

"What," inquires the manager of an actor in the induction to one of the most famous of Indian plays, "are those qualities which the virtuous, the wise, the venerable, the learned, and the Brahmans require in a drama?" "Profound exposition of the various passions," is the reply, "pleasing interchange of mutual affection, loftiness of character, delicate expression of desire, a surprising story, and elegant language." "Then," says the manager (for the Indian dramatists, though not, like Ben Jonson, wout to "rail" the public "into approbation," are unaffected by *mauvaise honte*) "I recollect one." And he proceeds to state that "Babhavūti has given us a drama composed by him, replete with all qualities, to which indeed this sentence is applicable: 'How little do they know who speak of us with censure! This entertainment is not for them. Possibly some one exists, or will exist, of similar tastes with myself; for time is boundless, and the world is wide.'" This self-possessed disregard of popularity, springing from an imperturbable consciousness of lofty aims, accounts for much that is characteristic of the higher class of Indian plays. It explains both their paucity and their length, renders intelligible the chief peculiarity in their diction, and furnishes the key to their most striking ethical as well as literary qualities. Connected in their origin with religious worship, they were only performed on solemn occasions, chiefly of a public nature, and more especially at seasons sacred to some divinity. Thus, though they might in some instances be reproduced, they were always written with a view to one particular solemn representation. Again, the greater part of every one of the plays of Northern India is written in Sanskrit, which ceased to be a popular language by 300 B.C., but continued the classical, and at the same time the sacred, form of speech of the Brahmans. Sanskrit is spoken by the heroes and principal personages of the plays, while the female and inferior characters use varieties, more or less refined, of the Prakrit languages (as a rule not more than three, that which is employed in the songs of the women being the poetic dialect of the most common Prakrit language, the *Caurasēni*). Hence, part at least of each play cannot have been understood by the large majority of the audience, except in so far as their general acquaintance with the legends or stories treated enabled them to follow the course of the action. Every audience thus contained an *inner* audience, which could alone feel the full effect of the drama. It is, then, easy to see why the Hindu critics should make demands upon the art, into which only highly-trained and refined intellects were capable of entering, or called upon to enter. The general public could not be expected to appreciate the sentiments expressed in a drama, and thus (according to the process prescribed by Hindu theory) to receive instruction by means of amusement. These sentiments are termed *rasas* (tastes or flavours), and said to spring from the *bhāvas* (conditions of mind and body). A variety of subdivisions is added; but the *sañta rasa* is logically enough excluded from dramatic composition, inasmuch as it implies absolute quiescence.

The Hindu critics know of no distinction directly corresponding to that between tragedy and comedy, still less of any determined by the nature of the close of a play. For, in accordance with the child-like element of their character, the Hindus dislike an unhappy ending to any story, and a positive rule accordingly prohibits a fatal conclusion in their dramas. The general term for all dramatic compositions is *rūpaka* (from *rūpa*, form), those of an inferior class being distinguished as *uparūpakas*. Of the various subdivisions of the *rūpaka*, in a more limited sense, the *nalaka*, or play proper, represents the most perfect kind. Its subject should always be celebrated and important—it is virtually either heroism or love, and most frequently the

latter—and the hero should be a demigod or divinity (such as *Rāma* in *Babhavūti*'s heroic plays) or a king (such as the hero of *Sākuntalā*). But although the earlier dramatists took their plots from the sacred writings or *Purānās*, they held themselves at liberty to vary the incidents,—a licence from which the later poets abstained. Thus, in accordance, perhaps, with the respective developments in the religious life of the two peoples, the Hindu drama in this respect reversed the progressive practice of the Greek. The *prakarañas* agree in all essentials with the *nalakas* except that they are less elevated; their stories are mere fictions, taken from actual life in a respectable class of society.¹ Among the species of the *uparūpaka* may be mentioned the *trōlaka*, in which the personages are partly human, partly divine, and of which a famous example remains.² Of the *bhāva*, a monologue in one act, one literary example is extant—a curious picture of manners in which the speaker describes the different persons he meets at a spring festival in the streets of Kolahapur.³ The satire of the farcical *prahasanas* is usually directed against the hypocrisy of ascetics and Brahmans, and the sensuality of the wealthy and powerful. These trifles represent the lower extreme of the dramatic scale, to which, of course, the principles that follow only partially apply.

Unity of action is strictly enjoined by Hindu theory, though not invariably observed in practice. Episodical or prolix interruptions are forbidden; but, in order to facilitate the connection, the story of the play is sometimes carried on by narratives spoken by actors or "interpreters," something after the fashion of the Chorus in *Henry V.*, or of Gower in *Pericles*. "Unity of time" is liberally, if rather arbitrarily, understood by the later critical authorities as limiting the duration of the action of a single year; but even this is exceeded in more than one classical play.⁴ The single acts are to confine the events occurring in them to "one course of the sun," and usually do so. "Unity of place" is unknown to the Hindu drama, by reason of the absence of scenery; for the plays were performed in the open courts of palaces, perhaps at times in large halls set apart for public entertainments, or in the open air. Hence change of scene is usually indicated in the texts; and we find⁵ the characters making long journeys on the stage, under the eyes of spectators not trained to demand "real" mileage.

With the solemn character of the higher kind of dramatic performances accord the rules and prohibitions defining what may be called the *proprieties* of the Indian drama. Not only should death never be inflicted *coram populo*, but the various operations of biting, scratching, kissing, eating, sleeping, the bath, and the marriage ceremony should never take place on the stage. Yet such rules are made to be occasionally broken. It is true that the mild humour of the *vidūshaka* is restricted to his "gesticulating eating" instead of perpetrating the obnoxious act.⁶ The charming love-scene in the *Sākuntalā* (at least in the earlier recension of the play) breaks off just as the hero is about to act the part of the bee to the honey of the heroine's lips.⁷ But later writers are less squeamish, or less refined. In two dramas⁸ the heroine is dragged on the stage by her braid of hair; and this outrage, a worse one than that imputed to Dunstan, is in both instances the motive of the action. In a third,⁹ sleeping and the marriage ceremony occur in the course of the representation.

The dramatic construction of the Indian plays presents no very striking peculiarities. They open with a benedic-

¹ e.g., *Mricchhakatī*; *Mālatī*, and *Mādhava*.

² *Vikrama* and *Urvāsī*.

³ *Sākuntalā*; *Uttara-Rāma-Charitra*.

⁴ *Nāgānanda*, act i.

⁵ *Vēhī-Sambhāra*; *Prachānda-Pañdava*.

⁶ *Vidhā-Salabhanjika*.

⁷ *Safada-Tilaka*.

⁸ *Arichandra*, act iv.

