

topic. Again, most of the objections brought against the single authorship of these poems, are frivolous in the extreme, and if applied and consistently followed out in the case of Shakespeare's plays, we should make the reign of Elizabeth three-fold more illustrious by the necessary inference that those immortal works of the world's greatest poet had at *the least* three different authors. There exist, however, far and wide, throughout the Iliad and Odyssey, unmistakable evidences of designed adaptation in their several parts, more numerous and more demonstrative than the apparent incongruities; surely no sound criticism can allow a few apparent gaps to outweigh the overwhelming evidence of uniform coherence, and of symmetrical antecedence and consequence in structure, everywhere pointing out a common purpose and a common author. We are told, forsooth, that whatever coherency and unity they possess, originated with Peisistratus, who first committed them to writing. No attempt has been made to support this assumption with evidence; on the contrary, there is very strong presumptive evidence that they were committed to writing even before Solon's time, and that Peisistratus merely compared and revised the different copies then extant, and formed from them a standard text for the use of the Athenian festivals. Long before the tyranny of Peisistratus, we are told that Solon regulated the recitation of the Homeric Lays at the Panathenaic Festival. The object of the illustrious legislator was to secure by a compulsory supervision a correct order of recitation, with a *prompter* to assist the Rhapsodists—a proof of the existence at that time of a manuscript copy of these poems—the best guide the guiding prompter could possess. It is hard, too, to conceive how a tyrant (in the Greek sense of