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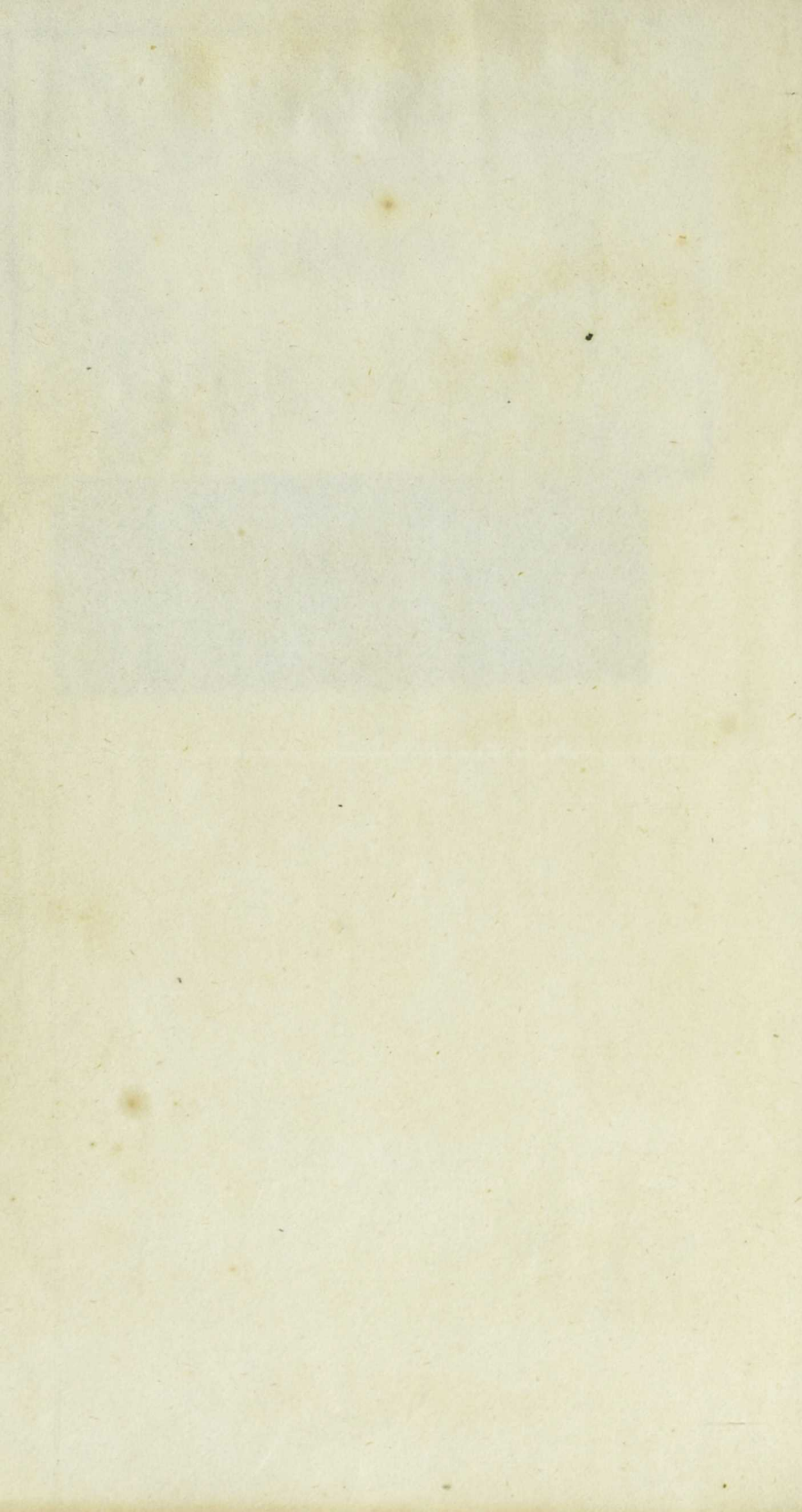
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by W Godwin



FRONTISPIECE.



JUPITER

THE
PANTHEON:
OR
ANCIENT HISTORY
OF
THE GODS
OF
GREECE AND ROME.

*FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS,
AND YOUNG PERSONS OF BOTH SEXES.*

BY EDWARD BALDWIN, ESQ.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

The purpose of this book is to place the Heathen Mythology in two points of view: first, as it would have struck a Traveller in Greece, who wished to form a just conception of the Religion of the country, free from either favour or prejudice; secondly, regarding Mythology as the introduction and handmaid to the study of Poetry, the author has endeavoured to feel his subject in the spirit of a poet, and to communicate that feeling to others.

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1814.

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PANTHEON
OR
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FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS
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BY EDWARD HALLAM, ESQ.
THE FOURTH EDITION.

The purpose of this book is to place the history of the gods of Greece and Rome before the eyes of the young mind, and to give it a clear and correct conception of the same. It is not intended to be a treatise on mythology, but a history of the gods, and to be read by the young mind, and to be read by the young mind, and to be read by the young mind.

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PRINTED FOR W. J. BODWIN,
AT THE BELL AND LION, IN THE STRAITS.

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New Street, Covent Garden.

TO THE

REV. MATTHEW RAINE, D.D.

MASTER OF THE CHARTER-HOUSE SCHOOL.

SIR,

AS the book [commonly known by the name of 'Tooke's Pantheon'] the imperfections of which it is the object of this volume to remedy, was published about one hundred years ago by one of the Masters of the Charter-House School, nothing appeared to me more obvious and natural than to address the present essay to you. But though this consideration unavoidably suggested itself, I should not have proceeded to carry it into act, were it not for the personal respect I entertain for your learning, your dispositions, and your character. I doubt not from the equity of your mind that, if it should appear to you upon ex-

amination, that I have effected my purpose, and produced a book well calculated to prepare young persons for understanding and relishing the compositions of the ancient poets, you will honour my pages with your sanction and approbation.

I am, Sir,

with sincere respect,

your most obedient servant,

EDWARD BALDWIN.

PREFACE.



IT is universally confessed that of all systems of mythology and religion, that of the Greeks is the most admirably adapted to the purposes of poetry. The "elegant forms and agreeable fictions," as Mr. Gibbon so justly styles them, which this scheme of things exhibit, soothes the imagination and feeds the curiosity of the reader with endless variety. The multitude of the Gods of the Greeks, however it might be calculated to shock the reasoning faculty if regarded as an object of faith, suits wonderfully the demands of the composer in verse, and from the majestic presence of Jupiter, to the Dryad of the oak, and the Nymph of the neighbouring fountain, supplies him on all sides with forms and agents to be brought forward at his convenience. They appear to have been scarcely ever contemplated with those deep emotions which render the mind incapable of yielding to the flights of fancy; at the same time that, as partaking of the seriousness and magnificence of a polished religion, they were in no danger of ranking among the unsubstantial creations of a fairy region.

It was naturally to have been expected that a book containing the elements of this system, would have proved one of the most agreeable presents that could be put into the hands of youth. This has not been the case. The dulness of the compilers in some instances, and, still more extraordinary, their malice in others, have combined to place Pantheons and Histories of the Heathen Gods among the most repulsive articles of the juvenile library. The book in particular, written in Latin by the Jesuit Pomey, and known among us by the name of Tooke, contains in every page an elaborate calumny upon the Gods of the Greeks, and that in the coarsest thoughts

and words that rancour could furnish. The author seems continually haunted by the fear that his pupil might prefer the religion of Jupiter to the religion of Christ.

In writing this little volume I own I have been impressed with no such fear. We have a religion in which "life and immortality are brought to light," and which inculcates the sublime lessons of the unity of God, and the love we should bear to "our neighbours as ourselves." This religion fears no comparison with the mythology of ancient Greece. It looks something like blasphemy for a Christian to think it necessary to the cause in which he is engaged, to inveigh against the amours of Jupiter, and to revive all the libels of the ancient Fathers against the religion of the government under which they lived. I felt no apprehension, that while I vindicated the Heathen mythology from misinterpretation, and endeavoured to conciliate the favour of young persons to the fictions of the Greeks, I should risk the seducing one votary from the cross of Christ.

But while I suffered no apprehension on this side, I conceived I had a duty to perform to the other. The office of the writer of such a book as this, is to prepare his young readers to admire and to enjoy the immortal productions of Homer, Horace and Virgil. There is no absolute necessity that these productions should be read at all; and it is quite absurd to set young persons upon the perusal of them, unless it be to improve their taste, and unless they are to be regarded as perpetual models in the art of fine writing. I am anxious therefore that every one who reads this book should draw from the perusal of it, not an aversion and contempt for the fictions of Greece and Rome, but an eager anticipation of their beauties, and a frame of mind prepared to receive the most agreeable emotions.

Nor could there indeed be any occasion to exaggerate the licentiousness of the Grecian inventors. It has long been a complaint, that books detailing the History of the Heathen Gods abounded with ideas and pictures by no means proper to be presented to the juvenile mind. Par-

ticular attention has been given to that article in the composition of this volume. It is expressly written for the use of young persons of both sexes, and I confidently trust that nothing will be found in it, to administer libertinism to the fancy of the stripling, or to sully the whiteness of mind of the purest virgin.

Another circumstance equally called upon me for exertion and diligence. The Gods of the Greeks are reckoned to amount to no fewer than thirty thousand. It is not much to be wondered at, that in discussing so multifarious a polytheism, the writers who have hitherto employed themselves in composing manuals on the subject have produced nothing but disorder and confusion. No person in reading these books could collect any distinct and well-ordered idea of the hierarchy of Heaven; and accordingly men in other respects no contemptible scholars, will often be found deficient in just notions on this point. I have set myself with some assiduity to disembroil this chaos; and though I have by no means done it in all instances to my satisfaction, yet I think it will be acknowledged that some success has attended my endeavours.

Anxious to take away from the subject the dry and pedantic air which has usually characterised books of this sort, I have further endeavoured to make my narrative as simple and direct as possible. I have not been forward to collate the glosses of different commentators, and to bring together the discordant genealogies which by one writer or another have been exhibited in so doubtful a subject. This ambiguity has been carried the farther by my predecessors, from the improper use they have made of Cicero's Books on the Nature of the Gods. That great Roman has put into the mouth of Cotta, the Sceptic in his Dialogue, all the inconsistencies, real or specious, that could be raked together as accusations against the established religion: no orthodox believer would ever have talked as he does, of three Jupiters, five Mercuries, and six Demigods of the name of Hercules; nor is this to be admitted as a fair and impartial statement of the Grecian

religion. It is not the object of this book to make its young reader an adept in all the distinctions and controversies of mythology; I shall have more effectually succeeded in my design, if I leave upon his recollection a grand picture of the system of the fabulous Gods, and a bold outline of the properties and adventures attributed to each.

Different writers both in France and England have undertaken to show, that the whole system of the Grecian mythology is allegorical, and that, however its inventors and teachers accommodated themselves to the vulgar apprehension by a multiplication of their Gods, and assigning to every province and energy of nature its separate Deity, the true sense was not the less carefully explained to the refined and the liberal; the real object being nothing more than a mystical, but pure and just, representation of the attributes of the Father of the Universe. With this disquisition the present work has no strict concern. Such enquiries belong rather to philosophy, than poetry. It was no part of my purpose (the purpose of presenting an introduction to the study of the poets), to strip the Grecian religion of its beautiful forms, and present it in the nakedness of metaphysical truth; it was rather incumbent upon me to draw out those forms in their utmost solidity and permanence, and “give to airy nothing a local habitation” and substantial character.

The uses of the study of ancient mythology are, 1. to enable young persons to understand the system of the poets of former times, as well as the allusions so often to be found interspersed in writers of a more recent date: 2. as a collection of the most agreeable fables that ever were invented, it is admirably calculated to awaken the imagination; imagination, which it cannot be too often repeated, is the great engine of morality: 3. it presents us with an instructive lesson on the nature of the human mind, laying before us the manners and prejudices of a nation extremely different from our own, and showing us to what extravagant and fantastic notions of the invisible world the mind, once bewildered in error, may finally be led.

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STATUES OF THE GREEKS.

THE
PANTHEON.

CHAP. I.

INTRODUCTION.

Statues of the Greeks.—Venus de Medicis, Apollo Belvidere, and Hercules Farnese.—Jupiter of Phidias.—Grecian Games.—Beautiful Forms of the Greeks.—Pantheon at Rome.

ONE reason why the Gods of the Greeks are so interesting to us, is that the Greeks were the finest writers in the world; and they have said such fine things about their Gods, that nobody who is acquainted with their writings, can recollect these imaginary beings without emotions of pleasure.

The Greeks are also supposed to have been the finest statuaries and painters that ever existed: none of their pictures, and few of their statues, have come down to us: but those we have, are the wonder and admiration of every body that understands in what the highest excellence of the human form, and the imitations of the human form, consists: for all the Gods of the Greeks were represented under the forms of men; what-

ever of majestic, or beautiful, or powerful, the Greek artists could find in the figure of man, they gave to the representations of their Gods.

The Venus de Medicis, the Apollo Belvidere, and the Hercules Farnese are the finest statues now existing: every thing that is enchanting in the beauty of a woman, or noble and prepossessing in the figure of a young man, or muscular and robust in the figure of a man who looks as if he could put an end to a lion with a blow of his fist, is comprehended in these three statues: the surnames by which they are called, they have received from the noble families or palaces of modern Italy, by whom or in which they have been preserved.

The Greeks admired more than all the rest the Jupiter which was carved by Phidias: this statue no longer exists: there was something so awful, so venerable, so more than any thing that you could conceive ever to have belonged to a man, in the figure and countenance of this statue, that you could scarcely look at it without exclaiming, "This indeed is a God!"

One of the reasons why the Greeks excelled all other nations in their representations of the human figure, is that they were probably the finest race of men that ever existed: this they owed in part to a famous institution among them known by the name of the Grecian games: these games consisted in wrestling, running, boxing, throwing the quoit, and other trials of skill: in consequence of the fineness of their climate, they practised these games for the most part naked: they rubbed themselves with oil, that they might render their limbs supple and pliant: they plunged in rivers and seas, that they might brace

their muscles: the garments they wore had no ligatures to compress and destroy the strength and grace and free play of the muscles; while modern nations, by garters, and buckles, and waistbands, and kneebands, and wristbands, and collars, and fifty barbarous contrivances, are continually spoiling the flowing and active forms with which nature has endowed us: it is not a hundred years ago, since a child, as soon as it came into the world, was swaddled and swathed and pinched with I know not how many yards of broad, strong binding, so that he could scarcely move a limb or a muscle of his whole body: it is not fifty years ago, since women, what they called, laced for a shape; that is, tried to be in figure as near as possible like a wasp, the two parts of the body of which are joined together as it were by a thread.

It is not wonderful that the Greek artists, who every day beheld their countrymen naked, and whose countrymen employed such powerful means for improving the freedom and strength of their limbs, should have excelled much more in the manufacture of statues than we do.

It is not wonderful, since the Greek artists made such exquisite statues, and the Greek poets, Homer and others, have written such fine things about their Gods, that a learned man cannot recollect the Greek mythology, without the most delicious and animated emotions.

I wish I could lead you into the Pantheon at Rome: I mean such as it was in the times of the Grecian religion, for the walls of the building still exist: the Gods of the Romans were the same as of the Greeks: the Pantheon was a rotunda, one hundred and sixty feet in diameter,

and the same in height; it had no light but what it received from a circular aperture in the middle of the vaulted roof: the rafters were brass; the front of brass gilt: the roof of silver; and the inside marble: this temple was dedicated to all the Gods, and contained in its circumference the statues of them all: if you could see it as it was in the time of the emperor Augustus, you would then see the Grecian religion in all its glory.

CHAP. II.

GENIUS OF THE GRECIAN RELIGION.—
OF ABSTRACTION.

The Religion of the Greeks gives Sense and Life to Inanimate Objects.—Personifies Abstractions.—Nature of Abstraction explained.

ANOTHER cause of the agreeable nature of the Grecian religion was that it gave animation and life to all existence: it had its Naiads, Gods of the rivers, its Tritons and Nereids, Gods of the seas, its Satyrs, Fauns and Dryads, Gods of the woods and the trees, and its Boreas, Eurus, Auster and Zephyr, Gods of the winds.

The most important of the senses of the human body are seeing and hearing: we love, as Pope says, to “see God in clouds, and hear him in the wind:” it is a delightful thing to take a walk in fields, and look at the skies and the trees and the corn-fields and the waving grass, to observe the mountains and the lakes and the rivers and the seas, to smell the new-mown hay, to inhale the fresh and balmy breeze, and to hear the wild warbling of the birds: but a man does not enjoy these in their most perfect degree of pleasure, till his imagination becomes a little visionary: the human mind does not love a landscape without life and without a soul: we are delighted to talk to the objects around us, and to feel as if they understood and sympathised with us: we create, by the power of fancy, a human form and a hu-

man voice in those scenes, which to a man of literal understanding appear dead and senseless.

One further source of the agreeable nature of the Grecian religion was, that it not only gave sense and life to all inanimate objects; it also personified abstractions.

Abstraction is a very curious operation of the human mind, and well worthy of consideration: we call the people about us by names, *John Williams, George Brown, David Smith*, and the animals with which we are familiar, as *Pompey, Tray, Carlo, Fidelle, Bijou*: there is nothing abstract in that.

But we have other names, not suited to a single individual, but to all individuals of the same nature, as *man, woman, boy, girl, dog, horse, rabbit, partridge*: this is the beginning of abstraction: when I say *man*, I do not mean *a tall man, or a short man, a fat man, or a thin man, a negro, or a European*: now there never was a man, who was neither tall nor short, nor fat, nor thin, nor black, nor white: yet a child, when he is familiar with the word, knows very well how to apply it to all the different sorts of *men* he sees, and is in no danger of applying it to a *cow, a horse, or a bird*.

There is another sort of abstraction more refined than this, as in the words *grief, fear, war, peace, life, death, &c.*: these words are descriptive of nothing that has form or colour: yet they are words of very convenient use, and greatly help us in reasoning and conversation.

Poetry affects the passions of those who read it, much more than prose does: for this plain reason, that poetry deals chiefly in images drawn from the sight, the hearing, and the other senses:

children love to read stories; for when they read of "a little girl with a Red Riding Hood, who carried her grand-mamma a custard, and was then eaten up by a wolf, that put on her grand-mamma's clothes, and got into her bed," they read what they very well understand: it is all as clear as the day: but, if you set them down to a book of moral philosophy or political science, to Locke on Human Understanding, or Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws, they can make nothing of it; the words that occur are all abstractions.

"Men are but children of a larger growth:" they never entirely lose the qualities that distinguish them in early life: they have more patience than children; their understandings are improved by books of moral philosophy or political science; but their passions and feelings are most powerfully affected by tales, histories and poetry; it is this love of having things actually presented before them, that leads people to plays, processions, and galleries of pictures.

Let us see what we were talking about: "one cause of the agreeable nature of the Grecian religion is, that it personifies abstractions:" Fate, Destiny, Fury, Comedy, Tragedy, History, are abstractions to us, but were real persons with them: in fact, not only the inferior Gods stood for abstract qualities or events, but many of the superior Gods also: Mars was War, Minerva Wisdom, Venus Beauty, &c.: it is in this sense that Homer^a introduces Minerva, that is, Wisdom or Prudence, as coming to check Achilles, when he was on the point of drawing his

^a Iliad, *α.* 194.

8 BEAUTY OF THE GREEK RELIGION.

sword in a fit of rage at the council-table of the Greeks.

The language of the Greeks was the language of poetry: every thing with them was alive: a man could not walk out in the fields, without being in the presence of the Naiads, the Dryads, and the Fauns: he could not sit by his hearth, without feeling himself protected by his Household Gods: he could not be married, but Hymen marshalled him to the ceremony with his torch and saffron robe: he could not die, but the Fates cut the thread of his life which themselves had spun: a nation could not go to war, but Mars and Bellona led them on to the fight.

The religion of the Greeks is perished and gone away for ever: we have a religion of the sublimest wisdom and the most elevated morality in the room of these fables: yet it is agreeable to know them, for they are at least full of beauty; and without this knowledge we shall never understand the finest writers in the world. *B*

CHAP. III.

OF ALLEGORY.—HISTORICAL ORIGIN OF
THE GODS OF THE GREEKS.

THERE are two things the consideration of which is necessary to the understanding the religion of the Greeks.

The first of these is allegory, that is, the personifying, or giving visible forms to, abstract ideas: a great part of the Grecian religion is of the nature of allegory: thus, when Homer introduces Minerva as checking the sudden rage of Achilles, he may very well be understood as meaning that the Wisdom or Prudence of Achilles's own mind on second thoughts produced this effect.

Allegory cannot be better understood than by an example: I will therefore present you here with one of the prettiest allegories in the world, the Vision of Mirza, an Eastern sage, written by Addison.

On the fifth day of the moon, which according to the custom of my forefathers I always kept holy, after having washed myself, and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hills of Bagdad, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer. As I was here airing myself on the tops of the mountains, I fell into a profound contemplation on the vanity of human life; and passing from one thought to another, Surely, said I, man is but a shadow, and life a dream. Whilst I was thus musing, I cast my eyes towards the summit of a rock that was not far from me, where I discovered one

their footing failed and down they sunk. In this confusion of objects, I observed some with scimitars in their hands, and others with urinals, who ran to and fro upon the bridge, thrusting several persons on trap-doors which did not seem to lie in their way, and which they might have escaped had they not been thus forced upon them.

The genius seeing me indulge myself in this melancholy prospect, told me I had dwelt long enough upon it: Take thine eyes off the bridge, said he, and tell me if thou yet seest any thing thou dost not comprehend. Upon looking up, What mean, said I, those great flights of birds that are perpetually hovering about the bridge, and settling upon it from time to time? I see vultures, harpies, ravens, cormorants, and among many other feathered creatures several little winged boys, that perch in great numbers upon the middle arches. These, said the genius, are envy, avarice, superstition, despair, love, with the like cares and passions that infest human life.

At length, said I, shew me now, I beseech thee, the secrets that lie hid under those dark clouds which cover the ocean on the other side beyond the end of the bridge. The genius making me no answer, I turned about to address myself to him a second time, but I found that he had left me; I then turned again to the vision which I had been so long contemplating; but instead of the rolling tide and the arched bridge, I saw nothing but the long hollow valley of Bagdad, with oxen, sheep, and camels grazing upon the sides of it.

A second thing, the consideration of which is necessary to the right understanding of the religion of the Greeks, is that their theogony, or the generations of their Gods, is partly historical.

The oldest events in the history of nations are for the most part fabulous; that is, the further men go back in endeavouring to trace the remote history of their national ancestors, the nearer they arrive at times of ignorance and obscurity,

respecting which nothing certain is known, and whatever is related that is true, is still mixed with fiction and fable.

Thus the history of our king Arthur, though no doubt there were such persons as Arthur and his counsellor Merlin, is for the most part fabulous: not to mention the history published by Geoffrey of Monmouth, and borrowed by that writer from some older source, which relates the adventures of the kings of Britain, from Brito, or Brutus, who is supposed to have come here from the siege of Troy, no one of which kings ever existed.

The ancient Greek history is more fabulous than most others: what can we think of Deucalion^b, who, after a dreadful deluge, restored the population of his country by throwing stones over his shoulder, which turned into men? or of Cadmus^c, who raised a crop of soldiers fully armed for combat, by sowing the earth with dragon's teeth? Just so, the history of the expedition of the Argonauts, and of the sieges of Thebes and Troy is filled with miraculous and impossible circumstances.

Exactly thus the history of the Gods of the Greeks bears every mark of being the history of persons who once were men, and who, being regarded as the benefactors of mankind, were worshipped as Gods after their death: Bacchus, for example, we know to have been an early conqueror, who made a successful expedition into India.

The Gods of the Greeks were not Greeks: their history was imported from some other

^b Ov. Met. lib. i. 411.

^c Ov. Met. lib. iii. 102.

country, from which the Greeks probably derived the first materials of their arts, their science, and their traditions.

The Greeks seem however to have misrepresented and disfigured the history which was handed down to them: they made Saturn an inhabitant of Italy, Jupiter of Crete, &c. *R*

CHAP. IV.

OF THE TERM GOD—OF WORSHIP, TEMPLES,
SACRIFICES, ALTARS AND PRIESTS.

By the word God I need not tell you that we understand a powerful being, whom we cannot see, but who nevertheless is continually interfering with our concerns, bestowing upon us the various blessings of life, and sometimes punishing us for our faults.

When the thoughts of men are turned to invisible beings who have power to benefit or hurt them, they unavoidably become anxious to obtain their favour.

The opinion which different nations entertain concerning the natures and characters of their Gods, constitutes their Speculative Religion; the means they employ to obtain the favour of these beings, constitute their Practical Religion, or Worship.

To obtain the favour of the Gods the Greeks built Temples, or edifices to which they resorted at stated times, when they designed to recollect with reverence the characters and power of their Gods.

In these Temples they placed Statues of the Gods, that by the sight of them their fancy might be awakened, and their minds held attentive.

In these Temples they also offered Sacrifices, that is, killed some of the most beautiful of their animals, and presented the first fruits of the

earth, with costly gums and odours, in honour of their Gods.

In the Temple, and ordinarily immediately before the statue of the God, was placed an Altar, that is, for the most part a square pillar of stone of inconsiderable height, but much greater bigness, upon the top of which they lighted a fire, and there burned the fruits of the earth, and certain parts of the animals they sacrificed, with costly gums and odours.

For the due performances of these Sacrifices there was a body of men set apart called Priests, who were clothed in white and other appropriate vestments, and were regarded by the people with peculiar veneration.

Common readers lie under a great disadvantage when they come to the history of the Gods of Greece and Rome: in poems and songs, such as are now written, Mars and Venus, and dimpling Cupids, and jolly Bacchus make so trivial a figure, that it is with difficulty we can be brought to think of them seriously, as the elements of a national religion: Gods whose worship is obsolete, are like kings in exile, and excite very different emotions from what they did when they were carried in state, and surrounded with a regiment of guards.

That you may have a due conception of the seriousness and sincerity of the religion of the Greeks and Romans, it is proper I should tell you that Machiavel, the famous Italian political writer, ascribes the long course of the Roman prosperity in the first place to their religion, and affirms that "for several ages the fear of God was never more conspicuous than in that republic:" and Cicero, the great Roman orator, gives

it as his opinion, that^d “ the Spaniards in numbers, the Gauls in bodily strength, the Carthaginians in subtlety, and the Greeks in genius, had exceeded his countrymen; but that there was one thing in which the Romans went beyond all the nations of the earth, and that was, in piety, and religion, and a deep and habitual persuasion that all human concerns are regulated by the disposal and providence of the immortal Gods.”

That the importance which the Greeks and Romans annexed to their religion may be better understood, I will now give an account of this religion as it was practised at Athens, the most refined and elegant city that ever existed.

^d De Haruspicum Resp. 9.

