2) those in which shepherds and rural scenes are really depicted, as in 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9. Others divide them: (1) those copied from Theocritus, as 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9: (2) those more original, as 4, 6, 10.

The Georgics

The *Georgics*,¹⁷ in four books, was written (between B.C. 37-B.C. 30¹⁸) at the request of Maecenas¹⁹ to whom the poem was dedicated. In this didactic Epic, Vergil copies largely from Hesiod, Nicander, and Aratus.²⁰ While the Eclogues have justly been regarded as inferior to the Idyls of his Greek original, Theocritus, the Georgics, on the other hand, have been accounted superior to any other poem on the

¹⁶ Sat. I. 10, 45.

¹⁷ *Georgica*, γεωργικά, from γῆ—γῆ, the earth and ἔργον, a work.

¹⁸ The chief historical events alluded to in the Georgics are: the death of Julius Caesar, 44 B.C. (3. 1, 456); the civil wars ended by the battle of Philippi, 42 B.C. (B. 1, 490); the wars waged (34 B.C.) in Parthia under Antony and those on the Rhine under Agrippa (B. 1, 509); the battle of Actium and the submission of the East, B.C. 30 (B. 2, 172; 3, 27.32; 4, 562); the irruption of the Daci on the Danube, B.C. 30 (B. 2, 497).

¹⁹ See the opening lines of Georgics, I. and IV.

²⁰ Hesiod's *Works and Days*; Aratus's *Phaenomena*; Nicander's *Georgica*.