⁹ Act iii.; cf. *Nāgānanda*, act iii.

¹⁰ *Vidhā-Salabhanjika*.

¹¹ *Vidhā-Salabhanjika*.

tion (*nāndī*), followed by "some account" of the author, and by an introductory scene between the manager and one of the actors, which is more or less skilfully connected with the opening of the play itself. This is divided into acts (*ankas*) and scenes; of the former a *nalaka* should have not fewer than 5, or more than 10; 7 appears a common number; "the great *nalaka*" reaches 14. Thus the length of the higher class of Indian plays is considerable—about that of an *Æschylean* trilogy; but not more than a single play was ever performed on the same occasion. Comic plays are restricted to two acts (here called *sandhis*). In theory the scheme of an Indian drama corresponds very closely to the general outline of dramatic construction given above; it is a characteristic merit that the business is rarely concluded before the last act. The piece closes, as it began, with a benediction or prayer. Within this framework room is found for situations as ingeniously devised and highly wrought as those in any modern Western play. What could be more pitiful than the scene in *Sākuntalā*, where the true wife appears before her husband, whose remembrance of her is fatally overclouded by a charm; what more terrific than that in *Mālatī* and *Mādhava*, where the lover rescues his beloved from the horrors of the charnel-field? Recognition—especially between parents and children—frequently gives rise to scenes of a pathos which Euripides has not surpassed.¹ The ingenious device of a "play within the play" (so familiar to the English drama) is employed with the utmost success by *Babhavūti*.² On the other hand, miraculous metamorphosis³ and, in a later play,⁴ vulgar magic lend their aid to the progress of the action. With scenes of strong effectiveness contrast others of the most delicate poetic grace—such as the indescribably lovely little episode of the two damsels of the god of love helping one another to pluck the red and green bud from the mango tree; or of gentle domestic pathos—such as that of the courtesan listening to the prattle of her lover's child, one of the prettiest scenes of a kind rarely kept free from affectation in the modern drama. For the *dénouement* in the narrower sense of the term the Indian dramatists largely resort to the expedient of the *deus ex machina*, often in a sufficiently literal sense.⁵

Every species of drama having its appropriate kind of hero or heroine, theory here again amuses itself with an infinitude of subdivisions. Among the heroines are to be noticed the courtesans, whose social position to some extent resembles that of the Greek *hetæra*, and association with whom does not seem in practice, however it may be in theory, to be regarded as a disgrace even to Brahmans.⁶ In general, the Indian drama indicates relations between the sexes subject to peculiar restraints of usage, but freer than those which Mahometan example seems to have introduced into higher Indian society. The male characters are frequently drawn with skill, and sometimes with genuine force. Prince *Samsthanaka*⁷ is a type of selfishness born in the purple worthy to rank beside figures of the modern drama, of which this has at times naturally been a favourite class of character; elsewhere⁸ the intrigues of ministers are not more fully exposed than their characters and principles of action are judiciously discriminated. Among the lesser personages common in the Indian drama, two are worth noticing, as corresponding though by no means precisely to familiar types of other dramatic literatures. These are the *vidū*, the accomplished but dependent companion (both of men and women), and the *vidūshaka*, the humble associate (not servant) of the

prince, and the buffoon of the action.⁹ Strangely enough, he is always a Brahman, or the pupil of a Brahman. His humour is to be ever intent on the pleasures of a quiet life, and on that of eating in particular; his jokes are always devoid of both harm and point.

Thus, clothing itself in a diction always ornate and tropical, in which (as Rückert has happily expressed it) the prose is the warp and the verse the weft; in which (as Goethe says) words become allusions, allusions similes, and similes metaphors, the Indian drama essentially depended upon its literary qualities, and upon the familiar sanctity of its favourite themes, for such effect as it was able to produce. Of scenic apparatus it knew but little; the simple devices by which exits and entrances were facilitated it is unnecessary to describe, and on the contrivances it resorted to for such "properties" as were required (above all, the cars of the gods and of their emissaries)¹⁰ it is useless to speculate. Propriety of costume, on the other hand, seems always to have been observed, agreeably both to the peculiarities of the Indian drama and to the habits of the Indian people.

The ministers of an art practised under such conditions could not but be regarded with respect, and spared the contempt or worse, which, except among one other great civilized people, the Greeks, has everywhere at one time or another been the actor's lot. Companies of actors seem to have been common in India at an early date, and the inductions show the players to have been regarded as respectable members of society. In later if not in earlier times individual actors enjoyed a widespread reputation—"all the world" is acquainted with the talents of *Kalahā-Kandala*.¹¹ The directors, as already stated, were usually Brahmans. Female parts were in general, though not invariably, represented by females. One would like to know whether such was the case in a piece¹² where—after the fashion of more than one Western play—a crafty minister passes off his daughter as a boy, on which assumption she is all but married to a person of her own sex.

The Indian drama would, if only for purposes of comparison, be invaluable to the student of this branch of literature. But from the point of view of purely literary excellence it holds its own against all except the very foremost dramas of the world. It is, indeed, a mere phrase to call *Kālidāsa* the Indian Shakespeare—a title which, moreover, if intended as anything more than a synonym for poetic pre-eminence, might fairly be disputed in favour of *Babhavūti*; while it would be absolutely misleading to place a dramatic literature, which, like the Indian, is the mere quintessence of the culture of a caste, by the side of one which represents the fullest development of the artistic consciousness of a people such as the Hellenes. The Indian drama cannot be described as national in the broadest and highest sense of the word; it is, in short, the drama of a literary class, though as such it exhibits many of the noblest and most refined, as well as of the most characteristic, features of Hindu religion and civilization. The ethics of the Indian drama are of a lofty character, but they are those of a scholastic system of religious philosophy, self-conscious of its completeness. To the power of Fate is occasionally ascribed a supremacy, to which gods as well as mortals must bow;¹³ but if man's present life is merely a phase in the cycle of his destinies, the highest of moral efforts at the same time points to the summit of possibilities, and self-sacrifice is the supreme condition both of individual perfection and of the progress of the world. Such conceptions as these seem at once to

¹ *Sākuntalā*; *Uttara-Rāma-Charitra*.

² *Vikrama* and *Urvāsī*, act iv.

³ *Vikrama* and *Urvāsī*; *Arichandra*; *Nāgānanda*.

⁴ *Mricchhakatī*.

⁵ *Ib.*, act vii.

⁶ *Ratnāvalī*.

⁷ *Ib.*

⁸ *Mudrā-Rakshasa*.

⁹ *Sākuntalā*; *Nāgānanda*.

