

the "Conquest of Troy," the theme of Homer's Iliad was an object of national and religious enthusiasm to all the Greeks. Homer's genius was distinctively narrative and naturally found expression in the epic form. The sacred subjects of Dante's *Divina Comedia* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* may be regarded as typical of Christian thought and civilization. Arnold describes the epic as treating of "one great complex action in a grand style and with fulness of detail." The epic is now probably an extinct form and is not likely to be heard by any later generation, for it is considered to be the first fruits of the earliest experiences of nature and life.

Next to the epic, among the great forms of literature, is the drama and if the epic yields the first place to any literary form, it is to the drama, because it includes more of human life and interest. It is a story represented by action and as the principle of imitation is inherent in human nature, it is found that the drama has been practised in some form by almost every nation. But the form accepted and followed in Europe, divided chiefly into comedy and tragedy, was the creation of the Greeks.

The dithyrambus, a hymn in honor of Bacchus, sung by a chorus of voices accompanied by music, expression, gesture and dances was the rude element out of which Aeschylus, unaided, created the drama as we now behold it; and although nothing has since been added to its structure, though he seems to have forestalled future ages of invention and to have left nothing undone yet it cannot be said to have been perfected till touched by the great master mind of Shakespeare. In his dramas he exhausts all human experience, divines the secret impulse of humanity and records his convictions on the questions of life, fate and immortality, which appeal to every one. The most abundant and most popular form of poetry is the drama, no other receives and preserves like it the exact imprint of the age, none expresses so much and that so deeply.

An adequate and exhaustive definition of lyrical poetry seems difficult to find, but the term lyrical implies, that each poem shall turn on some single thought, feeling or situation, its chief characteristic being concentration. It has been said that "the epic has the breadth and volume of a river, the drama has the scope and variety of the sea, the lyric is like a mountain pool, which may be tossed into foam but remains a pool, although sometimes of fathomless depths."

Now lyrical poetry, the creation of individual minds