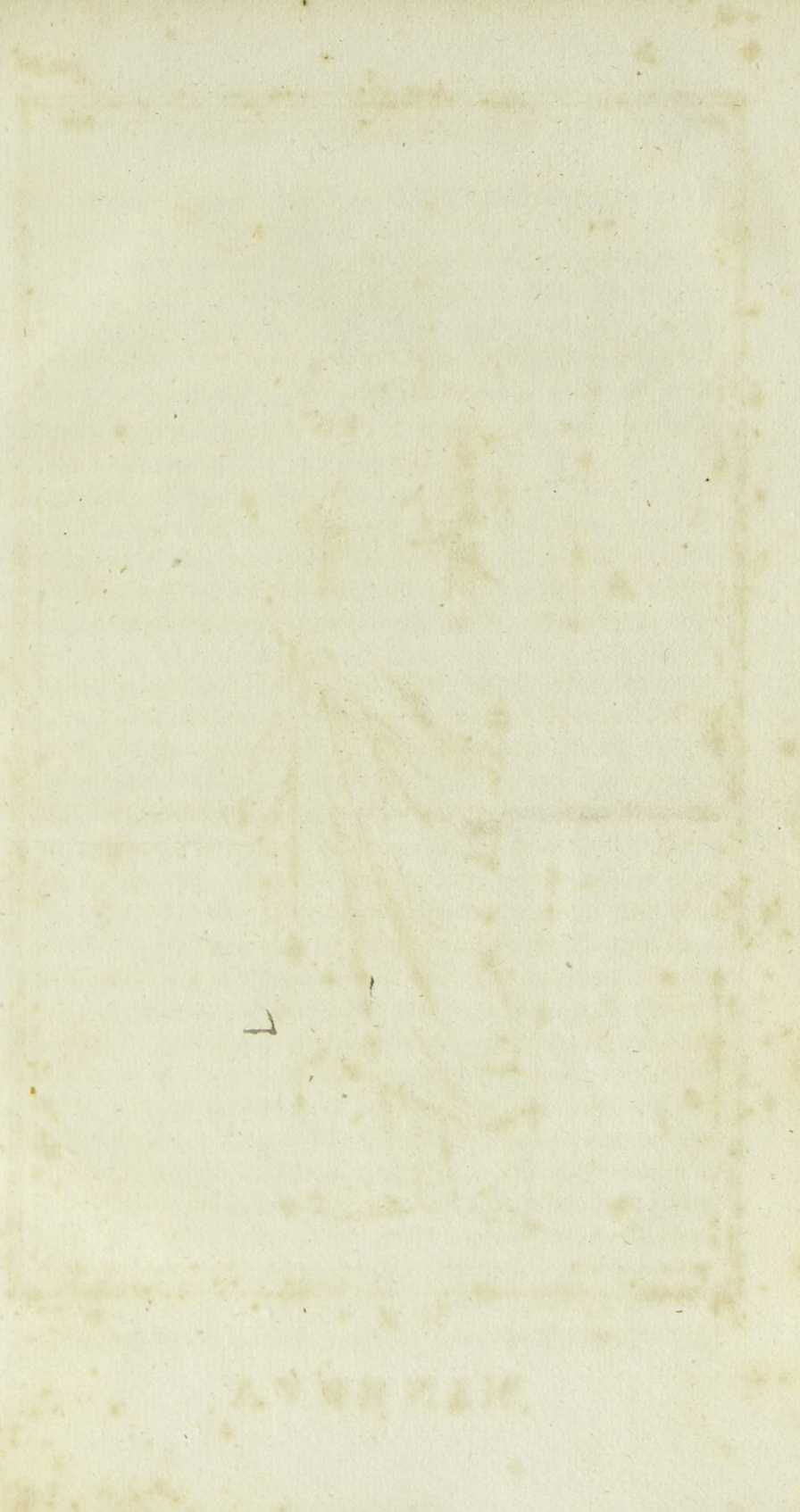
CHAP. V.
OF THE RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES OF THE
ATHENIANS.

Their Temples described.—Their Priests.—Their Prayers, Hymns, and Sacrifices.—Exercises of the Stadium: Running, Boxing, Wrestling, and Leaping.—Competitions in Music, Singing, and Dancing.—Tragedy.—The Three Annual Festivals of Athens.—The Mysteries.—The Grecian Games.—Divination.—The Sibyls.—Oracles.—Augurs and Aruspices.

As the statues by which the Greek sculptors represented their Gods were the most beautiful ever beheld, so the temples, or public buildings in which these statues were placed and these Gods worshipped, were not less worthy of admiration.

Of all the cities of Greece, Athens was that in which the finest specimens were to be found of Grecian statuary and Grecian architecture.

Minerva was the patron divinity of the Athenians: the citadel of Athens, otherwise called the Parthenon, was her temple: the Propylæum, or grand entrance of the temple, was built of marble, under the administration of Pericles, the greatest of the Athenian statesmen, and cost a sum of money equal to four hundred thousand pounds: the interior was filled with pictures, statues, bas-reliefs, altars, and trophies won by the Athenians from their enemies: the most celebrated of the statues was that of the Goddess by Phidias, which was only surpassed by the statue of Jupiter Olympius by the same artist, that I have already





MINERVA

mentioned, and that was the great ornament of the temple of Jupiter at Elis.

Another temple at Athens, only inferior in beauty and grandeur to that of Minerva, was erected to Theseus, an ancient hero, who may be considered in a great measure as the founder of the state: the temple of Ceres was enriched with three fine statues by Praxiteles: that of Cybele had a statue of the Goddess by Phidias: that of Jupiter Eleutherius was ornamented with fine paintings of the twelve principal Gods, and of other subjects, by Euphranor: that of Venus had a painting which was the master-piece of Zeuxis: these were the most consummate statuaries and painters the world ever saw: such, and many more were the noble and splendid temples that adorned the city of Athens.

The Greeks were not contented to enrich their temples with a multitude of statues of the Gods: they also erected statues in the streets and in all public places: there was one considerable street in particular in Athens, which was interspersed through its whole length with statues of Hermes, or Mercury, consisting of a head of the God rising from a square pedestal: on the pedestal were written, sometimes inscriptions describing a memorable fact, and sometimes moral precepts for the instruction and improvement of the people.

The priests of these temples made a considerable part of what would have struck your sight, if you could have walked through the streets of Athens: in country-places sometimes there was but one priest to a temple: but in Athens and other great towns there were always four at least, besides their attendants; the priests were distinguished by their vestments, they had often a long

beard, and they adorned their heads with fillets and diadems: they made a venerable appearance.

The priests had apartments to live in, within the verge of the temples to which they belonged; and the temples were kept in repair, and the priests maintained, either by landed estates set apart for that purpose, or by a portion assigned them of the fines imposed upon delinquents, and of the spoils won from an enemy in war: the priests of the most celebrated temples were chosen from the sacred families of Athens, the Eumolpidæ, the Cerycces, the Eteobutadæ, and others.

On days of solemn festival the multitude was immense that crowded to the temple of the God whose honours were that day to be commemorated: they spread themselves about the different porticos and approaches of the building: the high-priest stood near the altar in magnificent robes, and commanded silence: he asked, "Who are the persons who compose this congregation?" they answered with one voice, "Good men and true." "Join then," replied the priest, "in my prayers!"

After prayer, they sang hymns: the choir of the temple was well instructed in music, and the words of the poet often so well seconded their efforts, that the whole audience dissolved into tears: at other times the hymn was entirely in a triumphant style, such as, "Oh, Bacchus, son of Semele, author of our joyous vintage, great conqueror of the Eastern world!" and the congregation became full of gratitude and exultation.

The sacrifice followed the hymn: the most beautiful animals, adorned with gold and ribbands were brought to the altar to be killed: the

sacrifice was a feast to which the Gods were invited, to partake with their worshippers: while men lived upon the fruits of the earth, these composed the substance of their sacrifices: when they learned to feed upon animals, then victims, bulls, oxen and sheep, were presented to the Gods: meanwhile the whole temple was pervaded with the smell of fragrant woods, myrtle, cedar, and sandal-wood, together with incense, burning on the altar.

Nothing can be gayer or more fascinating than the religious ceremonies of the Greeks appeared in the eyes of the worshippers: every considerable festival was additionally solemnized by a generous contention for superiority between the different individuals or tribes who resorted to the temple: these contentions were either in what were called the exercises of the stadium, or in singing and dancing.

Stadium is a Greek word, signifying a race-ground or area set apart for exercises: the exercises of the stadium were principally running, boxing, wrestling, leaping, and throwing the quoit or javelin: and, as the Greeks connected these contests intimately with their religion, they entered into them with an anxiousness for superiority, and ascribed a species of glory to the successful candidate, of which we can with difficulty form an idea: the Romans surrendered the contests of the stadium, or amphitheatre, to their slaves.

The other sort of contention which accompanied the Grecian festivals, was in music, singing and dancing: infinite pains were taken to arrive at perfection in these three articles: and when they were joined together, and exhibited in union,

they constituted the Greek chorus: the most excellent poets were frequently applied to, to compose the words of the chorus, and the best musicians to set them to music: the names of Aristides and Themistocles, two Greeks who principally contributed to defeat Xerxes and the millions of men he brought with him out of Asia for the conquest of Europe, were to be read in some inscriptions in the city of Athens in connection with that wonderful military exploit; and in other inscriptions as leaders and superintendents of the chorus of one or other of the tribes of the city at the religious festivals: the Greek chorus was the foundation, and as it were, the kernel of the Greek tragedy.

The tragedy of the Greeks, as well as their contentions in muscular exercises, and in the gentler and more refined arts of competition, constituted a part of their religion: their theatrical compositions were never exhibited but at the most solemn festivals: the ceremony of the day began with sacrifice: plays written for the occasion by Sophocles, Euripides, and other extraordinary geniuses, were then performed, and a select number of judges pronounced upon their comparative claims: immense sums of money were expended upon the exhibiting these pieces with a splendour and magnificence proportioned to the occasion: and a question obstinately debated by the Athenians at different times, was whether their revenue should be spent in preference upon the exhibitions of their theatre, or the maintenance of their armies^c: it was generally carried for the former; the theatre belonged to

^c Demosthen. 1st and 3d Olynth.

the service of the Gods, the defence of the country was a merely human affair.

The three grand festivals of Athens were the Panathenæa, sacred to Athene, or Minerva, and the solemnities dedicated to Ceres, the Goddess of harvests, and to Bacchus, the God of wine; the Panathenæa, because Minerva was the patron-deity of the city, and the feasts of Ceres and Bacchus, because corn and wine are the grand sustenance of man, and the most indispensable blessings of heaven.

The processions which took place at these solemnities were exquisitely beautiful: a troop of elders, for the Panathenæa, were chosen from the whole city, of the most venerable appearance and of a vigorous and green old age: these marched first with olive branches in their hands: next followed a band of strong and powerful men in the vigour of maturity, clad in complete armour: after these came a set of youths, eighteen or twenty years of age, singing hymns in honour of the Goddess: these youths were succeeded by a troop of beautiful children, crowned with flowers, wearing only a shirt of fine muslin, and taught to move with a light and measured step: the procession was closed by a band of handsome virgins of the best families in Athens, clad in white, and with baskets of flowers on their heads: the whole escorted with the music of different instruments, and dancing.

The entertainments of the theatre were appropriated to the festivals of Bacchus: in the processions sacred to this God the Athenians indulged a certain licence: they imitated, sometimes with gaiety, sometimes in a manner approaching to

frenzy, the gestures and actions of drunkenness: the triumph of Bacchus, as he returned from the conquest of India, accompanied with satyrs and rustic deities, was represented by his votaries along the streets which led to his temple: the processions of Bacchus always took place by night, amidst the splendour of innumerable torches.

The greatest of all the solemnities belonging to the religion of Athens, was the festival of Ceres: to this were appropriated the Mysteries, sometimes celebrated in the temple of Ceres at Athens, but only performed in perfect ceremony at a magnificent temple in the little town of Eleusis, twelve miles from Athens, and hence called the Eleusian Mysteries: no person could be admitted to this celebration, without having first passed through a noviciate or probation of one or more years: it was death for a profane person to intrude, and death for one who had been present to reveal what he had heard or seen; it is collected however from certain hints on the subject, that the chief subjects of exhibition were a vivid and impressive representation of the pains of the condemned in Tartarus, and the joys of the blessed in the Elysian fields; and it has been conjectured that the doctrine revealed by the high priest, was the fallacy of the vulgar polytheism, and the unity of the great principle of the universe: thus the religion of the common people was left undisturbed; and the enlightened were satisfied, while they joined on ordinary occasions in the exteriors of that religion, secretly to worship one God under the emblems of the various manners and forms in which he operates: it has even been supposed that Virgil, in the sixth book of the

Æneid, where he describes the passage of *Æneas* into the regions of departed souls, has given a correct outline of the Eleusinian Mysteries.

Sacrifices were not only performed by the Greeks at their solemn festivals and in their public temples: it was customary also for individuals to make a sacrifice, by way of obtaining the favour of the Gods to some expedition in which they were engaged, or some voyage or journey that they purposed.

Sacrifices, and libations (the latter of these consisted in pouring wine upon the altar or the victim) were a part of the solemnities observed at funerals: and, when the person whose obsequies were performed was of great distinction, games, or the exercises of the stadium, were also celebrated in honour of the deceased.

There were four famous cities of Greece where games were regularly exhibited once in four or five years: the name of these games were, the Olympic in honour of Jupiter, at the city of Olympia in Elis; the Nemæan in honour of Hercules, at the city of Nemæa in Argolis; the Isthmian in honour of Neptune, near the city of Corinth; and the Pythian in honour of Apollo, near the city of Delphi in Phocis.

These games had an importance of the most wonderful sort in the eyes of the Greeks: this celebrated people cultivated with unremitting assiduity all kinds of athletic exercises; we are not therefore to be surprised, if they regarded with peculiar attachment the scenes where a perfection in these exercises might be exhibited to the greatest advantage: to the five combats of the stadium they added on these occasions the chariot-race: kings were eager to become competitors

for the prize in this: Pindar, the sublimest of the Greek poets, wrote his celebrated odes, in honour of the victors in the Olympic and other games: the Athenians bestowed a pension for life on any of their citizens who had borne off the prize in these combats: the wall of the city was broken down, that he might enter in his chariot at the breach, when he returned home in triumph: it is related of Diagoras the Rhodian, that when he saw his three sons crowned in one day at Olympia, he expired through excess of joy: Herodotus, the great Grecian historian, as the highest honour he could receive, was permitted to recite the nine books of his immortal work, amidst the concourse of spectators at the Olympic games: and lastly, to give the amplest idea of the value the Greeks annexed to these exhibitions, all the other events and transactions of their history were dated in, and referred to, such or such an Olympiad, or repetition of the Olympic games.

A considerable branch of the religion of the Greeks, as of all other false religions, consisted in Divination, or an attempt to foretel future events. Every man is anxious to know what will be his own fate for the residue of his life, and what will be the fate of his children and his nearest connections: and in proportion as he is superstitious, and believes in the possibility of gratifying his curiosity in these matters, his curiosity increases: thus vulgar and ignorant people in the present day consult gipsies and fortune-tellers, who tell servant-maids how many husbands they shall have, and such like stuff: the

† Aul. Gellius, iii. 15.

same people believe in omens, the spilling of salt, and the ticking of a death-watch, and unlucky days, and make themselves miserable about what the course of nature forbids them to know till the event: the imagination and taste of the Greeks elevated the weakest follies of the human mind, and gave the majesty and solemnity of religion to the poorest dreams of superstition.

The divination of the ancients consisted of two principal branches, oracles and omens: each of these they considered as a revelation from the Gods, and revered it accordingly.

An oracle was where the revelation from the Gods was reduced into words: oracles were usually in verse.

There was in Rome a celebrated collection of oracles called the Sibylline Books: the Sibylline Books were the composition of the Sibyls.

The Sibyls were old women, whom long experience had brought to the knowledge of all things, past, present, and to come, or who were inspired by Heaven with the gift of prophecy: there are ten of them on record, who resided in various quarters of the world.

The most famous of these is the Sibyl of Cumæ in Italy, spoken of in Virgil's *Æneid*: Apollo^a is said to have fallen in love with her; and that he might gain her favour, he promised to grant her whatever gift she would demand: she requested that she might live as many years as she had grains of sand in her hand: the grains proved to be a thousand: but she forgot to ask for perpetual youth, vigour and bloom: so she grew old and decrepid and shrivelled be-

^a *Æn.* iii. 445. *Æn.* vi. 56. ^b Ovid. *Met. lib.* xiv. 130 et seqq.

yond any thing you ever saw : it was the custom of the Sibyls to write their oracles on the leaves of trees, and scatter them before the entrance of the caves in which they lived.

The Sibyl of Cumæ had already lived some centuries, when Æneas came into Italy, and she undertook to be his guide to the infernal regions : she had reached the period of her own death, when she came to Tarquin the Proudⁱ, seventh king of Rome, bringing with her in nine volumes a collection of prophecies concerning the future fortune of the Roman state : these she offered to sell to the king ; but the price she demanded was three hundred gold Philippics, about three hundred pounds English : Tarquin having refused the purchase, the Sibyl went away, and burned three of the volumes, and then returned to the king, demanding for the remaining six three hundred Philippics : Tarquin still refused ; the Sibyl burned three more, and then required for the three only which were still remaining, three hundred Philippics : the king was astonished at this behaviour, and somewhat awed at the extraordinary procedure of the old woman : he bought the books, and the Sibyl disappeared, and was never more seen in the world.

These books were preserved with extraordinary care during the whole period of the Roman republic : they were lodged in a chest underground in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus : a college of priests was appointed to take charge of them, which at first consisted of two persons, but was gradually increased to fifteen : the books

ⁱ Aul. Gel. i. 19. Lactantius i. 6 : the latter enumerates the ten Sibyls.

were never opened without a special decree of the senate for that purpose, which was only passed in times of some great defeat or other terrible disaster having happened to the republic.

The most usual method respecting oracles was that, whenever the state, or an individual within the state, desired to obtain information as to the success which would attend them in any undertaking they meditated, they resorted to some temple celebrated for the oracles which were there delivered: the method of these oracles I shall explain, when I come to describe the oracle of Delphi under the article of Apollo: there were three principal oracles in Greece; the oracle of Jupiter at Dodona, the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, and the oracle of Trophonius.

The method of consulting the oracle of Trophonius was somewhat different from the rest: in the rest there was a priest of either sex, to whom the question was proposed, and who was supposed to be inspired by the God with a true prophetic answer: in the oracle of Trophonius there was understood to be no middle person going between the person who came to consult, and the supernatural being by whom he was answered.

The oracle of Trophonius had its seat in a cave at Lebadea in Bœotia: the votary was introduced into this cave with many ceremonies: he entered it alone: he was first seized with a deep sleep: he saw terrible things: these sights produced such an effect upon his mind, that it is said no one was ever after seen to smile, who had at any time visited the cave of Trophonius.

Scarcely any prince or state ever undertook an expedition, without having first consulted, and

obtained the sanction of, an oracle to their enterprise: individuals, who could afford the expence of the journey, and of the present which was afterward to be made to the God, observed the same ceremony: Xenophon^k, one of the most enlightened of the Grecian philosophers at the time when the science and arts of Greece had reached their greatest height, applied by the advice of Socrates to the oracle of Delphi, to know how he should conduct himself respecting that expedition of the Greeks into Persia, which led to the famous "Retreat of the Ten Thousand."

Omens were of two sorts, and there were two sorts of priests appointed to study and make authentic reports concerning them, Augurs and Aruspices: the Augurs drew their predictions principally, from the heavenly meteors, thunder, lightning, comets, &c.; or secondly, from the voice and language of birds, or their flying to the right or left hand; or lastly, from the sacred chickens which were kept for that purpose, and were supposed to afford a good or an unfavourable augury, according as they ate greedily, or refused to eat, the corn which was thrown to them at certain solemn times: Cicero, the most enlightened of the Romans, was a member of the college of Augurs in Rome: and there is a whole volume in his works, written upon the science of Divination.

The Aruspices were priests who drew their supposed knowledge of future events from the observations they made upon the sacrifices at the altar; and they pronounced that the event would be prosperous or otherwise, accordingly as the ani-

^k Cic. De Div. i. 54.

mal to be sacrificed made resistance, or seemed to come willingly to the altar, as the sacred fire was lighted easily, and burned with a pure and brilliant flame, or as the entrails, when the victim was opened, appeared to be in a healthful and perfect state, or the contrary¹.

¹The substance of this chapter on the Religious Ceremonies of the Athenians, is abridged from Abbé Barthelemy, Travels of Anacharsis.

CHAP. VI.

OF THE MORE ANCIENT GODS.

Chaos, Darkness, Tellus, Tartarus, Love, Erebus, Night, Cœlus, Saturn and Cybele.—Cœlus deposed by Saturn:—The Golden Age.

THE most ancient of the Grecian deities is Chaos: this is not without a resemblance to what we read of in the Bible, that, before the world was reduced into the beautiful and harmonious appearance we now behold, “the earth was without form, and void, and darkness reigned over the face of the deep^m.”

The consort of Chaos was Darkness, and from these parents were born Tellus, or the Earth, Tartarus, or Hell, Love (or the principle of harmony and attraction by which the elements of the world are bound together), Erebus, and Night: Erebus and Night becoming husband and wife, gave birth to the Sky and the Day: all this savours of allegorical.

Cœlus, or Uranus, that is Heaven, was the son and the husband of Tellus, otherwise called Terra, Titæa, and Vesta.

Cœlus, and Tellus, or Titæa, were the parents of the Titans, who, as well as the Giants, their half-brothers, are frequently named in reference to their mother, the “Sons of the Earth.”

Cœlus, a thing you will be apt to wonder at

^m Genesis, c. i. v. 2.

in the most ancient of the Gods, was an unnatural father, and cruelly shut up his children in caverns and subterraneous abodes: but it unfortunately happens in the history of the Gods of the Greek, that their actions were far from being constantly regulated by the principles of goodness and virtue.

Tellus took the part of her children the Titans, the chief of whom was Saturn: Tellus and Saturn contrived between them that Cœlus should have no more children, that he should be deprived of the kingdom, and that Saturn should succeed him: the rest of the Titans consented to this arrangement upon condition that Saturn should engage never to rear any of his male offspring, and that, whenever his reign should be at an end his kingdom should devolve to his brothers: to this Saturn agreed.

The wife of Saturn is variously called Ops, and Rhea, and Cybele, and Dindymene, and Berecynthia: she also sometimes bears the names of her mother (for she was the sister as well as the wife, of Saturn); like her, she seems likewise to be the Earth, and in this character was invoked by the appellations of *Bona Dea* (the Good Goddess) for her fruitfulness, *Magna Mater* (the Great Mother), and the Mother of the Gods.

Cœlus and Tellus were never made subjects of the Grecian statuary. Saturn is represented by their sculptors under the figure of a very old man, with a long beard, and bearing a scythe in his hand, the instrument with which he gave a terrible wound to his father: his appearance is similar to that, under which you see Time painted in Gay's Fables and other common books: they may indeed be considered as the same deity, the

the Greek names for each differing only in a single letter; Κρονος being Greek for Saturn, and Χρονος for Time. It is in the sense of Time that the circumstance in the history of Saturn has sometimes been explained, that he is the "devourer of his children."

Cybele, or Ops, the wife of Saturn, is explained in the allegorical sense to signify the Earth, though this is also the signification of the name of her mother. Taking Saturn and Cybele in this sense, they may properly be husband and wife, as "Time is the producer of the fruits of the Earth." Cybele is represented in her statues as crowned with towersⁿ; towers and cities being placed on the Earth: she has a key in her hand, to signify that in winter the Earth locks up her treasures, which she brings forth and disperses plentifully in the summer: she is placed on a chariot, and drawn by lions.

The reign of Saturn is commonly called the Golden Age^o, when the earth produced without labour the subsistence of its inhabitants, when all the good things of the world were enjoyed in common, when Justice, or Astræa, universally governed, and there were no differences, contentions or warfare among the people of the earth: in memory of this happy period, the Romans annually celebrated a festival, called Saturnalia, on occasion of which the slaves sat at table, and were waited on by their masters, and were further allowed, as long as the festival lasted, to say whatever free or saucy thing they thought

ⁿ Virgil. *Æn.* vi. 786; Ov. *Fasti*, lib. iv. 219; lib. vi. 321.
 • Hesiod. *Op.* iii.; unde Virg. *G.* i. 125; Ov. *M.* i. 89.

proper to the persons whom they were required to obey during the rest of the year.

Cybele, the mother of the Gods, was of so extraordinary a modesty, that it was said no male^p ever saw her, except her husband: her name was scarcely ever pronounced: she was a pattern for all matrons: men were excluded from her temple, and she was worshipped in silence^q.

This was one of the forms observed in the worship of Cybele: another mode in which she was worshipped, on different occasions, or in different countries, was that her priests, who were of the male sex, were however eunuchs^r, and that her worshippers celebrated her festivals with a confused noise of timbrels, fifes and cymbals, expressed their emotions by howlings, and indulged in all the extravagant gestures of madmen: these ceremonies bore a reference to the circumstances which are said to have attended the birth of Jupiter.

Another curious particular which belongs to the history of Cybele, is the affection she is said to have conceived for Atys^s, a Phrygian shepherd-boy, which was so great, that she made him her high-priest, on condition that he would never allow himself to fall in love with a mortal: this condition he broke, and the Goddess as a punishment, took from him the power of ever being a father.

^p Cicero De Harusp. v.; Tib. lib. i. El. vi. 22.

^q Virgil. Æn. iii. 112.

^r Juv. Sat. vi. 512.

^s Ov. Fasti, lib. iv. 221.

CHAP. VII.

WAR OF THE TITANS.

Birth of Jupiter.—Saturn, defeated and imprisoned by the Titans, is rescued by his Son.—Plots against the Life of Jupiter, and is deprived of the Kingdom.—Worship of Janus.

THAT Saturn^t might fulfil the treaty he had made with his brothers, he constantly caused his male children to be brought to him as soon as they were born, and by him they were devoured: Cybele, observing this, and feeling a mother's kindness for her offspring, resolved when Jupiter was born, to deceive her husband; she accordingly dressed a large stone in the swaddling-clothes of an infant, and presented it to Saturn, who deceived by appearances, swallowed the stone, and thought it had been his child: Cybele concealed the infant Jupiter upon mount Ida in Crete, where according to some accounts he was born, and caused the Curetes and Corybantes, her priests, to make a deafening noise with their drums and cymbals, which prevented the parent God from hearing the baby cries of his son: Jupiter was nursed by the nymphs, and suckled by a goat: the horn of this goat, called "Amalthæa's"^u horn," from the name of one of his nurses, and "Cornucopia," because it was endowed with the admirable privilege, that whoever possessed

^t Ov. Fasti, lib. iv. 197 et seqq.

^u Ov. Fasti, lib. v. 115.

it, should find it containing every thing he desired, he gave when he grew up, as a present to the nymphs: and the skin of the animal he converted into a shield, usually called the *Ægis* of Jupiter: Cybele, by a repetition of the same stratagem, deceived her husband at the birth of two other sons, Neptune and Pluto.

As they grew up, it should seem that Cybele acquainted her husband with what she had done, and presented to him the youths, his offspring, and that Saturn was so struck with their beauty and hopeful qualities, that he forgave his wife, and took them into favour: for the Titans having complained to Saturn of the breach of his agreement, the obvious remedy was for him upon their remonstrance to have destroyed his sons: this however he refused, and thereupon ensued a war.

The Titans^x were enemies so formidable, that to represent the greatness of their might, they are feigned to have had fifty heads and a hundred hands.

The names of the Titans^y were Oceanus, Cœus, Creus, Hyperion, Iapetus, Cottus, Gyges and Briareus: they had an equal number of sisters with whom they married, Oceanus to Tethys, Cœus to Phœbe, Hyperion to Theia, and Iapetus to Clymene.

The Titans were at first completely successful against Saturn: they took him and his wife prisoners, bound them with chains, and confined them in Hell: a few years after however, Jupiter overcame the Titans, and set his father and mother at liberty: the Titans were then shut up in

^x Hesiod. The. 150.

^y Hesiod. The. 133.

the prison which they had previously assigned to Saturn.

A prediction had reached the ears of Saturn^z, that he should be deprived of his kingdom by his eldest son: terrified at this menace, Saturn plotted to take away the life of Jupiter: but Jupiter having found out the design, and being full of resentment at the unkindness of a father whom he had so essentially served, drove Saturn out of his kingdom, and thus fulfilled the prediction: Saturn took refuge in a part of Italy, which is said afterwards to have been called Latium^a *a latendo*, from the God's having "laid hid" there: the king of this country was Janus, who is said to have been like Saturn, the son of Cœlus, but by a different mother: Janus made Saturn the partner of his throne, and the exiled God, of whom so many ill things have been told, did here as in his parent kingdom; reclaimed the people from their wild way of living, and taught them arts, civilization and happiness.