¹⁰ *Sākuntalā*, acts vi. and vii.; *Mālatī* and *Mādhava*, act v.

¹¹ Induction to *Anargha-Rāghava*.

¹² *Vidhā-Salabhanjika*.

¹³ *Vikrama* and *Urvāsī*.

enfold and to overshadow the moral life of the Indian drama. The affections and passions forming part of self it delineates with a fidelity to nature which no art can neglect; but the freedom of the picture is restricted by conditions which to us are unfamiliar and at times seem intolerable, but which it was impossible for the Indian poet's imagination to neglect. The sheer self-absorption of ambition or love appears inconceivable by the minds of any of these poets; and their social philosophy is always based on the system of caste. On the other hand, they are masters of many of the truest forms of pathos, above all of that which blends with resignation. In humour of a delicate kind they are by no means deficient; to its lower forms they are generally strangers, even in productions of a professedly comic intention. Of wit, Indian dramatic literature—though a play on words is as the breath of its nostrils—furnishes hardly any examples intelligible to Western notions.

The distinctive excellence of the Indian drama is to be sought in the poetic robe which envelops it as flowers overspread the bosom of the earth in the season of spring. In its nobler productions, at least, it is never untrue to its half religious, half rural origin; it weaves the wreaths of idyllic fancies in an unbroken chain, adding to its favourite and familiar blossoms ever fresh beauties from an inexhaustible garden. Nor is it unequal to depicting the grander aspects of nature in her mighty forests and on the shores of the ocean. A profound familiarity with its native literature can here alone follow its diction through a ceaseless flow of phrase and figure, listen with understanding to the hum of the bee as it hangs over the lotus, and contemplate with Śākuntalā's pious sympathy the creeper as it winds round the mango tree. But the poetic beauty of the Indian drama reveals itself in the mysterious charm of its outline, if not in its full glow, even to the untrained; nor should the study of it—for which the materials may yet increase—be left aside by any lover of literature.

Like the Indian drama, the CHINESE arose from the union of the arts of dance and song. To the ballets and pantomimes out of which it developed itself, and which have continued to flourish by the side of its more advanced forms, the Chinese ascribe a primitive antiquity of origin; many of them originally had a symbolical reference to such subjects as the harvest, and war and peace. A very ancient pantomime is said to have symbolized the conquest of China by Wou-Wang; others were of a humbler, and often of a very obscure, character. To their music the Chinese likewise attribute a great antiquity of origin.

Though some traditions declare the emperor Wan-Te (fl. about 580 A.D.) to have invented the drama, this honour is more usually given to the emperor Heun-Tsung (720 A.D.), who is likewise remembered as a radical musical reformer. Pantomimes henceforth fell into disrepute; and the history of the Chinese drama from this date is divided, with an accuracy we cannot profess to control, into four distinct periods, of each of which the plays composed in it are stated to bear the manifest impress. These are

I. That of the dramas composed under the Tang dynasty, from 720 to 907 A.D. These pieces, called *Tchouen-Khi*, were limited to the representation of extraordinary events, and were therefore, in design at least, a species of heroic drama. The ensuing times of civil war interrupted the "pleasures of peace and prosperity" (a Chinese phrase for dramatic performances)—which, however, revived.

II. Under the Sung Dynasty, from 960 to 1119.—The plays of this period are called *Hi-Khio*, and presented what became a standing peculiarity of the Chinese drama, viz., that in them figures a principal personage who sings.

III. The best known age of the Chinese drama was

under the Kin and Yuen dynasties, from 1125 to 1367. The plays of this period are called *Yuen-Pen* and *Tsa-Ki*; the latter seem to have resembled the *Hi-Khio*, and to have treated very various subjects. The *Yuen-Pen* are the plays from which our literary knowledge of the Chinese drama is mainly derived; the short pieces called *Yen-Kia* were in the same style, but briefer. The list of dramatic authors under the Yuen dynasty is tolerably extensive, comprising 85, among whom four are designated as courtesans; the number of plays composed by these and by anonymous authors is reckoned at not less than 564. In 1735 the Jesuit missionary Prémare first revealed to Europe the existence of the tragedy *Tchao-Chi-Cu-Eul* (*The Little Orphan of the House of Tchao*), which was founded upon an earlier piece treating of the fortunes of an heir to the imperial throne, who was preserved in a mysterious box like another Cypselus or Moses. Voltaire seized the theme of the earlier play for a rhetorical tragedy, in which he coolly professes it was his intention "to paint the manners of the Chinese and the Tartars." The later play, which is something less elevated in the rank of its characters, and very decidedly less refined in treatment, was afterwards retranslated by Stanislas Julien; and to the labours of this scholar, of Sir J. F. Davis, and of Bazin the elder, we owe a series of translated Chinese dramas, among which there can be no hesitation whatever in designating the master-piece. The justly famous *Pi-Pa-Ki* (*The Story of the Lute*) belongs to a period rather later than that of the Yuen plays, having been composed towards the close of the 14th century by Kao-Tong-Kia, and reproduced in 1404, under the Ming dynasty, with the alterations of Mao-Tseu, a commentator of learning and taste. *Pi-Pa-Ki*, which as a domestic drama of sentiment possesses very high merit, long enjoyed a quite exceptional popularity in China; it was repeatedly republished with laudatory prefaces, and so late as the 18th century was regarded as a monument of morality, and as the master-piece of the Chinese theatre. It would seem to have remained without any worthy competitors, for although it had been originally designed to produce a reaction against the immorality of the drama then in fashion, especially of Wang-Chi-Fou's celebrated *Si-Siang-Ki* (*The Story of the Western Pavilion*), yet

IV. The period of the Chinese drama under the Ming dynasty, from 1368 to 1644, exhibited no improvement. "What" (says the preface to the 1704 edition of *Pi-Pa-Ki*) "do you find there? Farcical dialogue, a mass of scenes in which one fancies one hears the hubbub of the streets or the ignoble language of the highways, the extravagances of demons and spirits, in addition to love-intrigues repugnant to delicacy of manners." Nor would it appear that the Chinese theatre has ever recovered from its decay.

In theory, no drama could be more consistently elevated in purpose and in tone than the Chinese. Every play, we learn, should have both a moral and a meaning. A virtuous aim is imposed upon Chinese dramatists by an article of the penal code of the empire; and those who write immoral plays are to expect after death a purgatory which will last so long as these plays continue to be performed. In practice, however, the Chinese drama falls far short of its ideal; indeed, according to the native critic already cited, among ten thousand playwrights not one is to be found intent upon perfecting the education of mankind by means of precepts and examples.

