





PREFACE.

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which continually advances. The epoc-
nian three, like that of the Elizabethan
of the great Spanish dramatists,
achievement, and their drama was
whereas the French drama
entertainment of an exclusive
Æschylus (B.C. 525-456)
Athens. He had fought at Marathon
we may be pretty sure, and seems to cor-
tive of the battle of Marathon, which was
probably that which was typically
fought at Marathon, and nearer
drama, was Æschylus. He
tomb. His drama, famous,
ment, of Æschylus.
law, of Æschylus.
of Æschylus.

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PREFACE.

GREEK DRAMA, forerunner of ours, had its origin in the festival of Dionysus, god of wine, which was celebrated with dance, song, and recitative. The recitative, being in character, was improved into the Drama, the chief author of the improvement, tradition says, being Thespis. But the dance and song were retained, and became the Chorus, that peculiar feature of the Greek play. This seems to be the general account of the matter, and especially of the combination of the lyric with the dramatic element, so far as we can see through the mist of an unrecorded age.

Thirlwall, still perhaps the soundest and most judicious, though not the most vivid or enthusiastic, historian of Greece, traces the origin of the Drama to "the great choral compositions uniting the attractions of music and action to those of a lofty poetry, which formed the favourite entertainment of the Dorian cities." This, he says, appears to have been the germ out of which, by the introduction of a new element, the recitation of a performer who assumed a character and perhaps from the first shifted his mask, so as to exhibit the outlines of a simple story