Janus^b was a God of some importance in the Roman calendar: he was represented with two faces, emblematical of his prudence, looking before and behind: his temple was open in war, and shut in time of peace^c; that is, he was the God of Peace, to be invoked where peace was not, but whom it was no longer necessary to propitiate when war had ceased: the Romans conquerors of the world were incessantly at war, and the temple of Janus was only twice shut during the whole period of the Roman republic.

Saturn being expelled from the empire of the

^z Hesiod. The. 463 et seqq.
Fasti, i. 238.

^b Ov. Fasti, i. 65 et seqq.

^a Virgil. Æn. viii. 322. Ov.
^c Id. 281; Virgil.

Æn. vii. 610.

Gods, Jupiter, his conqueror, called his brothers Neptune and Pluto, into partnership of his authority, taking to himself the government of Heaven and earth, and assigning to Neptune the dominion of the sea, and to Pluto the dominion of Tartarus, or Hell: this was the last revolution in the skies: consequently Jupiter is acknowledged in the Grecian mythology for the greatest of all the Gods, and is styled by Homer, father of Gods and men^d.

^d Πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε. Od. α. 28.

CHAP. VIII.

OF THE TWELVE SUPERIOR GODS^a.

I.

JUPITER.

Residence of the Gods of the Greeks on Mount Olympus.—Statue of Jupiter.—His Supreme Government and Authority.

JUPITER, as the Greeks affirmed, held his court regularly on the top of Olympus^b, a mountain of Thessaly, and was there principally surrounded by deities who derived their birth from him.

The most eminent of the Gods presiding on mount Olympus, and which constituted, as it were the cabinet-council of the skies, *Dii majorum gentium*, were twelve: six of these were male, Jupiter, Apollo, Mars, Mercury, Neptune and Vulcan; and six were female, Juno, Minerva, Diana, Venus, Vesta, and Ceres.

^a The account given of some of the Gods in this chapter is brief. The cause of this is, that the history of the amours of the Gods, and of their progeny by mortal mothers and fathers, is reserved for the latter part of the work, chap. XVII, to the end. The motive of this arrangement, as assigned in that chapter, is, that "the amours of the Gods are in reality no part of their proper and original character; the reason Jupiter is represented as falling in love with a multitude of women, is not from any licentiousness in his own disposition, but because every hero was ambitious to be a Demigod: the teachers of this religion did not perceive till too late, that by this means they were ascribing to the first of their Gods an indecent and libertine disposition:" it seemed to be but justice therefore, to remove these stories from this part of the work, and assign them to the place to which they more properly belong.

^b Hesiod. The. 42.

The statue of Jupiter by Phidias, the best of the Grecian artists, has already been mentioned; in this the God was represented with a beard, and seated on a throne of ivory and gold: he was crowned with an olive wreath: in his right hand he held the figure of a Victory, and in his left a sceptre, on the top of which was perched an eagle^c, the emblem of Jupiter, as being king of the air; his robe was adorned with a variety of figures of flowers and animals: this statue was sixty feet in height.

Jupiter is for the most represented by the ancients as governing the world by his providence; though there was, they said, a power superior to that of Jupiter, which they called Fate^d: by this perhaps they signified that it was the nature of fire to burn, of water to drown, and of a sword to wound, and if a man fell into the fire or the water, and remained long enough there, or if a sword was run through his body, it was not, they thought, in the power of Jupiter to prevent the consequences of dissolution, suffocation, or a wound: they also seem to have thought that Fate, independently of Jupiter, had decreed to every man the hour he was to die.

Jupiter is often described as viewing from some eminence the pursuits and contentions of mankind, and weighing in his scales their fortunes or their merits^e: he is the moderator of the differences of the Gods, for the Gods of the Greeks were apt to attach themselves to particular individuals, and to take opposite sides when these individuals went to war or otherwise opposed

^c Pindar. Pyth. i. 10.

^d Æschyli. Prom. v. 518.

^e Homer. Il. θ. 69; Il. χ. 209. Virgil. Æn. xii. 735.

each other: it was the custom of Jupiter when any of the inferior deities asked him a favour he was disposed to grant, to nod his assent: when Jupiter nodded, all heaven shook with terror^f, and neither men nor Gods from that time had the boldness to oppose his will.

 II.

JUNO.

Her Figure and Appearance.—Lucina the name by which Juno or Diana was invoked in child-birth.—Iris the Messenger of Juno.

Juno was the sister and the wife of Jupiter^g; she is styled the queen of Heaven: she was usually represented as sitting in a chariot of gold, drawn by peacocks^h, with a sceptre in her handⁱ, and wearing a crown adorned with roses and lilies: all that is majestic in the female face and figure was represented in her statues, as all that was lofty in the male was given to Jupiter: the peacock is her emblem, on account of the graceful carriage of its neck, and the magnificence of its train: Juno was born at Samos, or according to others at Argos, as Jupiter was born in Crete.

Lucina, the Goddess who presided over the birth of children, was according to some accounts the daughter of Juno, but is more frequently taken for Juno herself^k, or for Diana, one or

^f Hom. Il. α . 528.

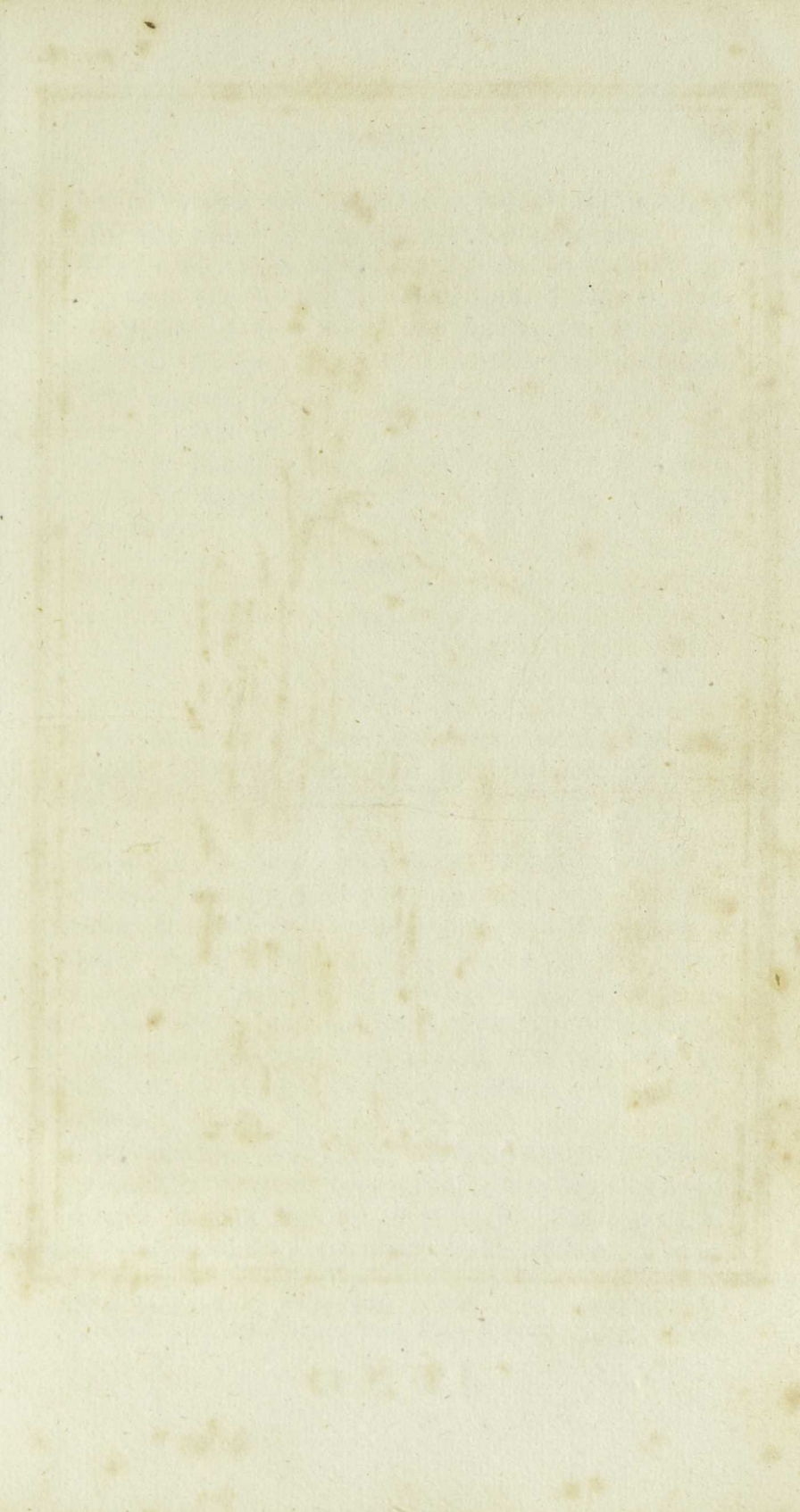
^g Hom. Il. π . 432. Virg. *Æn.* i. 46.

Ov. *Fasti*, vi. 27.

^h Ov. *Met.* ii. 531.

ⁱ Ov. *Fasti*, vi. 38.

^k Ov. *Fasti*, vi. 39.





JUNO

other of whom was usually invoked by mothers under the name of Lucina on that occasion.

Iris, a Goddess sprung from the deities of the sea¹, was the favourite messenger of Juno^m: Iris is understood to signify the rainbowⁿ: it was a beautiful image, that represented the messages of the queen of Heaven as gliding down this splendid arch to earth: it was natural that the colours of the rainbow, as well as of the peacock, should be appropriated to the majestic empress of the skies.



III.

MINERVA.

The Goddess of Wisdom.—Sprung from the Head of Jupiter.—Her Statue.—She presides over Military Fortitude and the Arts of Life.

Minerva is the Goddess of Wisdom, and is therefore said to have no mother, but to have sprung immediately from the head of Jupiter^o: Jupiter being grieved that his wife was barren, smote his forehead with his hand, a violent throbbing ensued, and presently Minerva, or as she is otherwise called Pallas, rose to light, not a child, but a Goddess completely formed.

The most celebrated of the statues of Phidias, after that of Jupiter Olympius, was the statue of Minerva in her temple at Athens: the height of this figure was thirty-nine feet: Minerva was

¹ Hes. The. 266. ^m Ov. Met. xi. 585. ⁿ Sen. Œd. 315.

• Hesiod. The. 923. Lucian. Dial. Deor. Pindar. Olymp. vii. 67.

usually represented in complete armour, bearing a shield with a head on it, which was supposed to be so terrible that every one who beheld it was turned into stone: her countenance was composed and awful, and her eyes of celestial blue: her emblems were the cock, the owl, and the basilisk.

Minerva was the most accomplished of all the Goddesses^p: she was the Goddess of war^q; that is, Minerva was the personification of fortitude; for what is more undaunted and invincible than wisdom? and she was the patroness of the stratagems of war: she was also the patroness of all the arts of life, particularly of spinning^r, needle-work, and embroidery: hence the distaff was likewise one of her emblems: she was always a maid; for what can be less fitted for subjection, and the trivial details of housekeeping and cookery, than perfect wisdom?

 IV.

MARS.

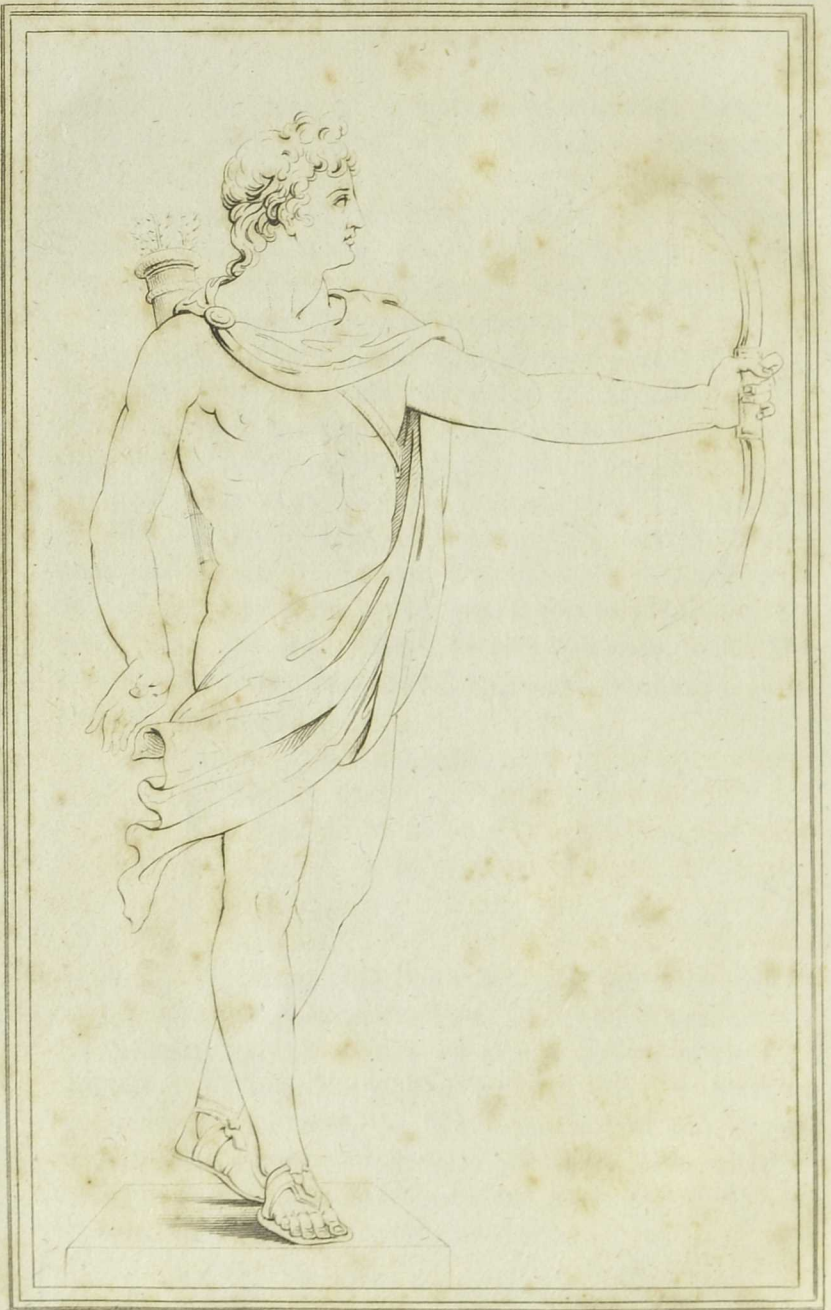
The God of War.

Juno did not always continue barren: Mars, the God of war, was the son of Jupiter and Juno, or according to others of Juno only, without a father^s: he was the patron of all that is furious and cruel in war, as Minerva was of all that is deliberate, contriving and skilful: the animals which were sacrificed to Mars were the wolf, the horse, the vulture, and the cock^t.

^p Ov. Fasti, iii. 833. Mille Dea est operum. ^q Ov. Fasti, iii. 5.

^r Ov. Fasti, iii. 819. ^s Ov. Fasti, v. 231 et seqq.

^t For a description of Mars and his attendants, see Virgil, *Æn.* xii. 331.



A P O L L O

V.

APOLLO.

His Birth.—His Mother Latona persecuted by the Serpent Python, which Apollo kills.—His Figure.—He is the God of the Sun—of Music and Poetry—the Author of Plagues and Contagious Diseases—and the God of Medicine—and Prophecy.—Oracle of Delphi.—Parnassus, Helicon, Cithæron, Castalia, Aganippe, and Hippocrene.—Discovery of the Oracle.—The Pythia, and her Tripod.—Style and manner of the Ancient Oracles.

Apollo was the son of Jupiter by Latona^v, the daughter of Cœus and Phœbe^w, two of the Titans: the imperious temper of Juno rendered her always extremely jealous when her husband became attached to any other female: having discovered the amour of Jupiter and Latona, she sent the serpent Python, a monster bred from the slime occasioned by a deluge, to persecute her: Latona fled from place to place to escape this monster, overcome with weariness, and ready to fall ill as her lying-in drew near: at length Jupiter turned her into a quail, and Neptune having struck the island of Delos with his trident and rendered it immoveable, which before floated about in the Egean sea, sometimes above and sometimes below the surface of the water, Latona flew over to it, and having there resumed her original form, became at one birth the mother of Apollo and Diana: one of the first actions of Apollo, when he grew up to man's estate, was to

^v Hes. The. 917.

^w Hes. The. 404.

kill with his arrow the serpent Python, that had been the tormentor of his mother^x.

Apollo was represented by the Greeks under the most beautiful figure they were able to conceive, young, unbearded, with graceful hair, and a countenance, fair, animated and expressive.

Beside the name of Apollo, by which he is most commonly known, this God is often called by the poets Hyperion, and Titan; Hyperion one of the Titans having been according to some accounts the God of the sun, before that province was conferred upon Apollo^y.

Apollo has various offices.

He is the charioteer of the sun, or rather the sun itself; he drives his chariot every day through the circuit of the heavens, and at night sinks below the waves to rest: he is drawn by four horses of the most extraordinary beauty and spirit, harnessed abreast: and when represented in this office, his head is surrounded with a brilliant circle of rays: the names of his horses are Pyroeis, Eous, Æthon, and Phlegon^z.

Apollo is also the God of music and poetry: in this character he is represented with a lyre in his

^x Ov. Met. i. 438, et vi. 185, et 332. Lucian. Dial. Irid. et Nept.

^y It is proper to mention that Homer, particularly in the celebrated story of Mars and Venus, clearly makes Apollo a distinct person from Helios, Sol, the Sun. The Sun is the discoverer of the offence, and Apollo is one of the Gods who comes in with the rest, to see what is the matter (Odys. 9). In Hesiod, Hyperion (another name which by modern poets has been given to Apollo) is one of the Titans, and marries Theia his sister [see p. 37] by whom he becomes father of *Ἡελιος* and *Σεληνη*, the Sun and the Moon, (Theog. 371). The later classics however, Virgil *Æn.* iv. 6. Horat. *Carm.* ii. 21, 24, and Ovid. *Met.* i. 473, ii. 24, with one accord ascribe the attributes of the luminary of day to Apollo.

^z Ov. *Met.* ii. 153. Vid. ante et seqq.

hand, and surrounded by the Nine Muses, the daughters of Jupiter by Mnemosyne, or Memory, one of the Titans.

Apollo is the author of plagues and contagious diseases: this is an allegorical conception, as contagious diseases are most frequent and fatal when the heat of the sun is at the greatest: in this character he is introduced by Homer in the first book of the Iliad, causing a plague amongst the Greeks: Homer describes him on that occasion, as shrouding himself in darkness (for the heat of the season is then most pernicious, when the air is thick as well as sultry), and shooting his arrows in various directions at the defenceless sons of men^a.

Apollo is also the God of medicine.

Lastly, Apollo is supposed to have instructed mankind in the art of foretelling future events: in all this there is a close connection: it is the sun, as he breaks forth in the spring, and pours upon us the genial warmth of summer, that inspires the mind with glowing conceptions and poetry, and the same turn of mind which makes men poetical, imbues them with sagacity beyond their fellows, and leads them with daring penetration to anticipate events to come; insomuch that in Latin the same word, *vates*, signifies a poet and a prophet^b.

It was in his character of a foreteller of future events, that the celebrated temple of Delphi was dedicated to Apollo: this was supposed to be the most perfect oracle in the world: the Greeks

^a Il. *α.* 44 et seqq.

^b Ov. Met. i. 517 et seqq. where Apollo is introduced giving an account of some of his attributes.

and Romans almost universally resorted to it when they meditated any arduous enterprise, to enquire whether their undertaking would succeed.

Oracles made a very essential part of the religion of the Greeks: they were places supposed to be particularly honoured with the residence of some God, to which the curious addressed their questions, and where the priests returned answers, and solved their doubts: a description of the oracle at Delphi may stand as an example of the rest.

Delphi was the place where Apollo is said to have killed the serpent Python: this place therefore, beyond all others in the world, was sacred to the God Apollo: near to the town of Delphi was the mountain Parnassus, with two tops, and on that account often called the "biforked hill," sacred to Apollo and the Muses: at the foot of the mountain, and near to the oracle, flowed the Castalian stream, the waters of which were supposed to communicate inspiration: in the same region were two other mountains, Helicon and Citheron, both of them, but the former especially, sacred to the same divinities: along the declivity of mount Helicon grew the Grove of the Muses; at the foot was the fountain Aganippe, the waters of which had virtues similar to those of the Castalian stream; and higher up was the fountain Hippocrene, on a spot which Pegasus, the winged horse of the Muses, having struck with his hoof, this fountain rushed out^c, the waters of which were violet-coloured, and are represented as endowed with voice and articulate sound: at Delphi were celebrated once in every

^c Ov. Met. v. 256.

five years the Pythian games, in commemoration of the feast of Apollo when he killed the Python^d: the Amphictyonic council also, a council consisting of deputies from the twelve principal states of Greece, and authorised to decide in all differences which arose between the particular states, held its session at Delphi.

The virtues of the oracle at Delphi are said to have been thus discovered: a number of goats were feeding on mount Parnassus, and happened to approach a deep and long chasm which appeared in the rock: from this chasm a vapour issued; and the goats had no sooner inhaled a portion of this vapour, than they began to play and frisk about with singular agility: the goatherd, remarking this, and curious to discover the cause, held his head over the chasm: when in a short time, the fumes having ascended into his brain, he was seized with a fervour of enthusiasm, and was observed to utter prophecies; in consequence of this discovery, a temple was here built to Apollo, and soon after a city in the vicinity of the temple.

The oracles in the temple at Delphi were always delivered by a priestess, called the Pythia: the apartment of the oracle was immediately over the chasm in the rock from which the vapour issued: the chasm was probably artificially narrowed, and the Pythia placed herself on a tripod, or three-legged stool, made full of holes, directly upon the chasm: after a time, her figure enlarged itself, her mouth foamed, and her eyes sparkled as with fire: and in this state she delivered, with the utmost earnestness, a number of wild and in-

^d Ov. Met. i. 446.

coherent speeches, which were supposed to be dictated by the God: the question proposed by the persons who came to consult the God were stated to her; her answers were written down by the priest, digested into order, arranged in hexameter verse, and delivered to the suppliant^e.

The oracle of Delphi in its infancy could only be consulted on one day in the year, the seventh day of the month Munychion, or March, which was supposed to be the birth-day of Apollo: afterward, on account of the multitude of votaries, the time was enlarged, and the Pythia might be consulted one day in every month.

Every one who came to propose his questions to the oracle was obliged in the first place to bring some considerable present, so that the shrine of Apollo at Delphi was one of the richest magazines of treasure in the world.

In the next place a sacrifice was offered to the deity: and accordingly as the priest pronounced that it was favourably received or rejected by Apollo, the Pythia consented or refused to mount the sacred tripod, and to answer the questions which were proposed to her: when Alexander the Great, previously to his expedition against Darius, consulted the oracle, the priestess refused to enter upon the holy ceremony; but Alexander, unused to contradiction, pulled and pressed her towards the tripod: upon which the Pythia at length exclaimed, "My son, thou art invincible:" these words from the priestess Alexander accepted as the answer of the God, and went away satisfied with his success^f.

The answers of the oracle were generally deli-

^e Diodorus Siculus, xvi. 25.

^f Plut. de Alexandro.

vered is obscure, sometimes in ambiguous terms: thus when Cræsus king of Lydia marched against Cyrus the Great, the oracle informed him that in the event of his campaign he should “overturn a great empire;” he did so, but the empire overturned was not that of Cyrus, but his own^h: again, when Pyrrhus king of Epirus engaged in a confederacy against the Romans, the oracle thus answered his enquiries: *Credo te, Æacida, Romanos vincere posse*ⁱ; which, according to the rules of classical construction, might either mean, “that he should conquer the Romans,” or that “the Romans should conquer him:” Pyrrhus understood it in one sense, but the course of events made it be finally interpreted in the other.

21/9

 VI.

DIANA.

The Goddess of the Moon and of Hunting.—Her Figure and Appearance.—She is also the Goddess of Chastity—and Magic.—Spartan Boys whipped at her Altar.

Diana is the twin-sister of Apollo, and like him has various offices: in heaven she is the moon, as Apollo is the sun: on earth she is the Goddess of hunters; and in Tartarus she is Hecate: it

^g Æschyli Prom. 662.

^h Suidas. v. Κροῖσος.

ⁱ This is a

verse of Ennius, mentioned by Cicero, together with the oracle concerning Cræsus. De Div. ii. 56.

was also her office to watch over women on occasions of child-birth; and she was worshipped in all cross-ways, from which circumstance she obtained the name of Trivia (*three ways*).

By the painters and sculptors she was most frequently represented in her character of a hunter: in this character she was attended by a bevy of nymphs, beautiful and exquisitely formed, herself more majestic, and taller by the head, than any of her followers; her legs were bare, well shaped and strong: her feet were covered with buskins; she had a bow in her hand, and a quiver full of arrows at her back^k.

Diana is the Goddess of chastity, more prone to the pursuit of wild beasts than the indulgences of love: this is metaphorical: the silent moon, with its mild and silver light, and that refreshing coolness which always accompanies a moon-light scene, was regarded as the very emblem of chastity.

In her character of Hecate she is sometimes confounded with Proserpine, the queen of Tartarus: as Hecate however she is principally distinguished as the Goddess of magic and enchantments: in reality the moon was regarded as having great concern in all enchantments; and it was believed by the ancients, that the magicians of Thessaly could draw down the moon from heaven by the force of their incantations: the eclipses of the moon were supposed to proceed from this cause; on which account it was usual at the time of the eclipse to beat drums and cymbals, that the incantations might not be heard, and

^k Hom. Od. ζ. 102. Virg. Æn. i. 498.

that the power of the magic might be rendered ineffectual¹.

The temple of Diana at Ephesus is mentioned in the New Testament, and is regarded as one of the seven wonders of the world: at Sparta, one of the cities best beloved by Diana, an oracle had commanded that human blood should be shed at her altar; in consequence of which it was at first customary to sacrifice human victims; but Lycurgus, the great Spartan lawgiver, abolished this custom, and substituted in the room of it a law, that boys of high birth should be whipped at the altar of Diana, till blood followed the lash; by this law he purposed to enure them to hardship, and the whipping was sometimes so severe, that the boys expired under it without a groan^m: in Taurica, where there was a celebrated temple of Diana, the rules of the worship required, that every foreigner who was found in the country, from shipwreck or otherwise, should be immolated at the altar of the Goddessⁿ.



VII.

VENUS.

Her Origin.—She is the Goddess of Beauty and Love.—
Her Figure and Appearance.—The Cestus, or Girdle of Venus.—Cupid her Son.

Venus, as I shall presently have occasion to mention, is described by Hesiod and the Mythologists^o as the offspring of Cœlus, and indebted

¹ Hor. Epod. v. 45 et seqq.

ⁿ Eur. Iph. Taur. 384.

^m Plut. in Lycurgo.

^o Chap. ix.

for her birth to the wound inflicted upon him by Saturn; in that case she is elder than Jupiter: by Homer and Virgil however she is repeatedly brought forward addressing Jupiter as her father; and she is sometimes called *Dionæa*, from *Dione*, a sea-nymph, supposed to be her mother^p: these different methods of describing her, arise out of the different views that are taken of her character: when the poet thinks of her in a personal light, as the Goddess of Beauty, and the most beautiful of female forms, it is natural to figure her in the bloom of youth; she is then the daughter of Jupiter: but she is very often spoken of in an allegorical sense: it is thus she is addressed by *Lucretius*^q, one of the finest of the Latin poets, in his book on the Universe: she is then the source of activity and life throughout the world: she is God's first command to man and animals and the fruits of the earth, "Increase and multiply," transformed from a literal precept into an ever-moving impulse: taken in this sense, she is of course ranked amongst the eldest of the Gods: and, as the ancients believed that water was the origin of things, Venus, or the principle of communicated life, is also figured as rising out of the sea.