The Chinese are, like the Hindus, unacquainted with the distinction between tragedy and comedy; they classify their plays according to subjects in twelve categories. It may be doubted whether what seems the highest of these is actually such; for the religious element in the Chinese drama is often sheer buffoonery. Moreover, Chinese

religious life as reflected in the drama seems one in which creed elbows creed, and superstitions are welcome whatever their origin. Of all religious traditions and doctrines, however, those of Buddhism (which had reached China long before the known beginnings of its drama) are the most perceptible; thus, the theme of absolute self-sacrifice is treated in one play,¹ that of entire absorption in the religious life in another.² The historical drama is not unknown to the Chinese; and although a law prohibits the bringing on the stage of "emperors, empresses, and the famous princes, ministers, and generals of former ages," no such restriction is observed in practice. In *Han-Kong-Tseu* (*The Sorrows of Han*), for instance, which treats a national historic legend strangely recalling in parts the story of Esther and the myth of the daughter of Erechtheus, the Emperor Yuen-Ti (the representative, to be sure, of a fallen dynasty) plays a part, and a sufficiently sorry one. By far the greater number, however, of the Chinese plays accessible in translations belong to the domestic species, and to that sub-species which may be called the criminal drama. Their favourite virtue is piety, of a formal³ or a practical⁴ kind, to parents or parents-in-law; their favourite interest lies in the discovery of long-hidden guilt, and in the vindication of persecuted innocence.⁵ In the choice and elaboration of such subjects they leave little to be desired by the most ardent devotees of the literature of agony. Besides this description of plays, we have at least one love-comedy pure and simple—a piece of a nature not "tolerably mild," but ineffably harmless.⁶

Free in its choice of themes, the Chinese drama is likewise remarkably unrestricted in its range of characters. Chinese society, it is well known, is not based, like Indian, upon the principle of caste; rank is in China determined by office, and this again depends on the results of examination. These familiar facts are constantly brought home to the reader of Chinese plays. The *Tchoang-Yuen*, or senior classman on the list of licentiates, is the flower of Chinese society, and the hero of many a drama;⁷ and it is a proud boast that for years "one's ancestors have held high posts, which they owed to their literary successes."⁸ Or the other hand, a person who has failed in his military examination, becomes, as if by a natural transition, a menacing monster.⁹ But of mere class the Chinese drama is no respecter, painting with noteworthy freedom the virtues and the vices of nearly every phase of society. The same liberty is taken with regard to the female sex; it is clear that in earlier times there were few vexatious restrictions in Chinese life upon the social intercourse between men and women. The variety of female characters in the Chinese drama is great, ranging from the heroine who sacrifices herself for the sake of an empire¹⁰ to the well brought-up young lady who avers that "woman came into the world to be obedient, to unravel skeins of silk, and to work with her needle"¹¹—from the chambermaid who contrives the most gently sentimental of *rendevous*,¹² to the reckless courtesan who, like another Millwood, upbraids the partner of her guilt on his suing for mercy, and bids him die with her in hopes of a re-union after death.¹³ In marriage the first or legitimate wife is distinguished from the second, who is at times a *ci-devant* courtesan, and

towards whom the feelings of the former vary between bitter jealousy¹⁴ and sisterly kindness.¹⁵

The conduct of the plays exhibits much ingenuity, and an aversion from restrictions of time and place; in fact, the nature of the plot constantly covers a long series of years, and spans wide intervals of local distance. The plays are divided into acts and scenes—the former being usually four in number, at times with an induction or narrative prologue spoken by some of the characters (*Sie-Tsen*). Favourite plays were, however, allowed to extend to great length; the *Pi-Pa-Ki* is divided into 24 sections, and in another recension apparently comprised 42. "I do not wish," says the manager in the prologue, "that this performance should last too long; finish it to-day, but cut out nothing,"—whence it appears that the performance of some plays occupied more than a single day. The rule was always observed that a separate act should be given up to the *dénouement*; while, according to a theory of which it is not always easy to trace the operation, the perfection of construction was sought in the dualism or contrast of scene and scene, just as the perfection of diction was placed in the parallelism or antithesis of phrase and phrase. Being subject to no restrictions as to what might, or might not, be represented on the stage, the conduct of the plots allowed of the introduction of almost every variety of incidents. Death takes place, in sight of the audience, by starvation,¹⁶ by drowning,¹⁷ by poison,¹⁸ by execution;¹⁹ flogging and torture are inflicted on the stage;²⁰ wonders are wrought;²¹ and magic is brought into play;²² the ghost of an innocently-executed daughter calls upon her father to revenge her foul murder, and assists in person at the subsequent judicial enquiry.²³ Certain peculiarities in the conduct of the business are due to the usages of society rather than to dramatic laws. Marriages are generally managed—at least in the higher spheres of society—by ladies professionally employed as matrimonial agents.²⁴ The happy resolution of the *nodus* of the action is usually brought about by the direct interposition of superior official authority²⁵—a tribute to the paternal system of government, which is the characteristic Chinese variety of the *deus ex machina*. This naturally tends to the favourite close of a glorification of the emperor,²⁶ resembling that of Louis XIV. at the end of *Tartuffe*, or in spirit, at all events, those of the Virgin Queen in more than one Elizabethan play. It should be added that the characters save the necessity for a bill of the play by persistently announcing and re-announcing their names and genealogies, and the necessity for a book by frequently recapitulating the previous course of the plot.

One peculiarity of the Chinese drama remains to be noticed. The chief character of a play represents the author as well as the personage; he or she is hero or heroine and chorus in one. This is brought about by the hero's (or heroine's) singing the poetical passages, or those containing maxims of wisdom and morality, or reminiscences and examples drawn from legend or history. Arising out of the dialogue, these passages at the same time diversify it, and give to it such elevation and brilliancy as it can boast. The singing character must be the principal personage in the action, but may be taken from any class of society. If this personage dies in the course of the play, another sings in his place. From the mention of this distinctive feature of the Chinese drama it will be obvious how unfair it would be to judge of any of its productions without a due appre-

The principal personage who sings.

¹ *The Self-Sacrifice of Tchao-Li*.
² *Lai-Seng-Tchou* (*The Debt to be Paid in the Next World*).
³ *Lao-Seng-Eul*.
⁴ *Pi-Pa-Ki*.
⁵ *The Circle of Chalk* (*Hoi-Lan-Ki*); *The Tunic Matched*; *The Revenge of Teou-Ngo*.
⁶ *Tchao-Mei-Hiang* (*The Intrigues of a Chambermaid*).
⁷ *Ibid.*; *Ho-Han-Chan*; *Pi-Pa-Ki*.
⁸ *Hoi-Lan-Ki*, Prol. sc. i.
⁹ *Tchao-Li*.
¹⁰ *Sorrows of Han*.
¹¹ *Pi-Pa-Ki*, sc. 2.
¹² *Tchao-Mei-Hiang*.
¹³ *He-Lang-Tan*, act iv; cf. *Hoi-Lan-Ki*, act iv.

