

Nemean, in honor of Zeus, at Nemea; and the Isthmian, held in honor of Poseidon, on the narrow isthmus of Corinth.

Of those great national festivals the Olympian secured the greatest renown. In 766 B.C. Coroebus was victor in a foot-race at Olympia, and from that time the names of the victors were carefully registered; that year came to be used by the Greeks as a starting point in their chronology. The games were held every four years and the intervals between two successive festivals was known as an Olympiad.

The contests consisted of foot-races, wrestling, boxing and other sports. Later, chariot-racing was introduced and became the most popular of all contests. The competitors must be of Hellenic race, must be guiltless of any crime against the state, or sin against the gods. Spectators from all parts of the world crowded to the festival.

The victor was crowned with a wreath of wild olives; heralds proclaimed his name abroad; statues were erected in his honour; and he was received in his city as a conqueror sometimes through a breach made in the walls.

These national games exerted an immense influence upon the social, religious, commercial and literary life of the Greeks. Into the four great festivals, excepting the Olympian, were introduced contests of poetry, oratory and history. During the festivals poets read their choicest productions, and artists exhibited their masterpieces. To this fact we owe some of the grandest production of the Greek race. The places where these games were celebrated became great centres of traffic and exchange during the festivals. They also softened the manners of the people, turning their thoughts from martial exploits, and giving the states a respite from war, and by the intercourse of the different cities it impressed a common character upon their social intellectual life.

Closely connected with these games or festivals was the Amphyctyonic Council, a league of neighbouring cities for the celebration of religious rites at some shrine, or for the protection of some temple.

The Greeks believed that their gods grew jealous at good fortune and unusual prosperity and often caused overwhelming calamity. But later this divine idea of envy was moralized into a conception of righteous indignation of the gods, aroused by insolence and presumptuous pride so inevitably engendered by an excess of prosperity.

Whoever hardened his heart against the appeal of a sup-