Venus was born according to some near the island of *Cythera*, and according to others, of *Cyprus*: her most celebrated temple was that of *Paphos*, a city in the latter of these islands.

Venus is the Goddess of beauty and love: her person is endowed with every quality that can render it alluring and attractive: her carriage is in the most exquisite degree graceful: in Venus there is no haughtiness, no forbidding expression

^p Virgil. *Æn.* iii. 19.

^q Lib. i. 1. et seqq.

of majesty; her countenance is adorned with smiles, and expressive of the sweetest gentleness, and encouragement; yet in her most admired statues she is represented as modest, conscious and bashful, *semi-reducta*, “half-withdrawing;” like Milton’s Eve, with

virgin modesty,
And conscience of her worth,—
Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retir’d,
The more desirable.

The chariot of Venus is drawn by turtle-doves, the emblems of indissoluble affection: she is constantly attended by Cupid, her son though it is uncertain by what father, and a train of little loves, that is, of beautiful boys with cherub faces and dimpled cheeks, who hover round her, buoyed up on silken wings: the myrtle is particularly sacred to Venus; and she is famous for her cestus, or girdle, which had this property, that by whatever female it was worn, her charms were sure to appear irresistible to the person whose affection she desired to command^r.

Cupid, the God of love, the son of Venus, is always represented under the figure of a beautiful boy, with a bow and arrows: these arrows are the shafts of love, and it is affirmed by the poets, that neither Gods nor men could resist their power: Cupid is extremely gentle, agreeable and caressing in his manner, but in his heart full of deception and malice: he is often represented as blind, because the lover does not see the real qualities of his mistress, but only those in which his own fancy attires her; and he has wings, because there is no passion of the mind more precarious than love, and the most

^r Il. ζ. 214.

vehement regard sometimes afterward turns to the bitterest hatred.



VIII.

MERCURY.

The Messenger of the Gods.—His Figure.—The Petasus.—Talaria—and Caduceus.—Its Virtues.—He is the God of Letters and Eloquence—of Traffic—and of Thieves.—Hermes Trismegistus, an Egyptian Historian.

Mercury is the son of Jupiter, by Maia the daughter of Atlas, and grand-daughter of Iapetus one of the Titans: his peculiar office in the council of Olympus, is that he is the messenger of the Gods, and particularly of Jupiter^s: for this purpose he is furnished with a winged hat, called *petasus*, and with wings to be worn on his feet, called *talaria*: the figure given to him by the statuaries is that which is best adapted for nimbleness and celerity; and nothing is more obvious, than that those properties of the human figure which are best fitted for these purposes, are closely allied to the perfection of symmetry and beauty.

Mercury also possessed certain attributes intimately connected with magic and enchantment; and in this character he bore a wand, called *caduceus*: this wand had wings at the top, and two serpents wreathed themselves about the stalk: it was endowed with such virtues, that whoever it touched, if awake, would immediately sink into a pro-

^s Hom. Od. v. 15, et 44 et seqq.

found sleep, and, if asleep, would start up full of life and alacrity: when it touched the dying, their souls gently parted from the mortal frame: and, when it was applied to the dead, the dead returned to life: it had also sovereign power in appeasing quarrels and controversies: if the God touched with it two mortal enemies, they instantly began to regard each other with eyes of affection: one of the earliest experiments that was made of it in this respect, happened thus: two serpents were fighting with terrible fierceness; their eyes flashed fire, their hissings were infernal, it seemed as if the combat could end in nothing less than the destruction of both: Mercury, happening to come by, touched them with his wand; they were immediately at peace; they embraced each other; they wreathed themselves round the instrument of their reconciliation, and remained ever after the ornament of the caduceus of the God.

It is in virtue of the caduceus that Mercury is represented not only as one of the celestial, but also of the infernal deities: it was his office to conduct the spirits of the departed to the boat of Charon, of whom I shall have occasion to speak hereafter: and again, according to the ancient doctrine of transmigration, or the passing of the soul after death into the bodies of other men or of animals, it was Mercury who led the spirits back, after having resided for some time in the nether or lower world, to revisit the cheerful beams of the sun.

There are many things related of this God, which forcibly suggest to us the idea of a man, who for his great and essential services to his fellow-beings, was worshipped as a divinity after

his death. He is said to be the inventor of letters; and his Greek name, Hermes, is derived from a word in that language which signifies "to interpret" or "explain:" in this quality Mercury is the God of eloquence, as Apollo is the God of poetry: an ingenious writer of the present age [John Horne Tooke, in his *Diversions of Purley*] has considered the wings which this God annexes to his feet, as emblematical of the wings which language gives to the thoughts of men.

Mercury, or Hermes, was perhaps some glorious character in some remote age of the world, who reclaimed men from their savage way of living, and taught them the arts of civilization: in allusion to this he is styled the "Pacificator," and his caduceus represents the power which his persuasions had to appease the angry passions of the mind.

Mercury is further represented as the inventor of traffic, and is said to have introduced the use of weights, measures and contracts: this is one of the fruits of civilization, and, when moderately and fairly applied, has been of great benefit to mankind.

Traffic however is too apt to degenerate into a system of fraud: when men engage in buying and selling and barter as a profession, the more keen and grasping among them will endeavour to buy cheap and sell dear, and cozen and overreach those with whom they have any dealings: the licentiousness of Greek imagination has taken hold of this, and has indecorously represented Mercury as the God of thieves: when once they had done that, they proceeded to complete the picture, and made the messenger of Jupiter one of the light-fingered crew within the reach of

whom no commodity is safe: Apollo, they say, having on a certain occasion assumed the office of a shepherd, Mercury stole away part of the flock which his brother God was tending: Apollo grew angry, and took up his bow, that he might revenge himself on the thief, but Mercury made slight conveyance of his quiver, and all his arrows along with it: at different times he purloined from Neptune his trident, from Venus her girdle, from Mars his sword, from Jupiter his sceptre, and from Vulcan a variety of his tools^t.

We must not confound Hermes, the Grecian God, with Hermes Trismegistus, an ancient Egyptian author, from whom Sanchoniathon, a Phœnician historian, drew part of the materials of his work: this Hermes, who lived about four hundred years after the date of Noah's flood, is represented by Plato and Cicero as having invented letters, the art of writing, and hieroglyphics: I suspect they have taken some attributes from the original Mercury, or Hermes, and given them to the Egyptian.

 IX.

NEPTUNE.

The God of the Sea.—His Figure and Appearance.—
His Extensive Authority.

Neptune is on all hands admitted to be the son of Saturn, and the brother of Jupiter: when the inheritance of their father was divided by lot among his sons, the sea was the portion

^t Hom. Hymn. in Merc. Hor. Od. i, 10.

which fell to Neptune: if you consider how terrible and beautiful an element the sea is, and what a vast portion the ocean occupies of the globe we inhabit, you will not wonder that Neptune is considered as one of the greatest of the Gods: he is represented with black hair and beard, and with a mantle of blue: one of his principal attributes is the trident, or fork with three teeth, which always serves him for a sceptre.

As the God of the sea, Neptune presided over the storms and the tempests: Virgil^u introduces him, in the midst of a tempest which the Winds had excited without his permission, as rising to the surface of the ocean, driving away the Winds with an awful rebuke, opening the quicksands in which certain ships were locked, pushing off other ships from the rocks upon which they had struck, and introducing a sudden and universal serenity and calm.

We shall have occasion to talk of Neptune again, when we speak of the Gods of the sea: this was his peculiar dominion: but he was one of the members of the council of Olympus; Pluto, though with Jupiter and Neptune, he was the third of those who divided the empire of the world among them, yet is not ranked with the Superior Gods, because his province was the infernal regions, and he never quitted his gloomy dominions. *R*

^u *Æn.* i 124.

X.

VULCAN.

The God of Vulgar and Material Fire, and of the Metallic Arts.—Cause of his Lameness.—He is the Artificer of Heaven.—His Uncouth Figure.—He is the Husband of Venus.

Vulcan, the God of fire, or more properly the presiding divinity of those who worked in the metallic arts, is the son of Jupiter and Juno, or according to others, of Juno without a father, as Minerva was the daughter of Jupiter without a mother: he was educated in heaven among the Gods, but was thrust out of the celestial abodes by Jupiter, and thrown down to earth: afterward he became restored to his rank, and was one of the council of Olympus.

The occasion of his disgrace was thus: Jupiter and Juno, the king and queen of the Gods, had often unhappy misunderstandings: in one of these Jupiter was so provoked with the perverseness of his wife, that he hung her out by her arms, suspended in a golden chain, from the threshold of heaven, having fastened a heavy anvil to her feet^z: Vulcan was moved with pity to see his mother in this disgraceful situation, and secretly relieved her from it; an act of disobedience which so exasperated Jupiter, that he kicked Vulcan out of heaven: Vulcan was nine days in the fall, and at length lighted with such force on the island of Lemnos, that he broke his leg, and was lame ever after^y.

^z Hom. II. σ. 17.

^y Hom. II. α. 590.

Vulcan is the artificer of heaven: he forged the armour of the Gods and Demigods, and the thunder of Jupiter: he constructed the golden chambers in which each of the superior deities were accustomed to reside: never was there so consummate a workman as Vulcan: in Homer's description of the shield he made for Achilles, it appears that it was enamelled with metals of various colours, and contained at least twelve historical designs, with groups of figures, all of admirable expressiveness and beauty: the seats which he constructed for the Gods, were so contrived, that they came self-moved from the sides of the apartment, to the place where each God seated himself at the table when a council was to be held^z.

Lemnos is supposed for this reason to have been the earthly residence assigned to Vulcan, because it abounded in blacksmiths, and artificers in different metals: he was also said to have a forge where he was busy in forming the thunder, within the concave of mount *Ætna*, and indeed wherever a volcanic mountain was to be found.

Vulcan is usually represented, seated at his anvil, with his fire and all his tools about him, holding a thunderbolt with a pair of pincers in his left hand, and in his right a hammer raised in the act to strike: he is also supposed to be all sooty and discoloured with the squalidness incident to his employments.

What is most extraordinary is, that this ugly and deformed God is described to be the husband of Venus, Goddess of beauty, and father of the lovely, cherub-faced boy, Cupid: perhaps this

^z Hom. Il. σ. 369 et seqq.



VESTA

is in Vulcan's capacity of God of fire, as love has always been represented under the image of a flame burning in the breast of the lover: thus allegorically, beauty may be said to be the mother, and the fire lighted up in the breast of its admirer the father, of Cupid, or love, or the perpetual adoration which the lover is represented in poetry as paying to the lady of his affections: the ancients might also conceal under this genealogy a satirical insinuation against the passion of love, which when it exists purely and chastely between the respectable father and mother of a family, producing domestic harmony and parental care, is one of the best of our feelings; but when it leads human beings to trample on all that is honourable and well-regulated in society, as by licentious poets and other writers it is too frequently described, it is one of the deepest blots to which our nature is exposed.

 XI.

VESTA.

The Goddess of the Refined and Celestial Fire.—Her Origin.—Distinguished from Tellus, or the Elder Vesta, Mother of Saturn.—The Vestal Virgins.

Saturn had by his wife, Rhea, or Cybele, three sons, Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto, and three daughters, Juno, Vesta, and Ceres^a; it remains to speak of the two last.

Vesta stands for two of the four elements, earth and fire: this is most clearly explained by

^a Ovid. Fasti, vi. 285. Hes. The. 454.

referring the two interpretations to two different Vestas: the elder being Tellus, the wife of Cœlus, and, as she is often called, “the most ancient of the Gods:” and the younger the daughter of Saturn, and sister of Jupiter: it is this latter deity, that makes one in the council of Olympus.

Vesta, considered as the personification of fire, was a principal object of ancient worship: if we regard Vulcan as the God of fire, the element over which he presided was gross, vulgar, and impure, or was of that sort by which the milder and more genial operations of nature are impeded: it was the fire of the artificer, the fire of licentious love, the fire with which the thunderbolts of Jupiter are formed, or that in which the universe shall perhaps one day be consumed: but the fire of which Vesta was the divinity, was of the purest sort, that by which all nature is pervaded, which is the element of life, the element by which all things grow and expand themselves, and in virtue of which they are endowed with health and vigour: chymists inform us that the element of fire, or heat, is to be found in almost every substance in nature, particularly in every substance that has life.

Vesta seems to have been the favourite sister of Jupiter, who having proposed to her to ask for any privilege she pleased and it should be granted to her, the favour she demanded was that she should remain perpetually a virgin, and that the first oblations in all sacrifices should be presented to her.

The worship of Vesta constituted a very eminent branch in the religion of the ancient Romans: her rites are said to have been brought into Italy by Æneas upon his escape from the

siege of Troy^b: Numa, the successor of Romulus, and second king of Rome, founded her temple in that city, and instituted the celebrated order of priestesses, called the Vestals, to attend upon it: their first duty was to take care of the sacred fire; which was not placed upon an altar or a hearth, but was hung up in the air in earthen vessels: it was kept perpetually burning, and was replaced every March by a fresh fire, lighted from the beams of the sun: if ever it were extinguished, it was believed that the state was threatened with the greatest calamities: the Vestals also took a vow of virginity, which if they broke, their punishment was to be buried alive, being shut up in a vault under ground, with a lamp and a small quantity of provisions, and there left to perish: in recompense for this severe law, the Vestals obtained extraordinary privileges and respect: they had the most honourable seats at games and festivals; the consuls and principal magistrates gave way to them wherever they met them; their declarations in trials were admitted without the formality of an oath; and if they happened to encounter in their path a criminal going to the place of execution, he immediately obtained his pardon. *h*

^b Ov. Fasti, iii. 423.

XII.

CERES.

The Goddess of Corn and Harvests.—Proserpine, her Daughter, carried off by Pluto, as she was gathering Flowers.—Ceres searches through the World for her.—Agreement between Pluto and Ceres.

Ceres is the Goddess of corn and harvests: and in proportion to the importance of corn for the subsistence of man, was the solemnity with which the religious rites sacred to Ceres were commemorated: I have told you before of the Eleusian Mysteries, of which Ceres was the presiding divinity.

Ceres had a favourite daughter, called Proserpine, of whom Jupiter was the father; nothing can be prettier than the story of the rape (or carrying off, from the Latin *rapiō*, *raptus*) of Proserpine.

Pluto, the God of Tartarus, or the infernal regions, was desirous, like his brothers, Jupiter and Neptune, to marry: he made proposals to several Goddesses, but all refused him: by living in hell, his complexion contracted the colour of the place, and his figure was otherwise so uncouth, and unlike what the ladies are accustomed to admire in a man, that none of the lady-inhabitants of heaven would have any thing to say to him.

Pluto, as he could not get a wife by fair means, determined to try such as are foul: the favourite residence of Ceres and her daughter was Sicily;

^c Hom. Hymn. in Cer. Ov. Met. v. 359.

feigned to be so on account of the extreme fertility of that island, which made it for a long time the granary of Italy and Greece: one day Proserpine, thinking no harm, was gathering flowers, amidst her attendant nymphs, in the beautiful vale of Enna in the centre of the island: while she was engaged in this innocent employment, Pluto started up through a cleft of the earth, in a black chariot drawn by coal-black horses: he no sooner cast his eyes upon Proserpine, than he resolved she should be his queen: he caught her up to his chariot, and immediately descended into hell: Proserpine was terribly frightened: she cried because she did not like to be run away with, and she cried because she lost in the struggle the nosegay she had been gathering.

While this was happening, the attendants of Proserpine were scattered different ways, looking for the finest flowers; so that, as all passed in a moment, no one of them could tell what was become of their mistress: Ceres, who seldom suffered her daughter out of her sight, but was now accidentally absent, presently returned: never did mother grieve more constantly for the loss of her child: she lighted two torches at the top of mount Etna, and sought her night and day, through the world: at last returning in despair to Sicily, she chanced to spy the girdle of Proserpine floating on the surface of a lake, and the nymph of a neighbouring fountain at the same time informed her whither her daughter had been taken.

Ceres, who had before grieved for the loss of Proserpine, now grieved the more, when she found that she had got so ugly a mate, and was gone to live in so frightful a place: she com-

plained to Jupiter, who sympathised with her grief, and told her that she should have her daughter back again, if it proved that she had eaten nothing in the infernal regions: but if she had, the laws of fate were against her, and there was no remedy.

Ceres was satisfied with this decision: she felt sure that Proserpine, resenting her being run away with, could not have been prevailed on to touch a morsel in hell: this was nearly the fact: it happened however that one day Proserpine walked alone in the gardens of Pluto, and was tempted with the beauty of a pomegranate: she gathered it, and thinking nobody saw her, picked out seven of the seeds, put them in her mouth, and swallowed them: this was all, but this was enough: the fact was discovered, and the hopes of Ceres were disappointed: at length a compromise was made between Pluto, the husband, and Ceres, the mother of Proserpine, that she should spend half the year in heaven with her mother, and half the year in Tartarus with her husband.

This has been allegorically explained: Proserpine is said to represent the seed, and Ceres the fertility of the earth: now the seed of wheat in particular, remains during the whole winter hid in the ground, while in the summer, it bursts its concealment, produces the stalk and the ear, and dilates itself in the face of the skies.

CHAP. IX.

WAR OF THE GIANTS.

Their Origin.—Tellus excites them to make War upon Jupiter.—Their Figure.—Typhon.—Tityus.—Othus and Ephialtes.—Enceladus and Briareus.—Their Manner of Fighting.—The Gods betake themselves to Flight—are assisted by Hercules—are finally victorious.—Punishment of the Giants.

As under the reign of Saturn there was a rebellion of the Titans, so under the reign of Jupiter happened the war of the Giants.

When Saturn deposed his father Cœlus from the government of heaven, in the scuffle he gave Cœlus a wound, and cut away a part of his flesh: the part which was separated Saturn threw into the sea, and from it, as from a seed, sprung the Goddess Venus: the drops of blood from the wound, fell on the earth, and were the parent source of the Giants^d.

There is some degree of puzzle and contradiction (as frequently happens in the Grecian mythology), about the parentage of the Giants: if what I have just said is to be taken literally, they are then entitled to the appellation commonly given them, of Sons of the Earth: but, if we recollect that the wife of Cœlus their father was called Tellus, Terra, or the Earth, and take the story that way, we may then consider them as

^d Hesiod. The. 174 et seqq.

full brothers to the Titans both by father and mother, only later as to the period of their birth: they were a sort of second brood.

Tellus did not look with a favourable eye upon the usurpation of Jupiter: she saw him first oppressing the whole body of her sons, under pretence of vindicating the cause of one of them, Saturn, and afterwards deposing Saturn himself: at length she excited the Giants to revenge upon Jupiter the cause of their brothers the Titans.

The Giants are described as terrible monsters: like the former brood, they had fifty heads and a hundred hands a piece^c: their stature was enormous, and, instead of two feet, their lower extremities were two amazing serpents' tails, that writhed, and folded, and beat the ground as they passed along.

Though the Giants are spoken of collectively as Sons of the Earth, yet, when the Greeks come to describe them separately, they ascribe to some of them a different origin: Typhœus, or Typhon, the most terrible of them, is said by some to be the son of Juno without a father: he was so tall that he touched the East with his right hand, and the West with his left, and as he stood upright, his front knocked against the stars: a hundred dragons' head grew from his shoulders: his body was covered with feathers, scales, ragged hair, and adders: the ends of his fingers were snakes: his eyes sparkled with fire, and his mouth belched out flames: his voice was particularly terrible, and when he pleased, he could make it like the roaring of a wild bull, the angry cries of

^c Hes. The. 670.

a lion, and the yell of a lion's whelp: the loftiest mountains trembled at the sound.

Another of the Giants was Tityus, the son of Jupiter and Elara: he was of so vast a size, that his mother died at his birth, and as she was brought to bed of him in a cavern, the earth was rent to give him way before he could see the light of the sun: when he lay down, his bulk covered nine acres of ground^f: he was guilty of some affront to Latona, the mother of Apollo, and Jupiter sentenced him for it to hell, where a vulture continually feeds upon his liver, which grows again as fast as it is devoured.

Two more of the Giants were Othus and Ephialtes^g: they grew nine inches every month, and were nine years old when they entered into the war against Jupiter.

Others of the Giants, were Enceladus, by some thought the same as Typhon; Ægeon, sometimes taken for Briareus: and Porphyriion: such were the enemies that conspired against the throne of Jupiter.

The Greeks always transfer the geography of the fabulous personages they received into their creed, to their own country; they therefore represent the Giants as dwelling in the peninsula of Phlegra, or Pallene, at no great distance from Olympus, the habitation of the Gods.

The weapons of the Giants in this war were no less terrible than their persons: they tore up mountains by the roots, and cast them at the Gods: they heaped Ossa on Pelion^h, that by this means they might scale Heaven, or Olympus;

^f Hom. Od. λ. 575. ^g Hom. Od. λ. 306. ^h Ov. Met. i. 151.
Virg. G. i. 278.

they tossed about flaming forests, in the room of darts: and hurled massy stones and solid rocks against Heaven, some of which fell upon the earth, and became mountains, and others into the sea, where they became islands.

The Gods themselves were terrified at the strangeness of this assault, and flying before the enemy, took refuge in Egypt, where they hid themselves in the forms of different animals, Jupiter as a ram, Juno as a cow, Mercury in the form of a bird called the ibis, Apollo in the form of a crow, Diana as a cat, Venus as a fish, and Bacchus as a goatⁱ.

In all this there is some allusion to the religion of the Egyptians, who worshipped their Gods under the figures of different animals, a bull, a dog, a cat, a crocodile, and even of leeks, onions, and beans: Jupiter Ammon in particular, who had a famous oracle in the Egyptian province of Lybia, was worshipped under the form of a ram.

At length the Gods resumed courage, and determined to renew the war: there was a rumour in heaven, that Jupiter could not succeed in this war, unless he called up a mortal to his assistance: by the advice of Minerva therefore, he sent for Hercules, of whom more will be said hereafter: it was perhaps on this occasion that the Cyclops, Brontes, Arges, and Steropes, first forged for Jupiter his thunderbolts.

All the Gods now contributed their strength for restoring the tranquillity of heaven, and, male and female, each killed a Giant: Typhœus however wounded Jupiter, and taking him pri-

ⁱ Ov. Met. v. 327.

soner, hid him in a cave in Cilicia: here Mercury found the Father of the Gods, and set him at liberty: in the conclusion all the Giants were overwhelmed with the thunderbolts of heaven: some were buried under mountains, others flayed alive, and others subjected to various other punishments: Typhœus was buried under the island of Sicily, which being terminated in its extremities by three promontories, Pelorus was placed upon his right arm, Pachynus upon his left, and Lilybæum upon his feet: Ætna is his breathing hole, and as the monster turns from side to side, the mountain vomits up flames of fire^k.

^k Ov. Met. v. 346.

CHAP. X.

OF THE FAMILY OF IAPETUS AND THE
CREATION OF MAN.

Atlas—a great Astronomer—sustains the Heavens upon his Shoulders.—The Pleiades his Daughters.—Calypso.—The Hesperides—their Garden.—Prometheus.—His affront to Jupiter.—His Man of Clay.—He steals Fire from Heaven.—Vulcan makes a Woman, Pandora.—She is rejected by Prometheus.—Prometheus chained to Mount Caucasus.—Immortality given to Man, miscarries, because it is confided to an Ass.

THERE is a longer history annexed to the family of Iapetus, one of the brothers of Saturn, commonly called the Titans, than to that of any other branch of this race, except the progeny of Saturn himselfⁱ.

Iapetus, who like Saturn married one of his sisters, by name Clymene, had by her four sons, Atlas, Menœtius, Prometheus, and Epimetheus.

Atlas, for the part which he took in the war of the Titans against Jupiter, was condemned perpetually to support the weight of the heavens on his shoulders: this fabulous relation has been explained to mean, that he was a great astronomer, perhaps the first inventor of astronomy: in this explanation then we have an example of what was spoken of in the beginning, that the Gods worshipped by the ancients had once been

ⁱ Hes. The. 507 et seqq.; where may be found the whole account of this family, and of the Giants.

men, and that they were deified after their deaths for their merits and services to mankind.

Atlas had one son, called Hesperus, and seven daughters, the Atlantides, by name Maia, Electra, Taygeta, Asterope, Merope, Halcyone, and Celæno: the eldest of these was the mother of Mercury: the children of Atlas imparted their names to several of the heavenly bodies: Hesperus is the evening star, and the seven daughters of Atlas gave names to the seven stars, commonly called the Pleiades.

Mythologists ascribe to Atlas another daughter named Calypso: she is famous for having detained Ulysses, king of Ithaca, on his return from the siege of Troy, seven years in the island of Ogygia her residence, by a sort of force^k: Calypso offered Ulysses, if he would always remain with her, that, like a God, he should never die: but the love which Ulysses bore to his wife and his country was so great, as to determine him to refuse the splendid bribe.

Hesperus, the son of Atlas, had three daughters, called the Hesperides: their names were *Ægle*, *Arethusa*, and *Hesperithusa*: Juno committed to their care the precious trees which bore the apples that she had presented to her husband as a marriage-gift: the apples were of gold, and the orchard in which they grew was called, from the name of its guardians, the garden of the Hesperides: they were assisted in the discharge of this momentous office by a terrible dragon.

Mencætius was one of the Titan race which were cast down into hell.

Prometheus was, like the rest of his family, an

^k Hom. Od. α. 13.

enemy to the progeny of Saturn: a dispute is said to have arisen, as to what part of the sacrifices offered by the subjects of Jupiter was to be considered as appropriated to the God at whose altar it was slain: for from the first institution of sacrifices, it was the custom for the victim to be amicably shared, according to a fixed rule, between the God and his worshipper.

Prometheus offered himself as umpire in this dispute: he was always regarded as the wisest, or rather as the craftiest and most wily, of the heavenly race: he killed two bulls, and skilfully divided the flesh, the fat, the offal and the bones: he sewed up the flesh very neatly in the skin of one of the bulls, and the bones, inclosed in an envelop of fat, in the other: he then called upon Jupiter to look on the parcels, and to say which of them he chose for his own share: Jupiter deceived by the fair appearance of the fat which peeped here and there through the apertures of the skin, chose that parcel, in preference to the other which contained all that was most wholesome and valuable of the two animals: this is an ugly story; and the part assigned in it to Jupiter is wholly unworthy of our idea of a God.

From this moment Jupiter became the bitter enemy of Prometheus, and to punish him and his race, withheld from them the use of the celestial element of fire: Prometheus, who surpassed the whole universe in mechanical skill and contrivance, formed a man of clay of such exquisite workmanship, that he wanted nothing but a living soul to cause him to be acknowledged the paragon of creation: Minerva, the Goddess of arts, beheld the performance of Prometheus with approbation, and offered him any assistance in her

power to complete his work: she conducted him to Heaven, where he watched his opportunity to carry off at the tip of his wand a portion of celestial fire, from the chariot of the sun: with this he animated his image: and the man of Prometheus immediately moved, and thought, and spoke, and became every thing that the fondest wishes of his creator could ask.

Jupiter became still more exasperated than ever with this new specimen of Prometheus's ability and artifice: he ordered Vulcan, the great artificer of Heaven, to make a woman of clay, that should be still more consummate and beautiful of structure than Prometheus's man: with this alluring present Jupiter determined to tempt Prometheus to his ruin: all the Gods of the Saturnian race, eager to abet the project of their chief, gave her each one a several gift, from which circumstance she obtained the name of Pandora, *all gifts*: Venus gave her the power to charm; the Graces bestowed upon her symmetry of limb and elegance of motion; Apollo the accomplishments of vocal and instrumental music; Mercury the art of persuasive speech; Juno a multitude of rich and gorgeous ornaments; and Minerva the management of the loom and the needle: last of all, Jupiter presented her with a sealed box, which she was to bestow on whoever became her husband: thus prepared, he sent her to Prometheus by Mercury, as if he had intended him a compliment upon the wonders of his own performance: Prometheus however saw through the deceit, and rejected her: Mercury then presented her to Epimetheus, Prometheus's brother, who was less on his guard, received the seemingly angelic creature with delight, and eagerly opened

the box she brought him; the lid was no sooner unclosed than a multitude of calamities and evils of all imaginable sorts flew out, which dispersed themselves over the world, and from that fatal moment have never ceased to afflict the human race: Hope only remained at the bottom, being all that is left us to relieve our sorrows, and render the labours and troubles of life capable of being endured.