¹⁴ *Hoi-Lan-Ki*.
¹⁵ *Pi-Pa-Ki*, sc. 15.
¹⁶ *Hoi-Lan-Ki*, act i.
¹⁷ *Hoi-Lan-Ki*, act ii.
¹⁸ *Pi-Pa-Ki*, sc. 18.
¹⁹ *Tchao-Mei-Hiang*; *Pi-Pa-Ki*.
²⁰ *Ho-Han-Chan*.
²¹ *Pi-Pa-Ki*.
²² *Ho-Han-Chan*, act ii.
²³ *Teou-Ngo-Yuen*, act iii.
²⁴ *Teou-Ngo-Yuen*, act iii.
²⁵ *Teou-Ngo-Yuen*, act iv.
²⁶ *Hoi-Lan-Ki*.

ciation of the lyric passages, which do not appear to be altogether restricted to the singing of the principal personage, for other characters frequently "recite verses." In these lyrical or didactic passages are to be sought those flowers of diction which, as Julien has shown, consist partly in the use of a metaphorical phraseology of infinite nicety in its variations—such as a long series of phrases compounded with the word signifying *jet* and expressing severally the ideas of rarity, distinction, beauty, &c., or as others derived from the names of colours, birds, beasts, precious metals, elements, constellations, &c., or alluding to favourite legends or anecdotes. These features constitute the literary element *par excellence* of Chinese dramatic composition. At the same time, though it is impossible for the untrained reader to be alive to the charms of so unfamiliar a phraseology, it may be questioned whether even in its diction the Chinese drama can claim to be regarded as really poetic. It may abound in poetic ornament; it is not, like the Indian, bathed in poetry.

Merits of
the Chinese
drama.

On the other hand, the merits of this dramatic literature are by no means restricted to ingenuity of construction and variety of character—merits, in themselves important, which no candid criticism will deny to it. Its master-piece is not only truly pathetic in the conception and the main situations of its action, but includes scenes of singular grace and delicacy of treatment—such as that where the re-married husband of the deserted heroine in vain essays in the presence of his second wife to sing to his new lute, now that he has cast aside the old.¹ In the last act of a tragedy appealing at once to patriotism and to pity, there is true imaginative power in the picture of the emperor, when aware of the departure but not of the death of his beloved, sitting in solitude broken only by the ominous shriek of the wild fowl.² Nor is the Chinese drama devoid of humour. The lively abigail who has to persuade her mistress into confessing herself in love by arguing (almost like Beatrice) that "humanity bids us love men;"³ the corrupt judge (a standing type of the Chinese plays) who falls on his knees before the prosecuting parties to a suit as before "the father and mother who give him sustenance,"⁴ may serve as examples; and in *Pi-Pa-Ki* there is a scene of admirable burlesque on the still more characteristic theme of the humours of a competitive examination.⁵ If such illustrations could not easily be multiplied, they are at least worth citing in order to deprecate a perfunctory criticism on the qualities of a dramatic literature as to which our materials for judgment are still scanty.

Scenery and
costume.

While in the north of China houses are temporarily set apart for dramatic performances, in the south these are usually confined to theatres erected in the streets (*Hi-Thai*). Thus scenic decorations of any importance must always have been out of question in the Chinese theatre. The costumes, on the other hand, are described as magnificent; they are traditionally those worn before the 17th century, in accordance with the historical colouring of most of the plays. The actor's profession is not a respectable one in China, the managers being in the habit of buying children of slaves and bringing them up as slaves of their own. Women may not appear on the stage, since the emperor Khien-Long admitted an actress among his concubines; female parts are therefore played by lads, occasionally by sunuchs.

The JAPANESE drama, as all evidence seems to agree in showing, still remains what in substance it has always

been—an amusement passionately loved by the lower orders, but dignified by no literature deserving the name. Apart from its native elements of music, dance, and song, and legendary or historical narrative and pantomime, it is clearly to be regarded as a Chinese importation; nor has it in its more advanced forms apparently even attempted to emancipate itself from the reproduction of the conventional Chinese types. As early as the close of the 6th century Hada Kawatsu, a man of Chinese extraction, but born in Japan, is said to have been ordered to arrange entertainments for the benefit of the country, and to have written as many as thirty-three plays. The Japanese, however, ascribe the origin of their drama to the introduction of the dance called *Sambaso* as a charm against a volcanic depression of the earth which occurred in 805; and this dance appears still to be used as a prelude to theatrical exhibitions. In 1108 lived a woman called Iao no Zenji, who is looked upon as "the mother of the Japanese drama." But her performances seem to have been confined to dancing or posturing in male attire (*otokoma*); and the introduction of the drama proper is universally attributed to Saruwaka Kanzaburô, who in 1624 opened the first theatre (*sibaia*) at Yeddo. Not long afterwards (1651) the play-houses were removed to their present site in the capital; and both here and in the provincial towns, especially of the north, the drama has since continued to flourish. Persons of rank are never seen at these theatres; but actors are occasionally engaged to play in private at the houses of the nobles, who appear formerly themselves to have taken part in performances of a species of opera affected by them, always treating patriotic legends and called *no*. The Mikado only has a court theatre.

The subjects of the popular plays are to a large extent historical, though the names of the characters are changed. An example is to be found in the *Yôjuri*, or musical romance, in which the universally popular tale of *Chûshûgura* (*The Loyal League*) has been amplified and adapted for theatrical representation. This famous narrative of the feudal fidelity of the forty-seven *rouins*, who about the year 1699 revenged their chief's judicial suicide upon the arrogant official to whom it was due, is stirring rather than touching in its incidents, and contains much bloodshed, together with a tea-house scene which suffices as a specimen of the Japanese comedy of manners. One of the books of this dramatic romance consists of a metrical description, mainly in dialogue, of a journey which (after the fashion of Indian plays) has to be performed on the stage. Other popular plays are mentioned dealing with similar themes, besides which there are domestic dramas of a very realistic kind, and often highly improper, though all intrigues against married women are excluded. Fairy—and demon—operas and ballets, and farces and *intermezzos* form an easy transition to the interludes of tumblers and jugglers. As a specimen of nearly every class is required to make up a Japanese theatrical entertainment—which lasts from sunrise to sunset—and as the lower houses appropriate and mutilate the plays of the higher, it is clear that the condition of the Japanese theatre cannot be regarded as promising. In respect, however, of its movable scenery and properties, it is stated to be in advance of its Chinese prototype. The performers are, except in the ballet, males only. Though the leading actors enjoy great popularity and very respectable salaries, the class is held in contempt, and the companies were formerly recruited from the lowest sources. The disabilities under which they lay have, however, been removed; nor is it impossible that the reign of progress in Japan may revolutionize an agency of civilization which it seems for the present to have regarded as beneath its notice.

