

A. Dramatic entertainments first engaged the attention of the Romans, as, indeed, of most other nations. They seem to have been chiefly delighted with satirical dramas; but when these were made the vehicles for libels on the leading public men, a law was passed to restrain the license of the stage; and the poets then invented a new species of composition, called satire.

Q. Who was the first inventor of satire?

A. Lucil'ius, who is said to have lashed the vices of his age with unsparing severity; but his fame is eclipsed by that of his successors—Hor'ace, whose delicate wit charmed the court of Augus'tus; Ju'venal, the bold declaimer against the vices that prevailed in imperial Rome; and Per'sius, the stern supporter of the severest forms of the Stoic philosophy.

Q. Is not didactic poetry connected with satirical?

A. Satire may be called a species of didactic poetry. The Romans, however, had some poems solely devoted to instruction; as the poem of Lucre'tius on the Universe, inculcating the tenets of the Epicurean philosophy; the Georgics of Vir'gil, giving instruction in agriculture; and Hor'ace's Epistle to the Pi'sos on the Art of Poetry.

Q. Had the Romans any panegyrical poets?

A. In the later ages of the empire they had scarcely any other kind of poets; and their flatteries were, for the most part, as stupid as they were base. Clau'dian, however, is an exception; his poem in praise of Stil'icho possesses real merit.

Q. Were there many epic writers among the Romans?

A. There were several; but the chief were En'nus and Næ'vius, whose works are lost; Virgil, the prince of the Latin poets, whose Æne'id is second

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