Jupiter thus constantly failing in every indirect attempt of retaliation upon his redoubtable adversary Prometheus, at last proceeded to a more open hostility: he sent Vulcan and Mercury, who seizing upon this extraordinary personage, conveyed him by main force to Mount Caucasus, where, being chained to the rock, a vulture commissioned by Jupiter cowered upon his breast, continually preying upon his liver, which grew again as fast as it was devoured: how the unfortunate Prometheus was delivered from this punishment I shall have occasion to mention hereafter, [p. 226.]

The fable of Prometheus's man, and Pandora, the first woman, was intended to convey an allegorical sense: the ancients saw to how many evils the human race is exposed, how many years of misery many of them endure, with what a variety of diseases they are afflicted, how the great majority is condemned to perpetual labour poverty and ignorance, and how many vices are contracted by men, in consequence of which they afflict each other with a thousand additional evils, perfidy, tyranny, cruel tortures, murder and war: the views of the early ancients, in times of savage rudeness, and before the refinements of society were invented, were more me-

lancholy respecting the lot of man than ours have been since: they could not therefore admit that he was the creature of Jupiter: they were rather prone to believe that Jupiter was from the first his enemy: the same views led them to speak evil of and revile the female sex: Hesiod, who, unless we are to except Homer, is probably the oldest of the Grecian poets, and who has related this story of Prometheus at length, says "that the men are like industrious bees who by their labours procure all the honey, and that the women are the idle drones who fatten upon the good things which their more assiduous fellows have accumulated¹:" it is impossible not to remark a considerable resemblance between the story of Pandora's box, and that of the apple with which Eve in the Bible *tempted* her husband, *and he did eat*.

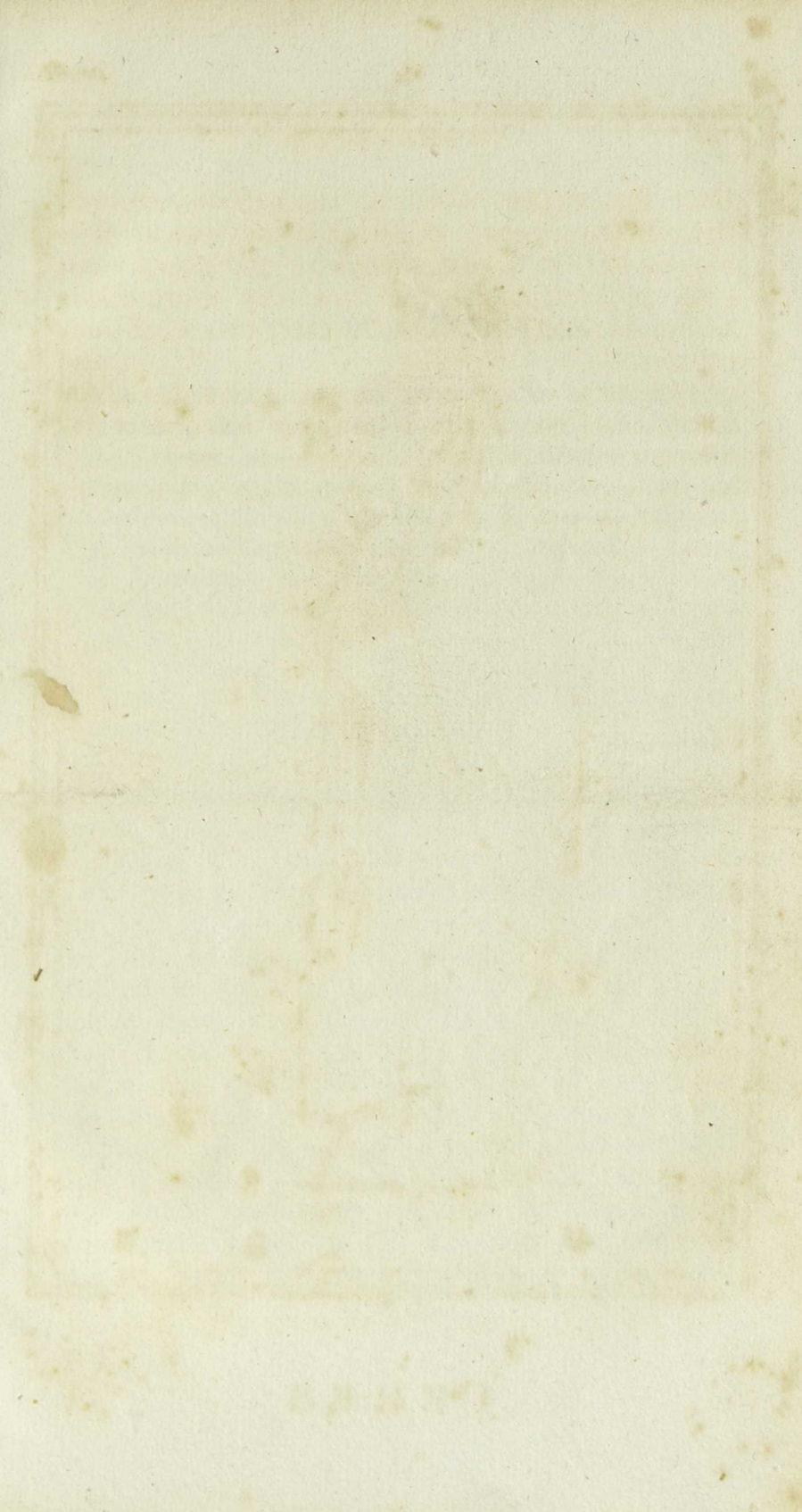
There is a further story^m that has been told of Prometheus, which for its strangeness it may seem worth while to relate: some of the first race of mankind proved ungrateful to their former, and gave a perfidious information to Jupiter against him: Jupiter rewarded the informers with the gift of immortal life, for all men were hitherto mortal: he packed the gift however upon the back of an ass: the ass had already travelled a long way, and was exceedingly weary, and troubled with a tormenting thirst: he at length came to a river, but a water-serpent guarded the stream, and would not suffer him to drink: the wily serpent would yield upon no other terms, than that the ass should surrender to him the invaluable burthen he bore, in exchange for his draught: the ass accepted the bargain:

¹ Hesiod. The. 593.

^m Nicander, Theriac. 349.

thus the serpent obtained the gift of immortal life, in consequence of which every year he casts his slough, and comes forth as young and vigorous as ever, while the unworthy mortals for whom Jupiter destined it, lost the reward of their treachery.

The story of the creation of man by the hands of Prometheus was not however universally received in the religion of the Greeks: many deeming it more decent and just to ascribe this event to the power of Jupiter.





CERES

CHAP. XI.

OF THE RURAL DEITIES.

Pan the God of Inanimate Nature—also of Shepherds, Hunters, and Fishermen.—His Figure.—Festival of the Lupercalia.—Curious Origin of his many-reeded Pipe.—He is the Author of Panic Fears.—Pales the Goddess of Shepherds.—Flora of Flowers.—Pomona, of Fruits.—Vertumnus the God of Orchards.—Loves of Vertumnus and Pomona.—Priapus the God of Gardens.—Terminus, of Boundaries.—Satyrs, Fauns and Sylvans.—The River Gods.—Story of Alpheus and Arethusa.—The Nymphs.—Naiads, Dryads, Oreads, and Hamadryads.—Story of Echo and Narcissus.—The Celestial Nymphs.

HAVING now finished my account of the superior Gods, or inhabitants of mount Olympus, as well as of the other branches of the family, we come next to that beautiful part of the Grecian mythology, which replenished all nature with invisible beings, so that whether these ancients walked in fields or gardens, whether the object before them were a river or a wood, whether they travelled by sea or by land, whether they visited the hospitable habitations of others, or continued under the protection of their own roofs, they felt on all occasions surrounded with the divine nature: and, as these Gods, whatever was their particular province or department, were represented in the Grecian pictures and statues under the most graceful or picturesque

figures and attitudes, their worshippers had continually present to them in fancy, thin, airy and elegant forms, floating upon the winds, listening to their ejaculations, diving into their thoughts, and studious of their prosperity and happiness.

Every one must feel how superior this state of mind is to that of the atheist: if the Greeks were unacquainted with the Christian God, the "Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth," the omniscient author of the universe; if their Gods appear limited, fantastic, and in this tremendous comparison contemptible;—yet they had the happiness to regard all nature, even the most solitary scenes, as animated and alive, to see every where around them a kind and benevolent agency, and to find on every side motives for contentment, reliance and gratitude.

The most eminent of the rural deities was Pan: he is the presiding God of inanimate nature as it is seen on the surface of the earth, of the trees, the fields, the mountains, and the vallies: his name is derived from a Greek word which signifies "all things," and he is therefore often mysteriously considered as the great principle of vegetable and animal life.

Different accounts are given of his origin: the most common represents him as the son of Mercury^a: some Greek writers^o ridiculously make his mother to have been Penelope, wife of Ulysses, one of the Grecian kings engaged in the siege of Troy: on the other hand the Egyptians regard him as one of the eight deities whom they hold entitled to a priority of worship, before the twelve superior Gods of the Greeks^p.

^a Hom. Hymn. in Pan. ^o Herod. Eut. 145. ^p Id. 46.

Pan is represented under the figure of a man in his superior parts, with horns on his head, and a long beard which covers his breast; his skin is dark-coloured, and his form vigorous and muscular; he is clothed with the skin of a leopard; and his lower parts have the figure of a goat: this mixed and discordant appearance is explained to have been adopted in his statues, the better to represent that universal nature of which he is the symbol: his upper parts are harmonious and majestic as the heavens; his horns express the beams of the sun, or the figure of the new moon: his rubicund face is the image of the orb of day: the leopard's skin he wears is emblematical of the starry heavens: and the shaggy appearance of his lower members is expressive of the fertility of the earth, which is usually covered with shrubs, corn and grass.

Pan is especially the God of shepherds, hunters, and fishermen who dwell among the crags of the ocean: as the God of shepherds, his worship was assiduously cultivated in Arcadia¹, and in this character he is usually furnished with a pipe of uneven reeds, called "syrinx:" in Rome he was worshipped under the name of the "Lycæan Pan" (from Lycæus, a mountain in Arcadia, or from *λύκος*, the Greek name for a wolf); and his festivals, in which his priests ran naked through the streets with whips in their hands², lashing every one they met, were called Lupercalia: the women in particular were eager to receive each one her lash, believing that it portended fertility, and that every one who felt it would prove a happy mother³.

¹ Ov. Fasti, ii. 271.

² Id. ii. 287.

³ Id. ii. 423.

The ancients made an agreeable story of Pan's many-reeded pipe: they said that the God fell in love with a beautiful nymph, named Syrinx: the damsel, displeased at the appearance of his goat-like feet, ran away from him: till, coming to a river where her flight was stopped, she prayed to the deities of the stream to rescue her: they took pity on her distress, and metamorphosed her into a bundle of reeds: Pan, who had just overtaken his coy mistress, thought to throw his arms about her, and drew back astonished to embrace nothing but so many reeds: as he stood in mournful surprise, the reeds, which waved backward and forward with the wind, produced a sound particularly soothing to his disappointment: and struck with what he heard, he gathered them as they grew, and formed them into a pipe which, from the name of the nymph he admired, he called Syrinx[†].

All the strange, mysterious and unaccountable sounds which were heard in solitary places, were attributed to Pan, the God of rural scenery: one story in particular was told of him, that when the Gauls, under Brennus their leader[‡], made an irruption into Greece, and were about to plunder the city of Delphi, Pan in the night haunted them with extraordinary and appalling noises, so that, heartily sick of their enterprise, they fled to their own country, with as much speed and disorder as if a powerful enemy had been close at their heels: from this attribute of Pan, all unaccountable fears, by which the minds of men are turned away from a spirited enterprise

[†] Ov. Met, i. 690 et seqq.

[‡] Pausanias. Phoc.

without any apparent cause, are called "panic fears."

Pales was the Goddess, as Pan was the God, of shepherds: nothing is handed down to us of her parentage, except that she is sometimes considered as the same with Cybele, the wife of Saturn: the Romans celebrated her festival every spring under the name of Palilia: on these occasions the peasants perfumed their sheep with the fumes of rosemary, laurel and sulphur: the sacrifices were milk, and wafers made of millet: and the ceremony concluded with leaping over fires made of straw, and dancing round and between them: the worshippers of Pales believed that this Goddess was able to preserve their flocks from wolves and from disease^v.

Flora is the Goddess of flowers: she was originally only one in the bevy of rustic nymphs: but as the Greeks express it by a pleasing allegory, being married to Zephyrus, the God of the west wind, he gave her empire over the flowers of the field^x: Flora was represented under the figure of a beautiful female, blessed with perpetual youth, crowned with flowers, and bearing the horn of plenty in her hand: the Romans, as the season of flowers is the season when all nature is jocund and gay, were accustomed to celebrate the festivals of Flora with licentious rites: Lactantius^y, an ancient Christian writer, has taken occasion from this circumstance, to vilify the Goddess, and, out of zeal for his own religion, to pretend that Flora was originally a beautiful, but dissolute woman of Rome, who by her

^w Ov. Fasti, iv. 735.

^x Id. v. 195.

^y Lactantius, i. 20.

naughty manners accumulated a great fortune, and bequeathed it to the state, on condition that they should celebrate an annual festival in her honour for ever; the Roman senate accepted the bequest, but to hide the disgrace, voted that this naughty woman should now be proclaimed Goddess of flowers; but this is a story entirely of Lactantius's own making: no good cause however requires to be supported by lies, and Christianity is not at all obliged to Lactantius for inventing so foolish a tale.

Pomona is the Goddess of fruits: she is usually represented under the figure of a rosy and healthful female, resting herself upon a basket filled with flowers and fruit, holding a bough in one hand, and some of the apples she has gathered from the bough in the other: though she were one of the nymphs of the fields, she took no pleasure in hunting, and the other amusements so frequent in the country; but devoted herself entirely to the cultivation of fruit-trees: she had for ever the pruning-hook in her hand; she taught the art of ingrafting; and she busied herself in hollowing lines in the turf, to conduct along the refreshing rills which made her trees prosper and flourish.

She was so occupied with these cares, that she never turned her thoughts to the passion of love: and, though all the rural Gods admired her, and would gladly have become her suitors, she looked upon their addresses with impatience and dislike: and, that she might be freed from their importunities, surrounded her plantation with a high wall, within which she directed that no person of the male sex should be permitted to enter.

Ovid, the Roman poet^z, tells a pleasing story of the courtship of Pomona, the Goddess of fruits, and Vertumnus, the God of orchards: Vertumnus had, like Proteus, the sea God, of whom I shall speak by and by [p. 115], the faculty of changing himself into what form he pleased; and he used this faculty for the promotion of his suit; he took in succession every different form by which he thought he might intice the Goddess, or win her attention: when his craft and his wiles had grown too notorious in one form, he assumed another, and thought by that means to elude the vigilance of the guardians of the plantation in which Pomona for ever busied herself: but it was all in vain: Pomona's servants were too faithful to be deceived, and Vertumnus could never gain entrance into the inclosure.

Having tried every male form in succession, Vertumnus bethought himself of assuming that of a decrepid female: he had no sooner resolved on this, than his smooth visage became furrowed with wrinkles, his sparkling eyes grew dim, his smooth auburn hair was white as snow, his erect and graceful figure was bent toward the earth, his voice grew sharp and squeaking, he tottered as he walked, and supported his trembling steps on a staff: the guardian of the orchard conceived no alarm at this figure, and admitted him.

He immediately hobbled toward the place where Pomona was standing: he began praising her garden, and admiring its productions: he next turned to commending her person, which, he said, excelled that of other nymphs, as much as her garden surpassed theirs: he then kissed

^z Ovid, Met. xiv, 623 et seqq.

her again and again : the kisses of Vertumnus were warmer and more fervent, than from the appearance he had assumed might have been expected.

The seeming old beldame proceeded to read to the nymph an ingenious lecture in favour of marriage : he pointed to a luxuriant vine which had twined itself round a tall and sightly elm : “ See here,” said he, “ the benefits of conjunction : the elm without the vine would produce leaves only, and would be comparatively little valued : the vine without the elm would lie prostrate on the earth, and all its beautiful clusters would be disfigured with dust : see how they prosper by conjunction : take example, my child, by these : you cannot guess how superior the pleasures of love are to those you pursue : if you would only give encouragement to your admirers, you would have more suitors in your train, than ever Helen or Penelope will be able to boast hereafter among mortal men.

“ If however,” continued the deceitful God, “ you would take my advice (and you cannot imagine how entirely I love you), you would reject all the rest, and attach yourself to Vertumnus : your pursuits are the same ; you are the protector of fruits, and he of orchards : he can change himself into all imaginable shapes, and will take every day a new shape to amuse you : he loves you ; for that you may take my word, for Vertumnus does not know himself more intimately than I know him : other Gods are inconstant, will follow other pleasures, and court other ladies, when you have lost your novelty to them : but Vertumnus, though the orchard is his province, and he loves all its productions, yet does

not love apples, or strawberries, or pine-apples, the blushing peach, or the yellow apricot, half so much as he loves you."

Vertumnus felt himself quite at home in his subject, and made a fine speech: but Pomona seemed to give no attention to what he was saying: this was coyness, by which a young maiden often affects indifference to what she desires the most: the God felt vexed at the little progress he thought he made, and suddenly putting off the old beldame, resumed his proper shape: he determined no longer to be trifled with, but to run away at once with the idol of his heart: but this was no longer necessary: the effect of the youth and beauty in which he now appeared was astonishing: the God, bursting from his disguise of decrepitude, looked, says Ovid, like the radiant sun, when he breaks forth at once amidst the opposition of a thousand clouds: Pomona, half-convinced before by the arguments she had heard, was totally subdued by the figure of her lover: she frankly gave him her hand, and they became husband and wife.

Priapus is the God of gardens: he is a deity of a singular sort: he was the son of Venus, and is said to have had Bacchus, a Demigod, who will hereafter be spoken of, for his father^a: it was customary to set up his image in gardens, to frighten away birds^b and thievish boys, and, as something monstrous and aggravated in limbs and features was thought best calculated for this purpose, Priapus was usually represented under an unsightly figure: it was perhaps from this circumstance, that the tale originated that Juno,

^a Diod. Sic. iv. 5.

^b Tib. lib. i. 17.

perceiving that Venus was with child, and bearing a spite to that beautiful Goddess, attended under a mask of friendship at the birth of Priapus, and gave him for a gift that he should be the ugliest monster that ever was seen^c.

Terminus was the God of boundaries: it was the progress of civilization that gave sacredness and importance to the worship of this deity; in proportion as the limits between different states and the lands of different proprietors became matters of consequence, the policy of nations and legislators taught them to inculcate that a violation of boundaries was a crime against Heaven: Terminus was represented with a human head, but without legs or other members, to express that he was not to be removed; or sometimes an unbewn and shapeless stone, placed to mark the limits of different estates, was held a sufficient emblem of this God: when Tarquin the Proud laid the foundation of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus at Rome, he applied by sacrifices to all the Gods who had temples or shrines within the limits of the consecrated spot, for permission to remove them, and all by favourable omens signified their consent, except the God Terminus^d.

There were innumerable rural deities among the Greeks and Romans, beside those which have already been mentioned: the males were distinguished by the general names of Satyrs, Fauns, and Sylvans: their figures were half-man and half-goat, like that of Pan, and hence they were also sometimes spoken of by the appellation of Pans^e: they were a very frisky species of divini-

^c Suidas. v. Πρίαπος. He makes Jupiter to be the father.

^d Ov. Fasti, ii. 641 et 667.

^e Id. i. 396 et seqq.

ties, continually engaged in gambols and dancing: they dwelt chiefly in forests, and hid themselves in caves or among the trees; they were fond, like Robin Good-fellow, Will-with-a-Wisp, and the fairies and goblins of our Saxon ancestors, of playing little unlucky tricks upon their mortal neighbours, and of frightening the girls: yet, when the imagination of a Grecian peasant or poet discovered them, through a vista of glades, dancing their airy rounds amidst the brown shadows of the woods, the view communicated a soothing sacredness to the scene, and raised the thoughts of the beholder to the contemplation of invisible and celestial natures.

In addition to these wandering and ever change-ful deities there were others, who by their distinguishing attributes were fixed to a particular spot: these were the Gods protectors of rivers and trees: every river was supposed to have its God, who in statuary or painting was the emblematical representative of the fountain from which the river took its rise: he was seen reclining upon an urn from which the water continually flowed; he had a long beard, was clothed in blue garments, and had a crown of reeds: his favourite dwelling was in the caverns and deepest recesses of the river's bed: this God was particularly interested in the prosperity of the stream over which he presided: if by a long dry season and a hot summer the river shrunk within its banks, the God sympathised with it, languished, and was full of distress: if the river was stained with blood, choked with dead bodies, or otherwise impeded in its course or robbed of its limpid clearness, he felt the deepest resentment against its violators: Homer has

described at full in the latter part of the *Iliad*^f the resentment and contentions of the two celebrated rivers of Troy, Scamander and Simois, against Achilles, when he presumptuously profaned their waters.

Many stories are related of the adventures of the River Gods: there is none of them more worth repeating than the loves of Alpheus and Arethusa^g: Alpheus is a beautiful river of Arcadia in Greece: Arethusa was one of the nymphs attendant upon Diana: coming one day, much fatigued with hunting, to the banks of the Alpheus, and smit with the limpidness of the stream, she threw off her clothes, and determined to bathe there: the God observed her in silence; he thought he had never seen any thing so handsome, and determined to ask her to marry him: he rose, and appeared before her; but Arethusa, ashamed of being caught naked, and angry with the intruder, instead of listening to his addresses, ran away from him with the utmost swiftness: the God pursued, and had nearly overtaken her, when the nymph prayed to Diana, her mistress, to deliver her from the violence of her lover: Diana listened to her request, and turned her into a fountain: Alpheus immediately put off the human figure which he had hitherto assumed in the race, returned to his characteristic form of a river, and sought to mix his waters with those of the fountain Arethusa, the natural marriage of a river God: the nymph still in her new form shrunk from this familiarity, and, aided by Diana, escaped under the bed of the sea, and rose again a foun-

^f Il. φ.

^g Ov. Met. v. 574 et seqq.

tain in the island of Ortygia, within the Acropolis of the city of Syracuse: Alpheus however was too passionate a lover to be repulsed by any obstacles: he took the same course as Arethusa, and pursued her beneath the caverns of the ocean: Arethusa, overcome by the persevering constancy of her lover, perhaps consented to his desires: they were married; and the proof of the truth of this story according to the Greeks is, that whatever fragment of wood, or other floating substance was cast into the river Alpheus in Arcadia, was observed, after having been some time lost, to rise again in the fountain Arethusa at Syracuse.

The nymphs have already been several times mentioned: Jupiter received his early nourishment and education from the nymphs: Diana was always attended by a bevy of nymphs: and Flora, Pomona, and other Goddesses who afterward had a particular district and authority assigned them, were originally of this class.

The nymphs were a secondary order of deities, who had no temples, but to whom it was customary to offer an inferior species of sacrifice, chiefly milk, honey and oil: they peopled all nature with their airy, invisible and beneficent presence: they inhabited the woods, the mountains, the limpid springs, the rivers, and the seas, and received distinctive names accordingly: they were represented under the figure of beautiful virgins, in all the bloom of youth, and with every grace of form and motion: they made themselves grottoes, adorned with stones and spars, of all colours and the most romantic shapes, and hung with flowering shrubs and evergreens: these were placed, sometimes in the caverns of

the ocean, and sometimes in the wildest and most luxuriant, but solitary, retreats of the forest: the following is the account of the different sorts of rural nymphs.

Beside the River Gods, there were other aquatic deities, who make a very agreeable figure in ancient poetry, called the Naiads: these Goddesses were in an eminent degree endowed with the attributes of youth and beauty: they presided over springs, wells, and fountains, and inhabited some grove or meadow in the neighbourhood of their charge: it was their province to preserve each her little stream from mud and pollution, and maintain its clearness and translucency: when the Grecian enthusiast wandered in the fields, and observed the purling brook murmuring along its pebbly bed, he felt grateful to the Naiad of the fountain, and admired the perpetual assiduity with which she discharged her office.

Other female rural divinities were the Dryads^b and the Oreadsⁱ: the Dryads were the Goddesses of trees, especially of the oak, and had each a particular tree committed to her charge: these deities were immortal: there were others called Hamadryads^k, whose existence was indissolubly bound to that of the tree to which they belonged: they lived as long as the tree, and, when the life of the tree was gone, the nymph also expired in the same moment: the deification of these beings was plainly nothing more than personifying the principle of vegetable life which

^b Dryads, invoked, Virg. G. i. 11.

ⁱ Virg. Æn. i. 504. Oreads are mentioned as the nymphs attendant on Diana.

^k Ov. Met. i. 690, mentions Syrinx as an Hamadryad, and at the same time a Naiad.

appears and flourishes so wonderfully in trees, that principle by which they increase in stature, and expand their vegetable bulk, and shoot forth a thousand leaves, that principle, which, while it operates in inviolable silence, presents to the beholder, as the fanning west-wind rustles among the foliage, the most perfect assemblage of life and health and mobility and freshness that the universe can afford.

Every man loves the tree he has been accustomed every day to behold: the tree that grows at my gate, under whose shadow I have reposed a thousand times, whose mighty stature and gigantic arms fill me with veneration and respect, I feel as my friend: if one of its branches becomes withered, I am struck with sorrow; if its trunk is attacked with the daring axe, I apprehend it like sacrilege: the ancient mythology gave a new sanction to this irresistible notion of sympathy, by interesting the Dryads in the life of the grove: so that, when the audacious wood-cutter approached it, the nymphs were terrified at the unhallowed invader: they felt themselves rudely expelled from their customary haunt; with every wound the tree received they groaned; and, as the oak threw its vast bulk along the plain, a divinity expired.

The Oreads, called also Orestiades, were nymphs of the mountains: they were of a more wild, irregular, and fantastic character than those last mentioned: the keen air and rugged paths of their rocky situation made them hardy: they defied the blast with bosoms bare, while their long hair streamed in the breeze.

Echo was one of the mountain nymphs, of whom the ancients told several amusing stories:

nothing is more famous than the jealous freaks and fancies of Juno: she suspected that her husband had placed his affections upon some of the nymphs, and loved their company better than her own: she went down to earth to satisfy herself: Echo engaged her in a long conversation: this probably means nothing more, than that Juno mistook the sound of her own voice for the voice of some nymph of whom Jupiter perhaps was fond, and thus vexed herself with pursuing a shadow.

Juno believed that Echo had held her a tedious parley by design, that while she was listening, the wicked nymph might run away: "You shall play no one this trick any more," said Juno: "henceforth never speak, but when you are spoken to!"

Echo afterward fell in love with Narcissus, a most beautiful youth, son of the river Cephissus in Bœotia: Narcissus, one day as he went a-hunting, lost his companions, and was left alone in the wood: Echo hid herself among the trees, and looked: "How I wish I could speak to him!" thought Echo: "Who is here?" bawled Narcissus: "Here," answered Echo: "Come," said the boy; and "Come," replied Echo: "Let us meet," continued Narcissus: "Let us meet," answered Echo, who thinking this sufficient encouragement, came out from her hiding-place, rushed to him, and threw her arms round his neck: Narcissus, not prepared for such a meeting, shook her off, looked angry, and bade her "Begone:" the poor nymph ashamed of her forwardness, withdrew: she pined and grieved so sadly, that at last she wasted to nothing but a voice: in that state she still frequents the soli-

tudes she formerly loved, and is often to be heard, but never seen.