Chinshin-
gura.

No traces of a drama exist in any of the other civilized peoples of Asia—for that in Siam may probably be regarded as a branch of the Indian. Among the Hebrews and other Semitic peoples, as well as in at least one originally Aryan people of Asia which has cultivated letters with assiduity and success—the Persians—the dramatic art is either wanting, or only appears as an occasional and exotic growth. It is unnecessary to dwell on the dramatic element apparent in two of the books of the Hebrew Scripture—the *Book of Ruth* and the *Book of Job*. Of the dramatic element in the religious rites of the Egyptians a word will be said immediately; meanwhile it may be convenient at once to state that traces of dramatic entertainments have been found in various parts of the New World, which it cannot be part of the present sketch to pursue. Among these are the performances, accompanied by dancing and intermixed with recitation and singing, of the South-Sea Islanders, first described by Captain Cook, and lately re-introduced to the notice of students of comparative mythology by Mr W. Wyatt Gill. Of the so-called Inca drama of the Peruvians, the unique relic, *Apu Ollantay*, said to have been written down in the Quichua tongue from native dictation by Spanish priests shortly after the conquest of Peru, has been partly translated by Mr Clements Markham, and recently twice rendered into German verse. It appears to be an historic play of the heroic type, combining stirring incidents with a pathos finding expression in at least one lyric of some sweetness—the lament for the lost Collyar. With it may be contrasted the ferocious Aztec dramatic ballet, *Rabinal-Achi* (translated by the Abbé de Bourbourg), of which the text seems rather a succession of warlike harangues than an attempt at dramatic treatment of character. But these are mere isolated curiosities.

Dramatic
elements in
Egyptian
religious
and popular
life.

The civilization and religious ideas of the EGYPTIANS so vitally influenced the people of whose drama we are about to speak that a reference to them cannot be altogether omitted. The influence of Egyptian upon Greek civilization has probably been over-estimated by Herodotus; but while it will never be clearly known how much the Greeks owed to the Egyptians in divers branches of knowledge, it is certain that the former confessed themselves the scholars of Egypt in the cardinal doctrine of its natural theology. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul there found its most solemn expression in mysterious recitations connected with the rites of sepulture, and treating of the migration of the soul from its earthly to its eternal abode. These solemnities, whose transition into the Hellenic mysteries has usually been attributed to the agency of the Thracian worship of Dionysus, undoubtedly contained a dramatic element, upon the extent of which it is, however, useless to speculate. The ideas to which they sought to give utterance centred in that of Osiris, the vivifying power or universal soul of nature, whom Herodotus simply identifies with the Dionysus of the Greeks. The same deity was likewise honoured by processions among the rural Egyptian population, which, according to the same authority, in nearly all respects except the absence of choruses resembled the Greek phallic processions in honour of the wine-god.

That the Egyptians looked upon music as an important science seems fully established; it was diligently studied by their priests, though not, as among the Greeks, forming a part of general education, and in the sacred rites of their gods they as a rule permitted the use of flute and harp, as well as of vocal music. Dancing was as an art confined to professional persons; but though the higher orders abstained from its practice, the lower indulged in it on festive occasions, when a tendency to pantomime naturally asserted itself, and licence and wanton buffoonery prevailed, as in the early rustic festivals of the Greek and Italian

peoples. Of a dance of armed men, on the other hand, there seems no satisfactory trace in the representations of the Egyptian monuments.

But whatever elements the GREEK drama may, in the sources from which it sprang, have owed to Egyptian, or Phrygian, or other Asiatic influences, its development was independent and self-sustained. Not only in its beginnings, but so long as the stage existed in Greece, the drama was in intimate connection with the national religion. This is the most signal feature of its history, and one which cannot in the same degree and to the same extent be ascribed to the drama of any other people, ancient or modern. Not only did both the great branches of the Greek drama alike originate in the usages of religious worship, but they never lost their formal union with it, though one of them (comedy) in its later growth abandoned all direct reference to its origin. Hellenic polytheism was at once so active and so fluid or flexible in its anthropomorphic formations, that no other religious system has ever so victoriously assimilated to itself foreign elements, or so vivaciously and variously developed its own. Thus, the worship of Dionysus, introduced into Greece by the Phœnicians as that of the tauriform sun-god whom his worshippers adored with loud cries (whence *Bacchus* or *Iacchus*), and the god of generation (whence his *phallic* emblem) and production, was brought into connection with the Dorian religion of the sun-god Apollo. Apollo and his sister, again, corresponded to the Pelasgian and Achaean divinities of sun and moon, whom the Phœnician Dionysus and Demeter superseded, or with whose worship theirs was blended. Dionysus, whose rites were specifically conducted with reference to his attributes as the wine-god, was attended by deified representations of his original worshippers, who wore the skin of the goat sacrificed to him. These were the *satyrs*. Out of the connected worships of Dionysus, Bacchus, Apollo, and Demeter sprang the beginnings of the Greek drama.

"Both tragedy and comedy," says Aristotle, "originated in a rude and unpremeditated manner,—the first from the leaders of the dithyramb, and the second from those who led off the phallic songs." This diversity of origin, and the distinction jealously maintained down to the latest times between the two branches of the dramatic art, even where they might seem to come into actual contact with one another, necessitate a separate statement as to the origin and history of either.

The custom of offering thanks to the gods by hymns and dances in the places of public resort was first practised by the Greeks in the Dorian states, whose whole system of life was organized on a military basis. Hence the dances of the Dorians originally taught or imitated the movements of soldiers, and their hymns were warlike chants. Such were the beginnings of the *chorus*, and of its songs (called *paean*, from an epithet of Apollo), accompanied first by the phorminx and then by the flute. A step in advance was taken when the poet with his trained singers and dancers, like the Indian *sûtra-dhâra*, performed these religious functions as the representative of the population. From the Dorian *paean* at a very early period several styles of choral dancing formed themselves, to which the three styles of dance in scenic productions—the tragic, the comic, and the satyric—are stated afterwards to have corresponded. But none of these could have led to a literary growth. This was due to the introduction among the Dorians of the *dithyramb*,—originally a song of revellers, probably led by a flute-player and accompanied by the music of other Eastern instruments, in which it was customary in Crete to celebrate the birth of Bacchus (the doubly-born) and possibly also his later adventures. The leader of the band

¹ *Pi-Pa-Ki*, sc. 14.

² *Tchao-Mei-Kiang*, act ii.

³ *Tsou-Ngo-Yuen*, act ii.; cf. *Hoet-Lan-Ki*.

⁴ *Pi-Pa-Ki*, sc. 5.

⁵ *Sources of Han*.

(*coryphaeus*) may be supposed to have at times assumed the character of the wine-god, whose worshippers bore aloft the vine-clad *thyrsus*. The dithyramb was reduced to a definite form by the Lesbian Arion (fl. 610), who composed regular poems, turned the moving band of worshippers into a standing or *cyclic* chorus, invented a style of music adapted to the character of the chorus—the *tragic* or goat style—and called these songs goat-songs, or *tragedies*. Arion thus became the inventor of *lyrical tragedy*—a transition stage between the dithyramb and the regular drama. His invention, or the chorus with which it dealt, was established according to fixed rules by his contemporary Stesichorus. About the same time that Arion introduced these improvements into the Dorian city of Corinth, the (likewise Dorian) families at Sicyon honoured the hero-king Adrastus by tragic choruses. Hence the invention of tragedy was ascribed by the Sicyonians to their poet Epigenes; but this step, significant for the future history of the Greek drama, of employing the Bacchic chorus for the celebration of other than Bacchic themes, was soon annulled by the tyrant Cleisthenes.

The element which transformed lyrical tragedy into the tragic drama was added by the Ionians. The custom of the recitation of poetry by wandering minstrels called *rhapsodes* (from *ῥάβδος*, staff, or from *ῥάπτω*, to piece together) first sprang up in the Ionia beyond the sea; to such minstrels was due the spread of the Homeric poems and of subsequent epic cycles. These recitations, with or without musical accompaniment, soon included gnomic or didactic, as well as epic, verse; if Homer was a rhapsode, so was the sententious or "moral" Hesiod. The popular effect of these recitations was enormously increased by the metrical innovations of Archilochus (from 708), who invented the trochee and the *iambus*, the latter the arrow metre which is the native form of satirical invective—the species of composition in which Archilochus excelled—though it was soon used for other purposes also. The recitation of these iambs may already have nearly approached to theatrical declamation. The rhapsodes were welcome guests at popular festivals, where they exercised their art in mutual emulation, or ultimately recited parts, perhaps the whole, of longer poems. The recitation of a long epic may thus have resembled theatrical dialogue; that of alternating iambic poems, the form being frequently an address in the second person, even more so. The rhapsode was in some sense an actor; and when these recitations reached Attica, they thus brought with them the germs of theatrical dialogue.

The rhapsodes were actually introduced into Attica at a very early period; the *Iliad*, we know, was chanted at the Brauronia, a rural festival of Bacchus, whose worship had early entered Attica, and was cherished among its rustic population. Meanwhile the cyclic chorus of the Dorians had found its way into Attica and Athens, ever since the Athenians had recognized the authority of the great centre of the Apolline religion at Delphi. It therefore only remained for the rhapsodic and the cyclic—in other words, for the epic and the choral—elements to coalesce; and this must have been brought about by a union of the two accompaniments of religious worship in the festive rites of Bacchus, and by the domestication of these rites in the ruling city. This occurred in the time of Pisistratus, perhaps after his restoration in 554. To Thespis (535), said to have been a contemporary of the tyrant and a native of a Diacrian deme (Icaria), the invention of tragedy is accordingly ascribed. Whether his name be that of an actual person or not, his claim to be regarded as the inventor of tragedy is founded on the statement that he introduced an actor for the sake of relieving the Dionysian chorus. This actor, the representative of the rhapsodes,

and doubtless, at first, generally the poet himself, instead of merely alternating his recitations with the songs of the chorus, addressed his speech to its leader—the *coryphaeus*—with whom he thus carried on a species of *dialogue*. The chorus stood round its leader upon the steps of the Bacchic altar (*thymele*), the actor was placed upon a table. This table is the predecessor of the stage, for the waggon of Thespis is a fiction, probably due to a confusion between his table and the waggon of Susarion. It is a significant minor invention ascribed to Thespis, that he disguised the actor's face first by means of a pigment, afterwards by a mask. In the dialogue was treated a myth relating to Bacchus or some other deity or hero. Whether or not Thespis actually wrote tragedies (and there seems no reason to doubt it), and although both the cyclic chorus and rhapsodic recitation continued in separate use, tragedy was now in existence. The essential additions afterwards made to its simple framework were remarkably few. *Æschylus* added a second actor, and by reducing the functions of the chorus further established the dialogue as the principal part of the action. *Sophocles* added a third actor, by which change the preponderance of the dialogue was made complete.

If the origin of Greek comedy is simpler in its nature than that of Greek tragedy, the beginnings of its progress are involved in more obscurity. It is said to have been invented by Susarion, a native of Megaris, whose inhabitants were famed for their coarse humour, which they communicated to their colonies in Sicily. In this island, to this day the home of spontaneous mimicry, comedy was said to have arisen. In the rural Bacchic vintage-festivals bands of jolly companions (*κῶμος*, properly a revel continued after supper) went about in carts or afoot, carrying the phallic emblem, and indulging in the ribald licence of wanton mirth. From the song sung in these processions or at the Bacchic feasts, which combined the praise of the god with gross personal ridicule, and was called *comus* in a secondary sense, the Bacchic reveller taking part in it was called a *comus-singer* or *comædus*. These phallic processions, which were afterwards held at Athens as in all Greek cities, imparted their character to Old Attic comedy, whose essence was personal vilification.

Thus independent of one another in their origin, Greek tragedy and comedy never actually coalesced. The *satyr-drama*, though in some sense it partook of the nature of both, was in its origin as in its history connected with tragedy alone. Pratinas of Phlius, a contemporary of *Æschylus* in his earlier days, is said to have restored the tragic chorus to the satyrs, *i.e.*, he first produced dramas the same in form and theme as the tragedies, but in which the dances were different and entirely carried on by satyrs. The tragic poets, while never writing comedies, henceforth also composed satyr-dramas; but neither tragedies nor satyr-dramas were ever written by the comic poets, and it was in conjunction with tragedies only that the satyr-dramas were performed. The theory of the Platonic Socrates, that the same man ought to be the best tragic and the best comic poet, was never exemplified in practice. The so-called *hilaro-tragedy* or *tragi-comedy* of later writers, thought in some of its features to have been anticipated by Euripides,¹ in form nowise differed from tragedy; it merely contained a comic element in its characters, and invariably had a happy ending. The serious and sentimental element in the comedy of Menander and his contemporaries did far more to destroy the essential difference between the two great branches of the Greek dramatic art.