Narcissus afterwards fell in love with his own image in a fountain: it was so pretty, that I believe he thought it was a girl: he tried to kiss it, but he could not: yet when he smiled, it smiled: when he withdrew, it withdrew; and when he returned, it came back again: he visited the fountain every day: he was so vexed and wasted with his fruitless attempts, that at length the Gods in pity turned him into a flower, which still bears his name, and is called Narcissus¹.

Beside the nymphs already mentioned, who are called terrestrial, there were also other nymphs, called celestial: they presided over the starry heavens: they drove along the planets in their orbits: and as an ancient Greek wandered out in a calm and brilliant midnight, every star seemed to him to have a separate life, an eye, an ear, and a voice: he had a thousand witnesses to his prayers and his gratitude, and a thousand friends contributing to his happiness: they were the monitors of his conduct, and the genii who watched over his steps.

¹ Ov. Met. iii. 340 et seqq.

CHAP. XII.

OF THE DOMESTIC DEITIES.

Gods Protectors of Kingdoms, Provinces and Cities.—
 The Penates, or Houshold Gods.—Their Importance.—Story of Heraclitus.—The Lares.—The Manes, Gods of the Dead.—Ghosts and Spirits.—The Larvæ and Lemures.—The Lamiaë.—The Genii, or Dæmons.—Dæmon of Socrates.—Evil Genius of Brutus.—Sense of the Word Genial.

ANOTHER class of divinities of great importance in the Grecian mythology were the Penates or local divinities: of these there are reckoned three classes, the Gods of kingdoms or provinces, the Gods of cities and towns, and the Gods of single houses: there is some ambiguity as to the descent and character of these Gods: the inhabitants of kingdoms and cities seem to have chosen their protecting Gods as they pleased, and therefore frequently from among the superior Gods; thus Minerva was the protecting divinity of Athens, and Jupiter of Rome.

But besides the protecting Gods of kingdoms and cities, each house, as I told you, had its Penates or Houshold Gods: these were the presiding deities of hospitality: they spread a sacredness over domestic life: every member of a family was placed under the guardianship of the same friendly divinity: nothing could be done contrary to the great duties of husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant, without

offending the Penates: every stranger who entered the house became sacred and secure from violation: and no thought could be less endured, than that the master of a family should be affronted or assaulted under his own roof: thus Themistocles, when he fled to king Admetus^m, and Coriolanus to the king of the Volsciⁿ, immediately placed themselves on the hearth, and claimed the sanctuary of this stranger roof (the hearth was peculiarly the altar of the Houshold Gods): it has become a proverb in this country, that "Every Englishman's house is his castle;" it might have been a proverb among the ancients, that "Every Grecian's house was his temple."

We may judge of the importance annexed to the worship of the Houshold Gods, when we observe that at the time when Æneas^o fled from amidst the flames of Troy, what he was careful to carry away with him was his ancient father, his wife, his only child, and his Houshold Gods.

There is a beautiful story of Heraclitus the ancient philosopher, which is connected with this subject: the Grecian philosophers were accustomed to wear mean garments, and to show by their habits of living, that they were disdainful of the frivolous luxuries of society; yet they were every where sought after, and every where admired: certain strangers of rank came to Athens, and were desirous to visit the celebrated Heraclitus: they enquired out where he lived: as they approached his habitation, they saw a hut, ragged, narrow and dark: they knocked at the door, and the philosopher opened: struck with the appearance of things, they shrunk back, and hesitated to

^m Thuc. i. 136.

ⁿ Plut. in Coriolan.

^o Virg. Æn. ii. 707.

enter : Heraclitus observed their uncertainty, recollected what was due to his own character, and with a magnanimous simplicity said to them, "Enter boldly, for here also are Gods^p!"

Another class of the Houshold Gods, distinct from the Penates, were the Lares^q: these are said to be the twin-children of the nymph Lara by Mercury: they presided not only over single houses, but also over cities and streets, country-scenes and the waters of the sea: hence they were called according to their respective functions, Lares Familiares, Urbani, Compitales, Rustici and Marini: and under each of these characters worship was paid, and sacrifices were offered, to them: how the two sons of Mercury and Lara could furnish distinct deities for every street and house in Italy and Greece, is somewhat hard to explain.

It is difficult to distinguish between the Lares and the Manes: in many respects they seem to be the same: the mother of the Manes is called Mania, and Mercury was probably their father: they are reckoned among the infernal deities, and their particular province was to preside over burial-places, and the monuments of the dead: hence the Romans superscribed their sepulchral inscriptions with the letters D. M. that is, *Diis Manibus*, "To the Gods of the dead," to remind the profane that they must not look to molest with impunity the ashes of the deceased: now, as it was the ancient custom of the Romans and other nations to bury their dead beneath the floors of the houses in which they had lived, hence the

^p Aristot. de Part. Anim. i. 5.

^q Ov. Fasti, ii. 599.

Lares and Manes came to be confounded together, and regarded as Household Gods.

Among the other kinds of homage paid to the Lares or Manes, one was that, on certain solemn occasions, the Romans hung up on the outsides of their houses images of wool to represent the master and mistress of the family, smaller images for the children, and little balls of wool for the slaves: these packets were designed as a sort of commutation or substitute for the persons within, that the *Dii Manes*, or "Gods of the future state," seeing these, might be pleased to spare the lives of the members of the family.

By the Manes however were frequently understood the spirits of the departed: all nations have had traditionary stories of ghosts, or the appearance of persons deceased to their relations, their friends, and others: the Romans went so far as to separate the ghosts, which made a part of their religious creed, into two classes: the good and friendly were called Lares and Manes, and the ill and wicked spirits they denominated Larvæ and Lemures^r.

The Lares or Manes, taking the words in this sense, were the spirits of a man's ancestors, hovering around the spot where their mortal lives had been spent, and solicitous for the welfare of their descendants: these were the objects of sacrifices and other marks of religious veneration: this circumstance gave an additional sacredness to the houses of the Greeks and Romans: beneath the floor the remains of their buried forefathers were often deposited; their spirits were not afar off; and their virtuous and honourable descend-

^r Apuleius de Deo Socratis.

dants had the consolation to believe, that they acted in the sight of their progenitors, were guarded by their love, and sanctioned and animated with their approbation.

The Larvæ and Lemures were the spirits of wicked men deceased, who, as they had brutalised themselves with sensual indulgences during their past lives, found it difficult to detach their thick and half-corporeal souls from their bodies after death, and were condemned by day to repose among rotten carcasses and putrefaction, and by night to wander the earth, to the no small terror and injury of its inhabitants: they frequently haunted the wicked and impious without ceasing, appeared in every frightful form that can be imagined, and never allowed them a moment of tranquillity and repose.

The Romans entertained so great awe of these malevolent beings, that, by way of averting their vengeance, they instituted an annual festival in their honour in the month of May, called Lemuralia^s: during this solemnity, which lasted three days, all the temples of the Gods were shut, and marriages were prohibited; they burned beans and other vegetable substances, the smell of which was thought to be insupportable to the Larvæ; and they repeated magical charms, and beat upon drums and kettles, by these means compelling the ghosts to depart, and no longer to come and disturb the tranquillity of their relations on earth.

Lamiæ is another term we meet with in ancient mythology, and is nearly connected with the idea of the Larvæ: the Lamiæ were a species of de-

^s Ov. Fasti, v. 421 et 489.

mons, who assumed the forms of beautiful women, and whose favourite occupation was supposed to be first to entice young children away by their specious allurements, and then to devour them.

The Lares, the Larvæ and Lemures were frequently spoken of by the general name of Genii; the word Genius beside this is sometimes employed by the classic writers as a general name for the power of plastic nature by which all things are generated, and shaped, and kept alive: in this sense it is to be regarded as a name, sacred to the true God who created the world, or representative of his operations in the act of creation.

But the most frequent use of the word Genius in the ancient mythology, is in a sense somewhat similar to that of Guardian Angel in Christian writers: to every man were appointed at the hour of his birth two supernatural attendants, a good and an evil Genius, or, according to the Greek word Dæmon: these two spirits perpetually contended with each other for the chief possession of the man to whom they were addicted: the good Genius was incessantly urging him forward to virtue, glory and prosperity, smoothing the obstacles which occurred, and keeping up his courage: while the evil Genius as constantly supplied him with treacherous suggestions, and eagerly pushed him on to vice, infamy and ruin^t: there is a beautiful tale, written by Voltaire on this subject, entitled the Black and the White.

Socrates^v, the most excellent and virtuous of all the ancient philosophers, constantly ascribed all that was right and honourable in his life and

^t Xen. Cyrop. vi. 1.

^v Plut. in Theag. et al. p.

actions to the suggestions of his good dæmon: he said, he felt the motions of this friendly spirit as they rose in his mind, and affirmed that they were so distinct from every other sensation to which he was subject, that he was in no danger of ever committing any mistake respecting them.

It is related of Brutus, one of the Roman senators by whom Julius Cæsar was killed, that, a short time before his death, a spirit came to him in the night in his tent, having assumed the form of the dead Cæsar, and said to him, "I am thy evil Genius, Brutus!" to which Brutus, being a man of great courage, rejoined, "Wherefore dost thou come?" "To tell thee," said the spirit, "that I will meet thee again at Philippi^w:" at which place Brutus, having been defeated in battle by the friends of Cæsar, killed himself with his own sword.

A variety of poetical phrases have been built upon this idea of every man being attended by a Genius who fostered and protected him: the day of a man's birth is called the "genial day," the marriage bed is styled the "genial bed," and wine, "which maketh glad the heart of man," is expressed by the "genial bowl:" likewise such persons as live merrily, and freely partake of whatever is grateful to their appetites, are said to "indulge their genius."

^w Plut. vit. Cæsar. ad fin.

CHAP. XIII.

OF MONSTERS.

The Gorgons—destroyed by Perseus.—The Graiæ.—Bellona.—Pegasus and Chrysaor.—The Lybian Serpents.—Geryon and Echidna.—Orthus, Cerberus, Hydra, and Chimæra.—Sphinx and the Nemæan Lion.—Scylla.—The Cyclops.—The Sirens.—The Harpies.

ONE branch of the accounts of the Grecian mythology is monsters: the Grecian mythology, with its thirty thousand Gods, was complete in the time of Homer and Hesiod, when reading and writing were yet in their infancy: and it is past a doubt, that the Greeks did not invent their mythology themselves, but borrowed it from other nations in remoter ages: to remote and dark ages belong the tales of ghosts, and witchcraft, and giants, and a thousand other strange and terrible things: you need not wonder then that monsters make one chapter in the history of the Gods of the Greeks.

Nereus, son of Pontus, or the sea, had a brother named Phorcys^x, who according to the custom of the Grecian Gods, married his sister, Ceto, and by her became father of the Gorgons.

The Gorgons, according to some, were a nation of women, just like what we read of the Amazons, and were conquered, as will be seen hereafter, by Perseus: the most received account

^x Hes. The. 233 et seqq.

of them however is, that they were three sisters, by name Stheno, Euryale, and Medusa^y: these three, particularly Medusa, who is oftenest mentioned, are said by some writers to have been at first virgins of the most spotless beauty: but Medusa, being seduced by Neptune, and having yielded to his will and become his mistress, was immediately changed by Minerva, the Goddess of wisdom and prudence, into a horrible monster: her mouth was wide like the mouth of a lion, her teeth were of a fearful magnitude, her great staring eyes had the property of turning every one that looked on them into stone, and a thousand vipers writhed themselves about her brows instead of hair: an allegory by which the ancients probably intended to express how ugly vice and profligacy make their votaries appear in the eyes of the discerning and the good: the same description that applies to Medusa, holds equally of her two sisters.

The Gorgons made so wanton a use of their powers, that they turned all their neighbours into stone, and it became doubtful whether in a short time the world would be any otherwise peopled than by a multitude of stones in human figure: Jupiter in pity sent his son Perseus to destroy them: he was armed by the Gods for this dangerous expedition, and among other things, Mercury gave him wings to fly, Pluto an invisible helmet, and Minerva a mirror-shield, by looking in which he could discover how his enemy was disposed, without any danger of meeting her eyes: thus accoutered he made terrible work with the Gorgons: he attacked them before, and be-

^y Hes. The. 274.

hind, and on every side, before they were aware: though they felt the cuts and slashes of Perseus, they could by no means discover where he was: and as they could not see him, he took special care never to look at them: Medusa's head seems to have been his capital prize: he put it carefully in a bag, that he might not hurt any body with it unawares, and carried it as a present to Minerva, who fastened it ever after as an ornament in the middle of her shield.

The Gorgons had three other sisters, called Graiæ and Lamiaë: they were monsters not less frightful than the Gorgons: they are said to have had but one eye and one tooth among them^z; and they carefully locked up their eye in a box when they were at home, only using it when they went abroad: Perseus, when he went against the Gorgons, called on the Graiæ in his way, and stealing upon them when they were asleep, took away the box which contained their eye, and refused to give it up till they had given him certain instructions necessary for the conquest of the Gorgons.

A seventh sister of this hopeful family, fully worthy of the rest, was Enyo, or Bellona, the Goddess of war: like the Gorgons, snakes were the locks that adorned her head, instead of hair; she has a whip of iron in one hand, and a flaming torch in the other: all her gestures were furious and frantic, and her garments dripped with blood: her priests expressed their devotion to her by running about in a sort of frenzy-dance, and gashing themselves with knives^a: at Co-

^z Æschyli. Rom. 792. ^a Lact. de Div. Institut. i. 21. Tib. i. lib. vi. 46. Strabo. 12. Val. Flaccus, vii. 636.

mana in Asia Minor, she had a temple with a college of no less than three thousand priests.

^bFrom the blood of Medusa, as it gushed forth when Perseus smote off her head, sprang the winged horse, Pegasus, and Chrysaor, his original rider, who rose to life at first clad in complete armour, and brandishing a sword of gold: beside these two, the progeny of Medusa's blood, some drops fell from the head as Perseus flew along with it over the coasts of Africa, and from them were engendered the serpents of Lybia, so famed for their enormous size and deadly venom.

Chrysaor married Callirhoe one of the Oceanides, and by her became father of two other monsters, Geryon and Echidna.

Geryon was a monster in human shape, but with three heads: his residence was the island of Gades in Spain: he kept a prodigious number of oxen, and killed all the strangers that came into his country, giving their flesh for food to his oxen: as these oxen were regarded with horror, Geryon found it necessary to plant over them as a guard a dog with two heads, and a dragon with seven.

Echidna, the sister of Geryon, was a beautiful woman in the upper part of her body; but instead of legs and feet, she had from the waist downward, the form of a serpent.

Echidna became the wife of Typhon, the most terrible of the Giants who made war upon Jupiter, and between them they had the most extraordinary progeny ever heard of: their names were Orthus, Cerberus, Hydra and Chimæra.

^b Hes. The. 280 to 332.

Orthus was the two-headed dog that guarded the herds of Geryon.

Cerberus was a dog with three heads^c, and in other respects a most formidable monster: he was placed as a guard at the gate of the infernal regions: it is related of those who in their life-time visited the realms of Pluto, that they appeased Cerberus with a cake prepared for that purpose^d: hence the proverb “to give Cerberus a sop,” applied to persons who mitigate with a bribe some dastardly accuser, that barks very loud in hopes that somebody will think it worth while to purchase his silence.

Hydra was a furious dragon with a hundred heads, and endowed with this peculiar property, that if any one came against him with intent to destroy him, and cut off one of his heads, two others immediately sprung up in its place.

Chimæra was a monster of a mixed form, part lion, part dragon, and part goat, and had three heads, the head of a lion, the head of a dragon, and the head of a goat.

Chimæra became the wife of Orthus, the two-headed dog of Geryon, and her own brother; the fruits of this connection were Sphinx and the Nemæan lion: these monsters will be fully described, when I come to speak of Oedipus and Hercules by whom they were destroyed.

Scylla was a monster, who had for her father either Phorcys, the parent of the Gorgons, or Typhon, the father of Hydra and Chimæra: like the Gorgons, her original figure was that of a beautiful woman; but, being beloved by

^c Hes. The. 312, describes him as having fifty heads.

^d Virg. Æn. vi. 420.

Glaucus^c, one of the Gods of the sea, she fell a victim to the jealousy of Circe, who will hereafter be mentioned: Circe poisoned a fountain in which Scylla was wont to bathe, so that as soon as this lovely creature threw herself into the water she found the heads of dogs, barking and howling, suddenly sprout around her waist; she had twelve feet shaped like serpents, six heads, and in each head three rows of teeth: made desperate by this frightful metamorphosis, she threw herself into the narrow sea which divides Sicily from Italy, and ever after became the terror of mariners, whom as they passed near her abode in the rock, she was accustomed by six at a time to snatch up and devour: opposite to the rock of Scylla, was a whirlpool, called Charybdis, so that whoever endeavoured to steer his vessel in safety from the devouring jaws of Scylla, was in the most imminent danger of being swallowed up in the tremendous and rapid eddies of Charybdis.

The Cyclops may with propriety be reckoned among the monsters of the Grecian mythology: Hesiod^f represents them as three, by name Arges, Brontes, and Steropes, and makes them full brothers to the Titans, the sons of Cœlus and Terra; but according to Homer and Virgil, they are much more numerous: Homer also speaks of them as the sons of Neptune.

The office of the Cyclops was to forge the thunderbolts of Jupiter under the direction of Vulcan: the three abovementioned seem to have been constantly engaged in this occupation, and to have inhabited the bowels of mount Ætna: the rest of the tribe wandered on the adjoining

^c Ov. Met. xiv. 1 et seqq.

^f The. 140.



VULCAN

coast, and led the life of shepherds: they had however a passion for feeding upon human flesh: they were creatures of gigantic stature, beastly and deformed in their persons, and having each of them only one eye, which grew in the middle of their forehead: the most celebrated of the one-eyed shepherds is called Polyphemus^g.

The Sirens were Goddesses of the sea, beautiful in person, and much celebrated for the sweetness of their voices: they were three in number, and their names Parthenope, Ligeia and Leucosia: they are said to have challenged the Muses to a contention in singing, by whom they were defeated^h: it constantly happens in the Grecian mythology, when any one enters the lists with the Gods for victory and is defeated, that he is condemned to a certain punishment for his presumption: the Sirens were changed, as to the lower part of their forms, into the figure of a fish, and in their disposition into cannibals: they were confined to a certain part of the coast of Sicily; and there it was decreed that they should try to enchant with their singing every adventurer as he sailed along: they accommodated their songs to the temper of the stranger: to the ambitious they promised the gratifications of ambition, to the voluptuous endless pleasure, and to the lovers of wisdom knowledge and instruction inexhaustible: those who listened to their song, and disembarked on their coast, they devoured: but when the time should come in which any one should be found capable of resisting their inticements, it was fated them

^g Hom. Od. i. 182 et seqq. Virg. Æn. iii. 641 et seqq.

^h Pausan. Bœot. 34.

that they should be seized with despair, and destroy themselves.

The Harpies were the offspring of Thaumas son of Pontus, by Electra one of the Oceanidesⁱ: they had the face of a woman, the body of a vulture, and the claws of a dragon^k: they were extravagantly voracious in their appetites, and filthy in their habits; and when the Gods were greatly incensed against any one of mortal race, they could scarcely impose upon him a severer penalty, than to send these monsters to haunt his meals, afflicting him with the plague of an unsated hunger, and driving him to madness.

ⁱ Hes. The. 266.

^k Virg. Æn. iii. 216 et seqq.

CHAP. XIV.

OF THE GODS OF THE SEA AND THE WINDS.

Pontus.—Oceanus and Tethys, Parents of the Rivers and the Oceanides.—Nereus, his Figure, and the Shapes he assumes.—Doris, the Wife of Nereus, and Mother of the Nereids.—Neptune, his Figure and Appearance.—Amphitrite and Triton.—The Winds.—Æolus.—Aurora.

FROM a survey of the inferior Gods, protectors of the scenes of rural and domestic life, we will proceed to the vastest and most magnificent object which the globe of earth contains, the ocean: the sea, as well as the land, was according to the Grecian mythology full of Gods: the sea, considered merely as it strikes the organs of human sight, suggests principally ideas of what is barren, wild and tremendous: but the religion of the refined ancients filled it with life, action and hilarity: and the entranced voyager, brought up in the notions of this religion, often saw in its most solitary scenes the magnificence of the Gods, and heard the songs of the Nereids and the Sirens.

Pontus (the Greek name for the sea) was the son of Tellus without a father: he was therefore half-brother to the Titans: Pontus and Tellus were the parents of Nereus.

Oceanus (another name for the sea) was one of the Titans: Tethys was his sister and his wife:

from their marriage sprang a multitude of sons, who are the rivers, and a numerous family of daughters, called the Oceanides: these elder deities Pontus, Oceanus and Tethys, were never made the subjects of the Grecian sculpture.

Nereus is represented, like most of the male deities of the ocean and the rivers, with a long flowing beard and sea-green hair: the chief place of his residence was the Ægean sea: he was endowed with the gift of prophecy, and could assume whatever form he pleased: when Hercules sought the golden apples of the Hesperides, he applied to the nymphs who inhabit the caverns of the Eridanus, to know in what part of the world these apples were to be found: the nymphs sent him to Nereus, who being surprised by the hero, endeavoured by a variety of metamorphoses to elude his enquiries, and escape from his chains¹.

The consort of Nereus was Doris, one of the Oceanides, who brought him many daughters, called the Nereids: these beautiful deities were accustomed to dance about the throne of their father, and the chariot of Neptune: and thus the term Nereids has come to be used to express generally the female deities of the ocean: the most celebrated of the daughters of Nereus and Doris are Amphitrite and Thetis.

Neptune, the brother of Jupiter, became the husband of Amphitrite: the authority of Pontus and Oceanus and Tethys and Nereus appears gradually to have grown antiquated: they retired from their original honours to a condition of dignified ease: and Neptune is universally re-

¹ Apollod. Biblioth. ii. 5. Schol. in Apollon. Rhod. iv. 86.



NEPTUNE

ceived in the Grecian mythology as the God of the sea.

The appearance of Neptune, as described by the ancient poets^m, is extremely beautiful: he glides along the surface of the waves, in a chariot formed of a large and semi-transparent sea-shell of the colour of pearl: he is drawn by sea-horses: Triton, his son, blows the trumpet, which is also composed of a shell, before him; while other inferior deities float by his side, and guide the reins of his chariot: the dolphins, whose scales sparkle with azure and gold, play round his path, and seem rejoiced with his presence: Amphitrite rides along with him: the countenance of the God is majestic, awful and serene; and he bears in his hand the trident, or fork with three teeth, with which he divides the waves, and levels the surface of the waters: this glorious vision is a beautiful emblem of the vast element of the sea when composed into perfect calm.

One of the Gods of the sea, introduced by Homer in the *Odyssey*, and after him spoken of or alluded to by many poets, ancient and modern, is Proteus, famous for his consummate possession of the art of prophecy: he was consulted by Menelaus, king of Sparta, when upon his return from the siege of Troy, Menelaus was detained, wind-bound, for several weeks off the isle of Pharos in Egypt: Proteus, though knowing in future events, was seldom willing to communicate what he knew to inquisitive mortals: Menelaus, being secretly instructed how to deal with this coy and uncomplying God, surprised him when asleep, and bound him in chains: the God had the

^m Hom. *Il.* v. 23 Virg. *Æn.* v. 818.

power of assuming any shape that he pleased, and by these means thought to escape the importunities of the Grecian king: he assumed successively the form of a lion, of a voluminous and glittering serpent, a leopard, a boar, a river, and a tree: he expected under one or other of these forms to terrify Menelaus from his purpose, or to mislead and confound his ideas: the king however persisted with undaunted courage, and could never be induced to relax his hold: and Proteus, having at length exhausted all his tricks of evasion, yielded to the urgency of Menelaus, opened to him the knowledge of future events, and instructed him how to surmount his difficulties, and reach his desired home^a.

Nearly connected with the Gods of the sea, are the Gods of the winds: these are principally Boreas, Auster, Eurus, and Zephyrus; in other words, the north wind, the south wind, the east wind, and the west wind: their genealogy is said to have been this; Creus, one of the Titans, was the father of Astræus; Hyperion, another of the Titans, was the father of Aurora, the Goddess of the morning; Astræus and Aurora being wedded to each other, became the parents of the stars and the winds^o.

There are many other winds recorded by the ancients beside those of the four cardinal points, particularly Caurus and Argestes, whose operation was exceedingly tempestuous, and whose attacks were mightily dreaded.

Æolus, who according to some was a son of Jupiter, and according to others only an ancient king of Æolia, or the Æolian islands, to the

ⁿ Hom. Od. *l.* 385 et seqq. Ovid. Met. viii. 731.

^o Hesiod. Theog. 378.

north of Sicily, now called the islands of Lipari, and eminent for his skill in astronomy and navigation, is fabled to have had empire over the winds: his principal residence was Stromboli, or Strongyle, one of the Æolian islands: there he had a cave in which he shut up the winds: these boisterous deities roared and bellowed within the cave, and sought every cranny by which they might escape the despotism of their inexorable jailor, but in vain: if they could have escaped, we are told, they would have torn up the sea and the earth and the pillars of heaven from their foundation, and have carried them impetuously along through the boundless regions of space: Æolus however only occasionally let them loose for a very short period, which is the cause of terrible tempests, hurricanes and shipwrecks: and, when they have performed their destiny, Neptune drives them away², or Æolus recalls them, and they are shut up again in their strong prison of Stromboli.

Having just spoken of Aurora, the Goddess of the morning, I will here mention such particulars concerning her as are necessary to be known: Hesiod¹ assigns her a very poetical kindred: she is according to him, sister to the sun and the moon, and mother to the stars and the winds: Hesiod is extremely allegorical in his mythology: the relationship of Aurora to the sun and the moon is sufficiently obvious: she immediately precedes the appearance of the sun; and when the break of day arrives, the moon is no longer remarked: the winds are generally observed to fall towards evening, and to rise again when morning appears:

¹ Virg. Æn. i. 141.

² Theog. 371.

they therefore own the Goddess of morning for their mother: Lucifer, the morning star, is ever closely connected with Aurora; and the ancient mythologists were naturally led to represent all the stars as brothers, and proceeding from the same parent-stock.

The office of Aurora is to prepare the way for the sun: when she rises, the Hours unbar for her the gates of the East: she ascends in a chariot of gold drawn by two horses, as Apollo is drawn by four.

A glorious break of day in a fine climate, or in the middle of summer, is one of the grandest objects in creation: the veil of night is removed, and all things assume to the human eye their proper figure and colour: a rosy blush suffuses one half of the horizon, all nature is clothed with sparkling drops of dew: all nature is rendered fresh and alive again by the repose of the night: the breeze is young and untainted, and the fields never smell so sweet and balmy as at this early hour of the morning: the Goddess Aurora therefore was associated in the minds of the ancients with a thousand agreeable impressions.

CHAP. XV.

OF THE GODS OF HELL.

Tartarus and Erebus.—Site and Topography of Hell, or the Regions of the Dead.—Rivers of Hell: Acheron, Cocytus, Styx, and Phlegethon.—Swearing by the Styx, its Solemnity, and Why.—Monsters.—Charon, and his Boat.—Unfortunate Condition of the Ghosts of the Unburied.—Cerberus.—Fields of Lamentation.—Palace of Pluto.—Hecate and her Worship.—Mercury.—Judges of Hell: Minos, Rhadamanthus and Æacus.—Condemned in Hell: Tityus, Ixion, Tantalus, Sisyphus, and the Danaides.—Elysium.—Lethe, the Water of Oblivion.—Transmigration of Souls.

TARTARUS and Erebus, as I before told you, were the sons of Chaos and Darkness, and the brothers of Tellus, or the elder Vesta, usually called the most ancient of the Gods: in this sense they may be considered as persons, endowed with a human figure and an intelligent mind.