The history of Greek—which virtually always remained Attic—tragedy divides itself into three periods.

¹ *Alcestis; Orestes.*

I. *The period before Æschylus (535-499).*—From this we have but a few names of authors and plays—those of the former being (besides Thespis) Chœrilus, Phrynichus, and Pratinas, all of whom lived to contend with *Æschylus* for the tragic prize. To each of them certain innovations are ascribed—among the rest the introduction of female characters to Phrynichus.

II. *The classical period of Attic tragedy*—that of *Æschylus*, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*, and their contemporaries (499-405).—To this belong all the really important phases in the progress of Greek tragedy, which severally connect themselves with the names of its three great masters. They may be regarded as the representatives of different generations of Attic history and life, though of course in these, as in the progress of their art itself, there is an unbroken continuity. *Æschylus* (525-456) had not only fought both at Marathon and at Salamis against those Persians whose rout he celebrated with patriotic pride,¹ but he had been trained in the Eleusinian mysteries, and was a passionate upholder of the institution most intimately associated with the primitive political traditions of the past—the *Areopagus*.² He had been born in the generation after Solon, to whose maxims he fondly clung; he must have belonged to that anti-democratical party which favoured the Spartan alliance, and it was the Dorian development of Hellenic life and the philosophical system based upon it with which his religious and moral convictions were imbued. Thus even upon the generation which succeeded him the chivalrous spirit and diction of his poetry, and the unapproached sublimity of his dramatic imagination, fell, as it falls upon later posterity, like the note of a mightier age. *Sophocles* (495-405) was the associate of Pericles, and an upholder of his authority rather than a consistent pupil of his political ideas; but his manhood and perhaps the maturity of his genius coincided with the great days when he could stand, like his mighty friend and the community they both so gloriously represented, on the sunny heights of achievement. Serenely pious, he yet treats the myths of the national religion in the spirit of a conscious artist, contrasting with lofty irony the struggles of humanity with the irresistible march of its destinies. His art (which he described as having passed through three successive stages) may in its perfection be said to typify the watchful and creative calm of his city's imperial epoch. *Euripides* (480-406), as is the fate of genius of a more complex kind, has been more variously and antithetically judged than either of his great fellow-tragedians. His art has been called thinner and tamer than theirs, his genius rhetorical rather than poetical, his morality that of a sophistical wit. On the other hand, he has been recognized not only as the most tragic of the Attic tragedians and the most pathetic of ancient poets, but also as the most humane in his social philosophy and the most various in his psychological insight. At least though far removed from the naiver age of the national life, he is, both in patriotic spirit and in his choice of themes, genuinely Attic; and if he was "haunted on the stage by the demon of Socrates," he was, like Socrates himself, the representative of an age which was a seed-time as well as a season of decay. To *Euripides* the general progress of dramatic literature owes more than to any other ancient poet. Tragedy followed in his footsteps in Greece and at Rome; comedy owed him something in the style of the very *Aristophanes* who mocked him, and more in the sentiments of *Menander*; and when the modern drama came to engraft the ancient upon its own crude growth, his was directly or indirectly the most powerful influence in the establishment of a living connection between them.

¹ *Persæ.*

² *Eumenides.*

The incontestable pre-eminence of the three great tragic poets was acknowledged at Athens by the usage allowing no tragedies but theirs to be more than once performed, and by the law of *Lycurgus* (c. 330) which obliged the actors to use, in the case of works of the great masters, authentic copies preserved in the public archives. It is thus not impossible that the value of later Attic tragedy, of which the fertility continued considerable, has been under-rated. In all the names of 1400 tragedies and satyr-dramas are preserved; and tragic poets are mentioned of whose plays no names are known. Among the more celebrated Attic tragedians contemporary with the great writers, *Ion* of Chios (d. before 419) seems to have followed earlier traditions of style than *Euripides*; *Agathon*, who survived the latter, on the other hand, introduced certain innovations of a transnormal kind into the art of tragic composition.

III. *Of the third period of Greek tragedy* the concluding limit cannot be precisely fixed. Down to the days of *Alexander the Great*, Athens remained the chief home of tragedy. Though tragedies must have begun to be acted at the Syracusan and Macedonian courts, since *Æschylus*, *Euripides*, and *Agathon* had sojourned there,—though the practice of producing plays at the *Dionysia* before the allies of Athens must have led to their holding similar exhibitions at home,—yet before the death of *Alexander* we meet with no instance of a tragic poet writing or a tragedy written outside Athens. An exception should indeed be made in favour of the tyrant *Dionysius* of Syracuse, who (like *Critias* in his earlier days at Athens) was "addicted to" tragic composition. Not all the tragedians of this period, however, were Athenians born; though the names of *Euphorion*, the son of *Æschylus*, *Iophon*, the son of *Sophocles*, and *Euripides* and *Sophocles*, the nephew and the grandson respectively of their great namesakes, illustrate the descent of the tragic art as an hereditary family possession. *Chæremon* (fl. 380) already exhibits tragedy on the road to certain decay, for we learn that his plays were written for reading.

Soon after the death of *Alexander* theatres are found spread over the whole Hellenic world of Europe and Asia—a result to which the practice of the conqueror and his father of celebrating their victories by scenic performances had doubtless contributed. Alexandria having now become a literary centre with which even Athens was, in some respects unable to compete, while the latter still remained the home of comedy, the tragic poets flocked to the capital of the Ptolemies; and here, in the reign of *Ptolemy Philadelphus* (283-247) flourished the seven tragic poets famed as the "Pleias," who still wrote in the style and followed the rules observed by the Attic masters. Tragedy and the dramatic art continued to be favoured by the later Ptolemies; and about 100 B.C. we meet with the curious phenomenon of a Jewish poet, *Ezechiel*, composing Greek tragedies, of one of which (the *Ætodus* from Egypt) fragments have come down to us. Tragedy, with the satyr-drama and comedy, survived in Alexandria beyond the days of *Cicero* and *Varro*, nor was their doom finally sealed till the Emperor *Caracalla* abolished theatrical performances in the Egyptian capital in 217 A.D.

During the whole of its productive age Greek tragedy seems to have adhered to the lines laid down by its great Attic masters; nor were these in most respects departed from by the Roman imitators of these poets and of their successors.

Tragedy was defined by *Plato* as an imitation of the noblest life. Its proper themes—the deeds and sufferings of heroes—were familiar to audiences intimately acquainted with the mythology of the national religion. To such themes Greek tragedy almost wholly confined itself; and in later days there were numerous books which discussed these