But much of the Grecian mythology, and particularly the remoter branches of the genealogy of the Grecian Gods, is plainly allegorical: Chaos, and Darkness, and Heaven, and Earth, in their most obvious and primary sense, however the poetical imagination of the Greeks might have furnished them with limbs and speech and voluntary action, clearly signify things, and not persons: in the same manner Tartarus and Erebus, though on certain occasions they were spoken of as persons, yet are more ordinarily employed as names of situation and place.

The Greeks believed that the soul, or thinking principle in man, survived the destruction of the body: they asserted that the souls of men after death became inhabitants of a region lower than the earth, hence called the infernal region, and Hell.

The Greeks, like all other nations who have maintained the immortality of the soul, taught that the pleasurable or painful state of being upon which men entered after death, had a connection with the merits or demerits of their conduct while they lived on earth: hence they separated the infernal region into two principal divisions, Tartarus, or the abode of woe, and Elysium, or the mansions of the blessed: Erebus was a general name for both, or according to some was rather appropriated to the residence of the good deceased.

The Greeks were exceedingly ignorant of astronomy, the figure of the earth, and the system of the heavens: they for the most part regarded the earth as a flat surface, like a round table, over which the sky stretched itself in the manner of a grand hemispherical canopy: America not having been discovered till about three hundred years ago, the other three quarters of the globe presented to the eyes of men unaccustomed to scientific and astronomical observations the appearance of a plane surface, or what mathematicians would call the section of a cylinder made at right angles with its diameter.

Hesiod, the oldest writer upon the Grecian mythology whose works have been preserved, says⁹, that the distance between Heaven and earth is

⁹ The. 720 et seqq.

such, that a brazen anvil let down from Heaven would be nine days and nights in falling before it reached the earth, and that Tartarus or Hell is just as distant below, as Heaven is elevated above, the surface of the earth: the greater part of the Grecian poets however, as has been before said, place the residence of the Gods on the top of some high mountain, particularly Olympus, and the regions of the dead at no very considerable distance beneath the surface of the earth.

The Greek poets and mythologists represent several of their heroes during their lives as paying a visit to the regions of the dead, particularly Orpheus, Theseus, Pirithous, and Hercules: not to mention Ulysses and Æneas; since the descent into Hell by the two last may be suspected to have been introduced by their respective poets into their works, rather as an ornament to their admirable writings, than as matter of historical relation.

This descent of living men into the regions of the dead, has given rise to various accounts as to the part of the earth from which such a descent might be made: Homer* has taken up the subject on the grandest scale, and describes Ulysses, when he descended into hell, as sailing to Cimmeria, a country situated “at the utmost bounds of the ocean, and never visited by the sun:” this description suggests the idea of a climate, as far remote as possible from the equator, or circle of greatest heat, and placed in the domains of eternal ice: Cimmeria is the name of a peninsula in Asia, the modern appellation of which is the Crimea, or Crim Tartary; but the Cimmerii

* Od. λ. 13.

who settled in this place, were perhaps a colony from some region still farther north.

The more usual accounts however of the descent into Hell were, that it was from some district of Italy or Greece, where the hero happened to be at the time: Theseus and Pirithous found a passage near the river Acheron in Epirus: Hercules descended by the mountain Tænarus in Laconia; and Æneas near Cumæ in Campania; the waters of the Acheron were black and bitter; near Tænarus there is a large and deep cleft of the earth, out of which issued a smothering and unwholesome vapour; and the waters of the Avernus, near Cumæ, sent forth a putrid and offensive smell: in fact, to the superstitious eyes of the first Greeks and Romans any pool or cavern of the earth which was distinguished by a loathsome and disgusting vapour, seemed to be an entrance to the infernal regions.

The geography, or rather topography, of Hell is particularly to be attended to, if we would form a clear idea of the infernal regions according to the Grecian mythology.

The whole region is surrounded with a wall, constructed by Neptune, the substance and gates of which are of brass: these gates are guarded by certain of the Giants and by Briareus with his hundred hands: when you had entered these gates, there still remained the journey of a year through a wild accumulation of the principles of things thrown together in the utmost disorder, before you reached the habitable domain; such is the description of Hesiod^s.

The ancients reckoned four rivers in Hell:

^s Theog. 781.

Acheron, Cocytus, Styx, and Phlegethon: a fifth I shall speak of hereafter.

The Acheron, as I have already mentioned, was a river in Epirus, the waters of which were bitter and loathsome to the palate: it is difficult to say whether the river in Hell received its name from, or gave it to, the river which flows upon earth.

Cocytus was another river of the same part of Greece: the waters, particularly in the season of tempests and storms, were observed to flow with a hollow and howling sound, which to a superstitious imagination resembled the groans of a departing spirit, or the lamentations of the damned.

The Styx was a small river, or rather lake, in the province of Arcadia: its waters were said to be of so deadly a coldness, that they proved a mortal poison to every one who drank of them; they had also the power of dissolving iron: the Styx was by these properties qualified to be a river in Hell: Virgil says that it makes nine times the circuit of the regions of the dead^t.

The Styx is particularly famous for being the subject of the most solemn oath which could be sworn by the Gods themselves: whatever a God swore by the Styx that he would perform, he dared not afterward refuse to execute, however he might repent of his oath.

This river owed its peculiar privilege to the following circumstance^v: Styx, who was a nymph, and one of the daughters of Oceanus, had three daughters of her own, Victory, Valour and Strength: all three assisted Jupiter in his war against the Giants, and were, as we might sup-

Georg. iv. 480.

^v Hesiod. Theog. 389.

pose from their names, of the utmost service to him on that occasion: Jupiter demanded of these miraculous allies how he could remunerate their aid, and they asked, as the greatest favour he could bestow, this token of honour in behalf of their mother.

The punishment awarded to that God who violated his oath sworn by the Styx, was that in the first place he should drink of the waters of that tremendous stream: this draught, which was certain death to a mortal, threw even a God into a state of the most oppressive lethargy which lasted a whole year: nor did his punishment end then: he was doomed for nine years more to wander an outcast from Heaven, and to seek shelter as a banished God where he could in foreign regions.

The last of the four rivers of Hell is Phlegethon: so called because it swells with waves of fire, and its streams are flames.

Virgil^w, who has handed down to us the last and most complete description of the regions of the dead, says, that immediately on entering this darksome abode, a stranger was encountered with a thousand monstrous and terrific forms, Cares, and Mourning, and a troop of Diseases, and Old Age: added to these were Fear, and Hunger, and Want, and Labour, and Sleep, and Death, with the dishonest Joys of the wicked, and Discord, and War, and the Furies.

Mingled with these allegorical personages were all the uncouth and horrid shapes that fancy ever framed, Centaurs, and Scyllas, and Harpies, and the hundred-handed Briareus, and Gorgons, and Hydra, and Chimæra; not that this was the real habitation of these terrible beings, but that their

^w *Æn.* vi. 273.

forms perpetually flitted before the scared eye of him who visited the infernal abodes.

As soon as he had passed through this formidable assemblage, he came to the banks of the Acheron: for a considerable way before he reached the water, he trod upon slime and mud, an uncomfortable and uncertain footing: here were gathered together an innumerable multitude of ghosts lately departed, eagerly waiting for a passage over the stream.

Charon, one of the most ancient of the Gods, the son of Erebus and Night, was the ferryman of Hell: his countenance was that of an old man, but his old age was vigorous and powerful: he had a long flowing beard, the hair perfectly white: but his beard and garments were deformed with neglect and filth, and his speech was ill-tempered and morose: he had no vessel but a crazy boat, which he conducted from one side of the river to the other by means of a long pole pushed against the shores and the bottom.

As a crowd of hovering ghosts hastened toward the place the moment they saw the ferryman approach, Charon selected a few, as many as his vessel would safely convey, and drove away the rest with surly speech and threatening gestures.

Every dead man paid to Charon a small brass coin for his fare: and many of the ancients took care to put this coin under the tongue of their deceased relation, that he might be at no loss for that requisite when he came to the banks of the Acheron.

No person was admitted into the boat of Charon till he had received the honours of a regular burial: so that those unfortunate persons who were sunk in the caverns of the ocean, or cast out

to the fowls of the air, were obliged to wander for a long time in wretchedness amidst the mud and slime of the river: after a penance of one hundred years they became entitled to the privileges of Charon's boat: it was regarded therefore by the ancients as the highest pitch of hard-heartedness or revenge to deny to the dead the honours of sepulture: and if a man were drowned at sea, or by any other means placed beyond the reach of this ceremony, his friends still paid to him the forms of burial, cast dust on his empty tomb, invoked his ghost to witness their piety, and spoke peace to his departed spirit.

The first object which saluted a stranger's eyes after he had crossed the river, was the tremendous three-headed Cerberus, the watch-dog of Hell, whose office it was to prevent the living from entering, and the dead from escaping: Hesiod gives him fifty heads: and Virgil describes him with a collar (so to express it) of fierce and frightful snakes, which grew round his neck: when the living visited the infernal regions, they were accustomed to throw to Cerberus a cake strongly impregnated with soporific drugs, which he ate, and was silent.

The first region of Hell that presented itself, immediately after the traveller had passed the kennel of Cerberus, was a sort of middle district appropriated to such as had neither merited the punishments of Tartarus nor the joys of Elysium: this region however was a melancholy abode, and a part of it was known by the name of the Fields of Lamentation: this portion of the infernal regions was inhabited by the souls of infants who had died as soon as they were born, of those unfortunate persons who had been put to death

wrongfully upon accusation of some crime, of such as had laid violent hands upon their own lives, of those who had been crossed in love, and lastly, of warriors who laid claim to no other merit but that of valour.

Next after this region presented itself the palace of Pluto: the mansion of the God was built like the heavenly habitations^x, under the direction of Vulcan, and by the labour of the Cyclops: it was extremely magnificent, but of a sad and melancholy aspect^y.

The persons of Pluto and Proserpine, the king and queen of Hell, have been formerly described: they are sometimes called, in reference to the supreme power they possessed in their own dominions, the infernal Jupiter and Juno.

Hecate is one of the principal deities of Hell: Hesiod^z makes her the daughter of Asteria the sister of Latona, and thus first cousin to Diana: subsequent writers however have usually considered her as Diana herself, and in reference to this, Diana is frequently styled *triformis*², being the Moon in heaven, on earth the Goddess of hunting, and in Hell presiding over incantations and magic.

Whether or no Hecate be the same as Diana, certain it is that as the Goddess of magic^b she was represented under a form very different from that which was proper to Diana considered as a member of the Olympian council: her countenance was of so dreadful an expression, that scarcely any mortal could dare to look upon it: snakes and vipers grew upon her head instead of

^x Hom. Il. *α*. 607.

^y Id. *θ*. 15.

^z Theog. 411.

^a Hor. iii. 22.

^b Euseb. Præp. Evang. 5.

hair: her feet were two serpents of enormous size; and her stature was one hundred yards.

The worship which was addressed to her was performed under the shadow of a tree called the lotus, by the side of a river, or wizard stream, at midnight: the sacrificer wore a garment of the colour of the midnight sky: the victim was an ewe lamb: a deep hole was dug in the earth, into which the blood was suffered to run: the body of the victim was burned upon a pile of wood: and during the whole ceremony the priest incessantly invoked the presence of the Goddess: he then slowly withdrew himself from the altar; and though, if the sacrifice had been rightly performed, it was now succeeded by a loud trampling of feet and howling of dogs, the priest was forbidden to look round till after a certain interval: then strange apparitions in various shapes were seen, from whose gestures or speech the sacrificer learned that which it had been the purpose of the ceremony to discover: these magical incantations however were held to be wicked, and therefore by no means formed a part of the authorised Greek religion.

Mercury was also a deity of Hell: in his character of one of the council of Olympus, he was the God of eloquence: in his character of one of the infernal deities, his office was to conduct the spirits of the departed to the boat of Charon, and again to lead them back after an interval of one thousand years, to become once more inhabitants of this busy world: with the touch of his caduceus^c he caused the soul of a dying person gently to part from the mortal frame; and with the same

^c Virg. *Æn.* iv. 243.



MERCURY

talisman he called up the ghosts of the dead from their residence in the infernal abodes.

Within the palace of Pluto were to be found the three judges of Hell, Minos, Rhadamanthus, and Æacus: the two first of these had once been men, and were the authors of the famous laws of Crete: Minos and Rhadamanthus were placed by the Greeks as the final judges of the spirits of men departed, in consequence of the consummate excellence they had displayed as lawgivers and judges while they lived upon earth.

Minos and Rhadamanthus were the sons of Jupiter by a mortal, Europa, daughter of Agenor king of Sidon: Æacus was the son of Jupiter by Ægina, daughter of Asopus king of the island of Ægina: Æacus was also the grandfather of the celebrated Achilles.

As soon as the visitor of the infernal regions had passed the palace of Pluto, his road divided into two; that on the left led to the inclosure where those who had committed great crimes on earth were doomed to suffer the punishments of their misdeeds, and that on the right to the Elysian fields, the residence reserved for happy souls in a future state^d.

Among the condemned suffering in Tartarus, the most remarkable are Tityus, Ixion, Tantalus, Sisyphus and the Danaides.

Tityus^e was the son of Jupiter and Elara: he is usually numbered among the Giants: fearless even of the authority of the Gods, he offered an affront to Latona, the mother of Apollo: for this audacity Jupiter sentenced him to Hell, where, as he lies chained to the ground, his body covers a

^d Virg. *Æn.* vi. 540.

^e Hom. *Od.* λ. 575. Virg. *Æn.* vi. 595.

surface of nine acres: a vulture sits upon his breast, and gnaws his liver, and feasts upon his entrails; and that his punishment may be eternal, it is decreed that his intestines shall grow again as fast as they are devoured.

Ixion^f was a mortal, who is said to have been foolish enough to pretend to fall in love with the queen of the Gods: Jupiter to baffle his silly ambition shaped a cloud into the exact likeness of Juno and sent it to Ixion: Ixion was deceived: Ixion and the cloud were the parents of the Centaurs: but, not contented with this, Ixion went away, and boasted that his high-minded love had not proved fruitless, as every body supposed it would have done, but that he had experienced all manner of kindness and favour from Juno, who assured him that she loved him no less than her husband: Jupiter, more than ever irritated at this insult, sent Ixion to Hell, and caused him to be fastened to a wheel, where he whirls round for ever in incessant motion.

The punishment of Tantalus^g is still more refined, as his crime was more base and abominable: he resolved, he said, to make a trial whether the Gods really knew as much as they pretended: with this view he invited them to a feast: he killed his own son Pelops, yet a child, and cutting him in pieces, caused the flesh to be dressed in various ways, and served up to table: the Gods were not so to be imposed upon: Ceres however, oppressed with grief for the loss of Proserpine, did not take notice what was set before her, and ate a piece of the shoulder of Pelops: Jupiter joined together the limbs of the child

^f Pindar. Pyth. ii. 39 et seqq. ^g Pindar. Olymp. α. 38 et seqq.

thus unnaturally and impiously murdered, and restored him to life: in place of the shoulder which Ceres had eaten, Jupiter gave him a shoulder of ivory: and Pelops appears in the list of the most eminent founders of the Grecian nation.

All that remained was the punishment of Tantalus^b: Jupiter condemned him to Hell, and furnished him with a feast no less painful to Tantalus than the feast of Tantalus had been to the Gods: plagued with perpetual hunger, a bough, loaded with fruit the most delightful to the senses of sight and smell, hangs immediately before him: but the moment it approaches his lips, a blast of wind never fails to drive it to a distance from him: tormented with the most intolerable thirst he is plunged up to his chin in a refreshing stream; but he no sooner stoops to taste, than by fate the water retires from his lips, which never take in so much as a drop.

Sisyphusⁱ was a famous robber, who was accustomed to bury those he plundered under a heap of stones, and leave them to expire in lingering tortures: in Hell his sentence is to throw a stone of vast weight up to the top of an immense precipice: this he is never able to effect: the stone almost reaches the top, but never fails to bound down again: poor Sisyphus, eager to complete his task, puffs, and strains, and sweats, but all in vain: the misery to which he is condemned is, always to be engaged in performing what he can never effect.

The punishment of the Danaides^k is similar to that of Sisyphus: Danaus king of Argos, was

^b Homer. Od. λ. 581.

ⁱ Id. λ. 592.

^k Hor. l. iii. Od. xi. 15 et seqq.

brother to Ægyptus king of Egypt: an oracle had foretold that Danaus should be deprived of his crown by a son of Ægyptus: to defeat the prediction he had recourse to the following cruel expedient: Ægyptus had fifty sons, and Danaus fifty daughters: Danaus married his fifty daughters to the sons of Ægyptus, but with this injunction, that each one should murder her husband on the wedding-night, as he slept: forty-nine of the brides faithfully performed the mandate of their father; and for this unnatural action they were condemned to Hell: each is furnished with a bucket, and thus they are commanded to fill a large tun with water, the bottom of which is full of holes: their labour is incessant; but, however unconquerable are their exertions, they never approach an atom the nearer to the end of their task.

The scene of punishment in the future world was gloomy and horrible: Virgil¹ says, it is not lawful for any good or innocent beings ever to pass the threshold, and witness the measures of retribution which are there carried on: Phlegethon, the river of fire, flows round it: Tisiphone, the most terrible of the Furies, watches perpetually at the avenue; and the adamantine walls are of such strength that neither men nor Gods are of ability to demolish them.

The very thought of this eternal prison was enough to inspire sadness into every heart: but the mortal visitor of the infernal regions passed on by the gates of Tartarus, and entered Elysium: the air of this delicious retreat was fresh and elastic: the light gave a bright and soothing

¹ Æn. vi. 568.

purplish tint to every thing it fell upon: the trees were for ever green, the lawns for ever fresh, and the hearts of the inhabitants for ever cheerful: they employed themselves in athletic exercises, in dancing, and in concerts of vocal and instrumental music, or passed away their hours in not less agreeable contemplation and repose.

The persons for whom these happy seats were reserved, were such as during their abode on earth had shed their blood for their country, pious priests whose conduct throughout had not been less exemplary than their profession was venerable, and men who had embellished human life by the invention of useful arts, or who had left behind them the remembrance of actions which were honoured by posterity.

It is clear that neither Tartarus nor Elysium were awarded, according to the Grecian mythology, but to the atrociously criminal or to the eminently meritorious: the bulk of ghosts wandered undistinguished in other tracts of the infernal regions, where their existence seems to have been joyless and uncomfortable: Homer^m makes Achilles in the regions below declare "how gladly he would exchange his state for that of the poorest ploughboy;" and Virgilⁿ remarks of the self-destroyers, who he by no means places in Tartarus, "How greatly now do they wish that it were permitted them to sustain poverty and every earthly hardship, in the light of the sun!"

Beyond the regions both of Tartarus and Elysium is the last river of Hell, the river Lethe: the peculiar virtue of this stream was, that whoever drank of it forgot every thing that had ever hap-

^m Od. λ. 488.

ⁿ Æn. vi. 436.

pened to him: hence another of its names was the Water of Oblivion.

Pythagoras, Virgil, and many of the ancients inculcated the doctrine of transmigration: that is, that the souls of the deceased, after an interval of a thousand years, return once more into the upper world and are born: the thousand years is the tenet of Virgil^o; Pythagoras seems to have admitted no interval: as it is certain that no one remembers any thing that happened to him in any pre-existent state, it was supposed that the souls which were under orders to revisit the light of the sun, first drank of the waters of Lethe, in consequence of which their minds became a pure blank: Pythagoras seems to have been the only one who returned to life without drinking of the Lethe: for he said he recollected having once been Euphorbus at the siege of Troy^p, and at another time a cock: he forbid his scholars eating the flesh of animals, lest un-awares they should devour their own parents.

^o Æn. vi. 748.

^p Ov. Met. xv. 160.

CHAP. XVI.

OF THE GODS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
FACULTIES AND CONCEPTIONS
OF THE MIND.

Mnemosyne.—The Muses.—The Graces.—Themis, or Justice.—The Hours, or Seasons.—The Fates.—Their Distaff, Spindle and Shears.—Story of Meleager and Althea.—Astræa.—The Golden, Silver, Brazen, and Iron Ages.—Nemesis.—The Furies, the most Terrible of all Superhuman Natures.—Death.—Sleep.—Dreams.—Discord.—Momus.—Impotence of his Censures.—Prayers.—Virtue.—Honour.—Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude.—Hope.—Filial Duty.—Story of the Roman Charity.—Contumely, Impudence and Calumny.—Fortune.—Plutus.—Hygeia.—Hebe.—Hymen.—Fame.—Liberty.

NEXT to the Gods already spoken of, it is proper we should consider those deities which represent the faculties and conceptions of the mind: this is another of the great beauties of the Grecian mythology: it not only imparted life and judgment and will to inanimate natures, and peopled the very deserts with divinities: beside this it also substantiated mere abstractions, the unreal and fleeting ideas of the soul:

it gave to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name:

by means of this transformation, the poet talked to his Muse, and personified Health, and Liberty,

and Justice, and Prayer: and by habit contracted a deep feeling of the reality of these things: imagination, the faculty by which men transport themselves into the situations of their fellows, and make the case of another their own, is the very soul of moral goodness: the mythology of the ancients therefore, which awakened the imagination, must have had some favourable influence upon the moral habits of its votaries.

The most eminent of what we may call these abstract deities, are the Nine Muses: they were the daughters of Jupiter, the king of the Gods, by Mnemosyne⁹ (or Memory), one of the Titans: by this allegory the Greeks plainly signified, that the greatest refinements of human intellect were modifications only of the original faculty of Memory, cultivated by a devout and sedulous intercourse with invisible natures.

The Muses were, Clio, the Muse of History, Euterpe, of Music, Thalia, of Comedy, Melpomene, of Tragedy, Terpsichore, of Dancing, Erato, of Lyric, Divine, and Amorous Poetry, Polyhymnia, of Rhetoric, Calliope, of Epic Poetry, and Urania, of Mathematics and Astronomy: their names are derived from certain Greek words, signifying respectively the attributes and province of each.

The Muses were represented as beautiful virgins, of a majestic figure and an expressive countenance, and Apollo ordinarily presided in their assemblies: each of them bore about her certain symbols emblematical of the art to which she was devoted: Clio, the Muse of History, was crowned with laurel; she had a trumpet in her right hand,

⁹ Hes. The. 52 et 77.

and a book in her left: Euterpe, the patroness of Music, had a tiara of flowers, and sustained a flute: the garments of Thalia, the Muse of Comedy, were trussed up short, for the convenience of an unrestrained motion: she wore the sandal, or sock, emblematical of comedy, and carried a mask in her hand: Melpomene was distinguished by the buskin, emblematical of tragedy, and a gorgeous sweeping robe, splendid with purple and gold: in one hand she bore crowns and a sceptre, and in the other a dagger: Terpsichore, the Muse of Dancing, was represented in a dancing attitude, and exhibited a musical instrument: Erato, the Lyric Muse, appeared with the lyre, and was crowned with roses and myrtle: Polyhymnia, the Muse of Rhetoric, wore a flowing robe of purest white, a sceptre in her left hand, and her right hand raised in the attitude to speak: Calliope, the Epic Muse, was represented bearing books in her hands, and crowned with laurel: and Urania, the Muse of Astronomy, was seen with a tiara of stars, her robe of heavenly blue, a globe in her hand, and various mathematical instruments scattered round her.

The Graces^r were the daughters of Jupiter by Eurynome, one of the Oceanides: some of the ancients have ascribed to them a different parentage, and made them the daughters of Venus: their Latin name is derived from *gratus*, "pleasing;" but their Greek appellation, *Charites*, comes from a verb signifying "to rejoice;" thus reminding us that whatever is to give us pleasure, must present itself with smiles and hilarity: it was a usual admonition among the ancients to

^r Hes. The. 906.

persons of a surly and melancholic temper, "Sacrifice to the Graces;" and Plato is related to have addressed the phrase in this sense to Xenocrates, one of his scholars, who displayed a remarkably austere character^s.

The names of the Graces were Aglaia, that is, "splendid," Thalia, that is, "flourishing," and Euphrosyne, that is, "mirthful;" they were represented under the most beautiful forms, naked, and with their hands joined, the middle one turning her back, and the two others their faces to the beholder: Seneca^t, the Roman philosopher, has undertaken to give an explanation to these circumstances: "they are naked," says he, "because kindnesses ought ever to be conferred in sincerity and candour: they are young, for the memory of a benefit ought never to grow old; they are virgins, for kindnesses ought always to be pure, and without thought of a requital; their hands are joined, for there should be a perpetual reciprocation of assistance among friends; and lastly, two of the three turn their faces to the beholder, to signify that every benefit received should be twice thanked, once when we receive it, and again when it is returned:" the worship of the Graces was the same as that of the Muses, with whom they had a temple in common.

Another of the wives of Jupiter was Themis^v, one of the Titans: she is understood to be the Goddess of Justice and Righteousness; she instructed Jupiter how to come off victorious in the wars of the Giants, and pointed out to Deucalion^w the means of re-peopling the world after the universal deluge: she was worshipped by the Ro-

^s Diog. Laert. iii. in vit. Xenocr.

^t De Benefic. i. 3.

^v Hes. The. 900.

^w Ov. Met. i. 379.

mans under the name of *Justitia*; and in this character has been represented in later times with an erect figure, a bandage over her eyes, a pair of scales in one hand, and a sword in the other.

The offspring of the marriage of Jupiter and Themis is various: she first brought him three daughters, called *Eunomia*, "Good Government," *Dice*, "Judgment," and *Irene*, "Peace:" taken in the sense of their names, they are the obvious growth and attendants of civilised society: but they had another office in the Grecian mythology, and were called the Hours; or, as perhaps the word [*Ωραι*] may be more justly translated, the Seasons: the connection between their different functions is this, that wherever Good Government, Judgment and Peace prevail, there the Seasons, Spring, Summer, and Autumn, will appear with all their auspicious characteristics: their symbols were respectively, a rose, an ear of corn, and a cluster of grapes: they were the nurses of Venus, or Beauty whether animate or inanimate^x: they were born in the opening of the year, and had their favourite haunts in the meadows^y: they were the door-keepers of heaven^z; they harnessed the horses of the sun^a; and the various temperature of the skies depended upon their pleasure: they trod the earth with a soft and almost imperceptible motion, and were the appropriate bringers of intelligence of every thing new that happened in every part of the universe.

Jupiter and Themis had three other daughters, called the *Parcæ*, the "Destinies, or Fates^b:"

^x Hom. Hymn. in Ven.

^y Orph. Hymn.

^z Hom.

Il. ε. 749.

^a Ov. Met. ii. 118.

^b Theocr. Syracus. 105.

this genealogy was assigned them, because the fates and fortunes of men, as well as the regular return of spring-time and harvest, grow out of the state of society in which they are born.

The Fates however had a vague and uncertain character, proceeding from the metaphysical or philosophical conceptions of men respecting the order of the universe: one thing appears to be for ever connected with another: if Milton's father had not given him a learned education, Milton would never have written *Paradise Lost*: if Milton's mother, when she was with child, had happened to have passed through a street where a wild beast had broken loose, she might have been frightened, and Milton not have been born alive: if Milton's father and mother had never met, he would never have been born at all: perhaps their meeting depended upon some ball to have been given by the lady of a manor: Milton's mother would not have gone to the ball, if she had not been supplied with a cap by a French milliner: if a stage-coach had not been setting out for Oxfordshire at a particular time, the French milliner would never have come there: the French milliner would never have passed over to England, but for the persecution set up by the Catholics against the Hugonots: there never would have been Hugonots if Henry VIII. had not fallen in love with Anne Boleyn at cardinal Wolsey's banquet: in this manner all events seem to be linked together in an indissoluble chain: this connection of event with event is what some religious writers have called Predestination.

Taken in this sense Homer, and other Greek poets represent the power of the Fates as para-

mount to that of Jupiter^c: it therefore became natural to assign them a remoter origin: Plato^d says, they are the children of Necessity, Lycophron^e of the Sea or Chaos, and Hesiod in one place that they are the offspring of Erebus and Night^f, though in another he speaks of them as sprung from Jupiter and Themis^g.

The names of the Fates are Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos: they are generally represented under the figures of three old women, clothed in black: as soon as they were born, they fled to a distant quarter far removed from Gods and men, where they sit in a spacious, gloomy cave, scooped out of an immense rock of marble, and are perpetually busied with deciding upon the fortunes of the universe.

The better to convey to us the nature of their functions, the Parcæ are usually represented, Clotho as holding a distaff of adamant, Lachesis with a spindle drawing out a thread representative of the life of man, and Atropos with a pair of shears ready to cut the thread whenever her caprice may prompt her to do so.

The Fates are always described as inexorable; yet the ancients were eager to erect to them temples and statues, and demonstrated toward them every sentiment of respect: for the homage of the mass of mankind is less regulated by what they hope, than by what they fear.

The story of Meleager aptly illustrates the ideas which the ancients entertained of the Parcæ: Meleager was the son of the king of Ætolia: and to grace his birth, the Parcæ (like what we read of

^c Vid. supra, 41.

^d De Repub. 10. juxta finem.

^e Cass. 145.

^f Theog. 217.

^g Id. 903.

fairies in fairy-tales) were present at the moment he came into the world: Clotho gave him for gift that he should be the most courageous of mankind; Lachesis that he should excel all others in feats of activity; and Atropos, snatching a brand from the fire, said he should live as long as that billet remained unconsumed: Althea, the mother of Meleager, heard these predictions, and carefully extinguishing the brand, kept it ever after among the things she was most anxious to preserve: the most heroic of the actions of Meleager was the destruction of the wild boar of Calydon: all the heroes of Greece attended on this occasion, but it was Meleager that struck the ferocious creature to the heart: after the hunt was over, the two uncles of Meleager, brothers of Althea, envious of his glory, picked a quarrel with him, and in defending his life both of them were killed: Althea hastened to the temple of the Gods to return thanks for her son's success against the boar: but, as she returned, she met the corpses of her brothers, and becoming frantic with rage, flew home, cast the fatal brand into the flames, and Meleager expired^b.

Astræa was also the daughter of Jupiter and Themis: her character is exactly similar to that of her mother: she is intimately connected with the beautiful fiction of the Golden Age: "In the beginning of things," say the poetsⁱ, "all men were happy, and all were good: there were no quarrels, and there needed no law: all men loved and assisted each other: none wandered in search of distant climates, or in ships cut the unknown sea: the bowels of the earth were yet unransacked

^b Ov. Met. viii. 270 et seqq.

ⁱ Id. i. 149.

in search of the precious or the harder metals : spring and summer succeeded each other, without the intervention of winter : the earth brought forth all its fruits without the labours of the plough : cares, wants, wars and diseases were unheard of : and after a long series of healthful and happy existence, the lives of men subsided in a pleasing sleep, and their spirits became wafted to the mansions of the Gods, and regions of eternal joy."

This state of things did not last for ever : to the Golden Age, the Silver succeeded, to the Silver the Brazen, and to the Brazen the Iron Age : " A perpetual spring no longer fertilised the ground : cultivation was necessary, and cultivation produced property : steel was dug out of the earth, and ships navigated the ocean : men continually quarrelled with each other, and laws and punishments became necessary to repress their quarrels : wars arose between nations : shame and modesty were unknown : the most sacred engagements were violated, and truth and sincerity were set at nought : crime succeeded to crime : sons watched impatiently for the death of their fathers, and step-mothers mixed poison for the innocent orphans they should have protected : adultery, incest, blasphemy and murder stained the history of every day."

In the Golden Age^k the Gods did not disdain to mix familiarly with the sons of men : the innocence, the integrity and the brotherly love they found among us were a pleasing spectacle even to superior natures ; but, as mankind degenerated, one God after another deserted their late beloved

^k Ov. Fasti, i. 246.

haunts: Astræa, or Justice, lingered the last: she was loth to leave mankind, who had so long conformed themselves to her dictates: at length the smell of the wholesome earth now steeped in human gore, could no longer be endured by her: she flew away to heaven, and took her place, under the name of Virgo, among the signs of the zodiac¹.

Nemesis is a deity closely connected in character with Themis and her offspring: she is the Goddess of Vengeance: she is said by Hesiod^m to be the daughter of Night without a father, but by Pausaniasⁿ, a celebrated ancient historian, to be the child of Jupiter and Necessity: the conduct of Nemesis is always regulated by the strictest rules of justice: she is terrible only to offenders: but she is severe and inexorable in her proceedings: it is her province to defend the relics and the memory of the dead, and to pursue all sorts of crimes with a proportioned punishment: she is represented with a fierce countenance, with wild and dishevelled hair, and a whip in her hand: her emblems are wings and a wheel, to denote how swiftly punishment overtakes the criminal: yet sometimes the ancients, in allusion to many notorious facts in the history of mankind, observed of Nemesis, or the Vengeance of Heaven, that though sure to overtake the guilty head, her arrival was tardy, and the deluded offender oft-times promised himself that his sin was forgotten; the priest and the poet warned their votaries, that Nemesis was indeed slow of foot, but that her hand was heavy, and its inevitable blow crushed the guilty into dust: one of the names of this deity

¹ Arat. Phænom. i. 98 et seqq.

ⁿ Pausanias, i. 33.

^m Theog. 228.

was Rhamnusia^o, from a celebrated statue of her carved by Phidias, and set up in the temple of Rhamnus near Athens.

The Furies are attendants upon Nemesis; and are said by Virgil^p to be like her the daughters of Night; but Hesiod^q makes them the sisters of the Giants who warred against Heaven, being, like them, sprung from the blood of Cœlus: they are also called Eumenides and Diræ: they are three, and their names Alecto, Tisiphone and Megæra: they had another name, Erinnyes, which was common to them all: these were the most deformed and horrible of all the Grecian deities: their faces were emaciated, ghastly, and dun, as if embrowned with smoke: instead of hair, they had snakes depending from their heads, which lashed their necks and shoulders, and worked them up into rage: their eyes were blood-shot and flaming, and seemed ready to burst from their sockets: they carried iron chains, and whips with lashes of iron, or sometimes of scorpions, in one hand, and lighted torches in the other: their garments were of a rusty black, stained with fresh streams of blood, and hanging loose and tattered about their bony forms: they were the bearers of celestial vengeance against offending nations, and carried with them war, pestilence and famine: Terror, Rage, Paleness and Death followed in their train: they also struck remorse and frenzy into the hearts of enormous offenders: the Furies constantly haunted Orestes for having slain his mother, though that mother had first proved unfaithful to her husband the father of Orestes, and had afterwards treacherously killed

^o Pausanias, i. 33.

^p Æn. xii. 345.

^q Theog. 184.

him: when they fixed upon a guilty person, they followed him night and day; waking or sleeping, he saw them; they haunted him in solitude; they pursued him in feasts; the gloomiest cavern could not hide, and the most sumptuous palace could not defend him from their assaults^r.

The Greeks regarded these deities with such insurmountable terror, that they scarcely dared pronounce their names; and, when they passed by their temples they turned their faces another way, lest the very sight of the edifices should blast them^s.

There are several other of the ancient Gods, which were the progeny of Night.

Night, as has been seen, was one of the eldest of the Gods, the daughter of Darkness and Chaos, and the sister of Tellus, Tartarus and Erebus: it is characteristic of the Grecian mythology, often to ascribe to the daughter the qualities of the parent: hence Night is frequently taken as the same with Chaos; and in this sense she is styled by Orpheus^t the parent of Gods and men, being conceived to be prior to both in the order of time.

Taken in the allegorical meaning, we cannot be surprised to find Sleep and Death ranked among the children of Night.

Sleep and Death are said to be brothers, extremely resembling each other, and strongly smitten with a mutual attachment.

Death however is more frequently represented as a female, the twin-born of Sleep: her gar-

^r Æschyli Eumen. passim.

^s In Noctem.

^t Soph. Œd. Col. 123 et seqq.

ments are black, speckled with small stars, and her wings black and heavy.

Sleep, as we are told by Ovid^v, holds his perpetual residence in the deep cavern of a mountain in the country of the Cimmerii, into which the rays of the sun, either morning, noon, or night, never penetrate: the whole space is filled with a thick and flagging vapour: no cock, or dog, or any animal accustomed to rouse men from their slumbers, comes near the place: no voice is heard: the very leaves are never moved with the rustling of the wind: only the river Lethe creeps through the cave, and with a dull, murmuring sound invites and prolongs the slumbers of the God: the cavern is without a door, lest the creaking of a hinge might disturb the deep silence, and without a centinel, for in that region it is impossible that wakefulness should ever be maintained: Sleep himself reposes upon a downy couch, the covering of which is black: a heavy weight seems to press down his eyelids, and his head, nodding and oppressed, alternately falls on one side and the other: he is surrounded with myriads of Dreams, his offspring, whose task it is to protect and prolong the repose of their father: the chief of these is Morpheus, who has the faculty of assuming the airy form of every mortal that lives, or that ever has lived, Icelus, who presents to monarchs in their sleep the shape of beast, or bird, or any living thing, and Phantastus, who takes the appearance of inanimate substances, a rock, a palace, a forest, or a sea.

Discord is another of the children of Night; to whom Homer^w ascribes this peculiarity, that

^v Met. xi. 592.

^w Il. *l.* 440.

though at first she is but a dwarf, yet being nourished, she so improves in bigness, that while she walks along on the earth, her head touches the very heavens: it was the Goddess Discord^x that, at the nuptials of Thetis, honoured the festival, at which all the deities attended, with the gift of a golden apple, on which was written, "Let it be presented to the fairest:" Juno, Minerva and Venus immediately advanced their pretensions; and as the Gods were unwilling to interfere in their contention, Paris, the shepherd-son of king Priam, was appointed umpire: the Goddesses appeared naked before him, that the beauty of their proportions might be fully displayed: each of them offered a bribe: Juno promised to reward his favour with empire, Minerva engaged to make him the greatest of military heroes, and Venus to bestow upon him in marriage the most beautiful woman on earth: Paris decided in favour of Venus, and from that moment the two other Goddesses became his inexorable foes^y.

Among the children of Night are also frequently numbered Care, Fraud, Concupiscence, Misery, Old Age, and many the like unsubstantial beings^z.

Lastly, by a very apt metaphor, Momus^a, the God of Scoffing and Censoriousness, is universally stated to be the progeny of Night: by this fiction the generous ancients fastened the utmost degree of scorn upon a critical and carping disposition: they insinuated to all their disciples this glorious lesson, that nothing is more difficult than

^x Lucian Dialog. Mar. Panopes et Galenes.

^z Hes. Theog. 224

^a Id. 214.

^y Ov. Her. 16.

to produce a great and admirable work, in which shall be at once displayed the skill and comprehensive mind of its author, and a most excellent and important use for those for whom it was intended; while nothing is more easy than to raise quibbling objections to parts of such a work, to view every member of it with a squint and distorted eye, and to hold up each in turn to the laughter of the empty, the frivolous and the brutish.

It is in this sense Milton says, "Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like the strong man [Samson] after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam: purging and unscaling her long abused sight [this alludes to the story of St. Paul's conversion] at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance: while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms."

Momus is the satirist of heaven: though all the conceptions of the Gods were noble, and all their works were admirable, he with the most impudent fool-hardiness directed against them the shafts of his ridicule: Neptune, Minerva and Vulcan, three Gods of the highest class, seeing the incorrigible folly with which he laboured, once entered into a confederacy to put him to shame: and all, producing the most admirable efforts of their power, begged him with a grave air of humility to point out to them the censures to which they were liable: Neptune's work was a proud

and stately bull: Minerva's a spacious and splendid mansion, replete with every grace of art, and every accommodation that convenience could suggest: Vulcan's was a man, of erect front, the most perfect proportions, and a mien alike expressive of wisdom and benevolence: this must be supposed to have passed before the creation of the world, and these three productions to have been respectively the first specimens in their kind.

Momus for an instant stood abashed: he forgot his nature, and was speechless with wonder and delight: presently he recollected himself, and thought he should be for ever disgraced, if he did not adhere to his character of the "satirist of the Gods."

He looked at the bull: "All this is vastly well, vastly well indeed, brother Neptune," said he, "this animal is strong and awful and terrible: in many respects nothing can be better: but look at those eyes: come, confess, my friend, you were out there: why are they so far from each other? do not you see that, if they were close under his horns, every blow that he struck in his rage, would go so much the surer to its aim?"

He then looked at Minerva's palace: he strained hard for a fault, and was almost in despair; every thing was so complete: at last he said, "What a clumsy, cumbrous affair we have here! Why, Minerva, you should have clapped wings to your house, and made it as light as a feather: a house can never be without a situation and a neighbourhood: and, if your house should be in a bad neighbourhood, what-a-devil is its inhabitant to do? you do not expect him to take it up upon his back, and run away with it?"

Momus next turned to Vulcan's man: "Why,

this is worst of all," said he (he knew in his heart that Vulcan had surpassed both his competitors): "a man is nothing without a woman, nor a woman without children, nor a family without a tribe or a nation: and then, what hypocrisy and duplicity and treachery there will be in the world! now, if you had gone about your job with the least of the eye of a workman, would not you have made a window in your man's bosom, that every body might see without any trouble the very thoughts that were working in his heart^b?"

Prayers are reckoned by Homer^c among the daughters of Jupiter: this is perhaps to be regarded rather as a poetical allegory, than a section of Grecian mythology: it is however so beautiful, that it is worth your remembrance: "Though thus highly born, they are," says Homer, "lame of their feet, and wrinkled in their visages: their eyes are dim, and their behaviour is dejected: they are the constant attendants upon Injury: where Injury goes before, depressing the weak, and breaking the hearts of mankind, Prayers follow after, solicitous to heal the wounds that he has inflicted: Injury is strong and sound of feet, while Prayers are feeble, tottering and infirm: yet are they never far behind: they apply themselves to soften the heart of the injurious man, that he may repent the evil he has done: happy is he that listens to their suit: for, if any reject their modest, interceding voice, Jupiter visits that man, for the sake of his daughters, with exemplary punishment: an Injury heavier than that which he has committed falls upon the

^b Lucian. Hermotim.

^c Il. i. 502.

hard-hearted : his requests to the Father of the Gods are laughed to scorn : as he would listen to no intercession, so Jupiter pursues him with sorrow upon sorrow, till the pride of his heart is humbled in the dust."

All the Virtues, which can inhabit the breast of man, and prompt his tongue to speak, or his hand to act, were esteemed Gods, and had temples or altars erected to them in some parts of Greece or Italy : as these however were plainly allegorical, they had not a particular ancestry and descent ascribed to them like the other Gods, but stood alone, and were regarded as self-centered and independent : it was a beautiful fiction, by which all the great and admirable qualities of the human mind were represented with certain attributes and under a certain form, were elevated to the rank of things living and divine, and were deemed capable of actuating the hearts of their votaries and hearing their prayers.

Virtus, or *Arete*, was the general name for them all : Marcus Marcellus^d, a celebrated Roman consul, built a temple to Virtue, and another to Honour, and by a contrivance full of moral and meaning, so disposed the relative situations of the two, that the temple of Honour could not be entered but through the temple of Virtue.

The ancient moralists in their reasonings on Virtue, considered the good qualities of a free agent as resting upon four principal points^e, Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude, which they called the four cardinal or principal Virtues.

All the abstract qualities of the mind were re-

^d Liv. xxix. 11.

^e Cicero de Off.

presented under female figures: the Virtues were necessarily tall, graceful, comely and majestic: Prudence was distinguished by a carpenter's square in her hand to denote precision, and a globe at her feet expressing the largeness of her observation: Temperance carried a bridle; Justice a balance; and Fortitude stood in a firm attitude leaning upon a sword, the point of which rested upon the ground.

There were many other Goddesses of the same class, beside these four: and from their rank and circumstances in the Grecian mythology, and the statues of them which have been preserved, we are at this day perfectly familiar with their symbols and attributes: who, for instance, has not seen Hope leaning on her anchor?

There are various qualities of human actions, which are ordinarily regarded as the links by which the machine of human society is held together, and its order and sound constitution preserved: these were particularly venerated among the ancients: such are *Fides*, Faith: *Veritas*, Truth; *Concordia*, Concord; *Honestas*, Noble or Liberal Conduct; *Pudicitia*, Chastity; and *Pietas*, Filial Duty.

A temple was dedicated to Filial Duty in Rome on a very memorable occasion, and the story^f is strongly illustrative of the ideas the Romans entertained of the moral virtues: a Roman matron of distinguished birth was by the laws condemned to die: we are not told what was her crime: the jailor however received a warrant commanding him to put her death in prison: meanwhile he had conceived a respect for his prisoner, and by

^f Plin. Hist. Nat. vii. 36.

a singular kind of compassion could not prevail upon himself to put her to death, but resolved that he would leave her to perish by want of food: this unhappy matron had a daughter, that was newly married, and that had an infant to whom she was accustomed to give suck: the daughter came every day to the prison, requesting that she might be permitted to visit her mother: the jailor granted her desire, only on condition that she would allow herself to be searched, that she might convey no sustenance to her wretched parent: still the jailor expected when the unhappy matron would die: he was responsible for her existence: she was dead in law: he was disappointed: day after day, and week after week she continued to live: the keeper was at length convinced that there was some mystery in this, which he determined to penetrate: he hid himself in a convenient place to observe the next interview: when to his astonishment he discovered the head of the mother reclined upon the arm of the daughter, who presented her nipple to her parent to suck: she had invented this extraordinary way of administering nourishment to her mother, not being able to bear to see her expire before her eyes.

The jailor, brought up in the Roman notions of the superlative merits of Filial Duty, did not hesitate to disclose what he had seen to the judges; who on their part were struck with so profound an admiration at the fact, that they not only acquitted the daughter of all offence of what she had done, but gave her the life of her mother: this mother, who had lately been under sentence of death for some capital crime, was now decreed by a vote of the senate to be maintained for the

rest of her life at the public charge, together with her daughter: the prison itself in which this lovely scene had passed, was by the same vote ordered to be pulled down, and a temple to Filial Duty erected on its ruins.

It may at first appear surprising that the ancients not only erected temples and altars to the principal virtues which are the ornaments of human nature: they also paid a similar homage to the vices of man: such were Contumely, Calumny, and Impudence, each of which were honoured with religious worship by the Athenians: you may be sure it was not that they really held these qualities in respect and esteem.

To explain the riddle, it should be recollected that fear is a main principle of religion: "The fear of the Lord," says the Wise Man in the Bible, "is the beginning of wisdom:" pious persons full as often pray to God that he would not afflict them with certain evils, as that he would confer on them certain benefits: this sort of prayer is technically called "deprecation."

The Athenians therefore deprecated the power and malice of these vices: they prayed that they might escape the Contumely and Calumny of wicked men, and that Impudence might never become an inmate of their own breasts: thus explained, it appears that it was a noble bashfulness and pudency of soul that first led men to erect altars to Impudence.

Let it suffice for me to name a few other deities of this abstract species; for to make a complete catalogue of them would be tedious: the figure of Fortune, as spoken of by Æsop and others, is familiar to every one: she has a bandage over her eyes, to denote that she bestows her favours

indiscriminately upon the deserving and the worthless; and she stands upon a wheel, an emblem expressing the inconstancy of her temper, and the vicissitudes which her followers must look to experience.

Plutus² was the God of Wealth: like Fortune he was blind: for nothing can be more indiscriminately distributed than the good things of this world: he was painted lame; for wealth is usually very slow of acquisition: at the same time that he had wings; for “Riches,” as the wise man says, “make themselves wings, and fly away.”

Hygeia, or Health, was a Goddess always represented under the most engaging forms; for health is that blessing, without which all other blessings are worthless and insipid, and which gives a zest to them all: her smiles were irresistible: the colours in her cheek were softer than those of the peach, and the brightness of her eye inspired gaiety into every beholder: the texture of her flesh was firm, and her light and cheerful motions were grace itself, for they flowed from the hilarity of her heart.

Hebe, the Goddess of Youth, was the daughter of Jupiter and Juno: Jupiter was so delighted with her extreme beauty, that he made her his cup-bearer: her cheeks were fresh as the new-blown roses, and her flesh was enchantingly dappled, white and red: she wore a crown of flowers of the most exquisite richness and luxuriance: once on a time however, Hebe happening to fall in an awkward manner so as to excite a smile at the celestial banquet, the king of the Gods, like an earthly monarch, offended with what he ought

² Lucian. in Timor.

to have deemed accident, dismissed her from her employment, and took Ganymed in her stead, as will be seen hereafter^h.

It was the prerogative of Hebe to restore Gods and men to perpetual youth at her pleasure: Jupiter, when he took Hercules, his favourite son by an earthly mother, up into Heaven, gave him as a mark of his peculiar grace the Goddess Hebe to wifeⁱ.

Hymen, the God of Marriage, was the son of Bacchus^k, and Venus: according to other accounts, Hymen was originally the name of a young Athenian of extraordinary beauty, but ignoble origin, who fell in love with one of the most illustrious maidens of that city: in pursuit of the object of his passion, he disguised himself in female attire and joined a procession of Athenian virgins to Eleusis: a pirate-ship touched at Eleusis, and carried off many of the virgins, and among them Hymen and his mistress: Hymen laid a plan in concert with his fellow-captives, to destroy the pirates, and deliver the prisoners: he brought the vessel in triumph into the port of Athens: his citizens called upon him to name the reward they should give him for having performed so signal a public service: he asked their consent to marry one of the maidens he had delivered: thus he obtained his mistress's hand; and their wedlock was so fortunate, that it grew afterward into a custom to invoke his name on all occasions of marriage, and to pray that the couple now united might be as happy as Hymen and his bride^l,

^h Serv. in Virg. *Æn.* i. 28.

ⁱ Hom. *Od.* λ. 601.

^k Sen. *Med.* 110.

^l Serv. in Virg. *Æn.* i. 651. Schol. Hom. *Il.* σ. 493, represents Hymen as an Argive.

The attributes of Hymen were a garland of roses and marjoram, a saffron-coloured robe, and a torch^m.

Fame is a Goddess beautifully described by Virgilⁿ: she is one of the Titans: she is in perpetual motion, and though of small stature at first, grows and enlarges by going, till her head touches the skies: her body is clothed with feathers, and under every feather she has an eye to observe, an ear to hear, and a tongue to repeat all things; she never sleeps: by day you may often see her perched upon some high tower, that she may enjoy the more extensive prospect; and by night you may be startled with the whizzing of her wings, as she goes from town to town and from country to country, spreading rumours, some true, and many false.

Liberty,—“the mountain nymph, sweet Liberty,” as Milton calls her,—you may think whether she was worshipped by the ancient Greeks and Romans, who owed every thing to her, their courage, their virtues, their arts, and their glory, and who prized her more than life: the figure under which she was represented expressed every thing frank, ingenuous, and superior to fear: there was nothing about her wild, turbulent and restless: she seemed to know her own powers, and to repose in them a sober and enlightened confidence: her emblems were, the wand with which the magistrate touched a slave, and the *pileus*, or cap, so often spoken of by the name of the “cap of liberty,” which he put on his head, when he was admitted to his freedom.

^m Sen. Med. 67. Catull. lx. 7.

ⁿ Æn. iv. 173.

CHAP. XVII.

OF DEMIGODS.

Recapitulation.—Origin of the Demigods.—Inachus.—Io changed into a Heifer—and watched by Argus with a Hundred Eyes.—Phaeton—falls from the Chariot of the Sun, and is drowned.—Ogyges's Flood.—Cecrops, Half-Man and Half-Serpent.—Erichthonius, with Dragon's Feet.—Cruel Treatment of Philomela by Tereus.—Jealousies of Cephalus and Procris.—The Flood of Deucalion.

HAVING finished the history of the Gods of the Greeks, strictly so called, I will now give you an account of an inferior order of personages, but who make a conspicuous figure in the ancient mythology, and are sometimes called Demigods, and sometimes Heroes: these personages are understood to have had for their parents on one side a God, and on the other side a mortal.

The undisputed Gods of the highest order, or the remotest antiquity, that we read of in the Grecian mythology, may be divided into two classes, the allegorical and the personal.

It is not to be supposed that the more ancient Gods, as they are called, such as Chaos, Tellus, Cœlus, Tartarus, Erebus, Darkness and Night, ever were men and women: they seem to be merely names for the conceptions of the mind, and an explanation, partly poetical, and partly philosophical, of the origin of things: it is to be remembered that the ancients were all of opi-

nion, unlike to that which we are taught in the Holy Scriptures, that the matter of which the world is framed was eternal.

After the allegorical beings of the Grecian mythology, we come to those that I was calling personal: the accounts handed down to us of the family of Saturn, and the family of Atlas, have strongly the air, however disfigured by fables, of having a foundation in real history: Jupiter, and Mercury, and Prometheus, and the rest, in all probability once were men.

These personages however were the foundation of the Grecian mythology; and, though the Greeks made Jupiter a native of Crete, and so of the rest, this seems to have been the fruit of a national vanity: there is every reason to believe that they received their notions of the history and attributes of these Gods, together with their civilisation, by tradition from some more ancient people: the family of Saturn and the family of Atlas once were men, but it is not possible for us to discover in what age or what quarter of the world they lived.

Of the Demigods the accounts we have received is somewhat less obscure: the notion of this rank of personages originated in the flattery addressed by the Greeks to the powerful and prosperous, or the gratitude they felt for certain eminent benefactors of mankind: having already fixed their ideas of the family of Heaven, persons who were the proper objects of worship public and private, they pretended that the human creature whom they chiefly loved or feared, had a God, one of the heavenly habitants, for his father or his mother.

In ancient times, when science was least per-

fects, the human mind was most open to delusion: it is in such times that men believe in apparitions, and prodigies, and enchantments, and sorcery, and witchcraft: it was as common for a Greek of the earlier times to think he saw a God as a ghost: and the compliment that a God came down from Heaven to give commencement to his being, was perfectly acceptable to a great man of antiquity.

One of the latest, and therefore one of the most notorious examples of this is in Alexander the Great^o, who lived only about three hundred years before Christ: he gave out that he was begotten by Jupiter in the form of a serpent: no courtier had any chance of preferment with him who did not profess to believe this: he led his army many hundred miles across burning sands to the temple of Jupiter Ammon in Lybia, that he might obtain from the oracle a confession that this account of his birth was true: Alexander the Great lived in a time of too much refinement and knowledge to admit so foolish a story: he did not succeed in imposing it upon his countrymen.

One observation it is reasonable to make here: an improper representation has sometimes been given by satirists of the moral character of Jupiter: they have described him as for ever thinking of falling in love with women, and playing a thousand unlucky pranks: it is plain however that this is no part of his proper and original character: the history of the Demigods is the appendix or supplement of the Grecian mythology, by which the first gravity and sobriety of its cha-

^o Plut. in Alexand.

racter were corrupted: the reason that Jupiter is represented as falling in love with a multitude of women, is not from any licentiousness in his own disposition, but because every hero was ambitious to be a Demigod: the teachers of this religion did not perceive till too late, that by this means they were ascribing to the first of their Gods an indecent and libertine disposition: though this circumstance however has been much misunderstood, it is a strong argument of the imperfection and weakness of the religion of the Greeks, that it was susceptible of so unseemly a corruption.

The oldest personage in the annals of Greece belonging to the history of the Demigods is Inachus¹, who founded the city of Argos in Peloponnesus according to the most received chronology in the year before Christ 1856: he is said to have been the son of Oceanus and Tethys, and consequently the brother of the rivers, of Doris the wife of Nereus, and of the other nymphs the Oceanides: Inachus was in fact the name of the river which flowed by the city of Argos, and this is probably the origin of the fabulous parentage assigned to the founder of the city.

The beauty of Io², the daughter of Inachus, was so great as to inspire the bosom of Jupiter with love: Juno did not like that the king of Gods and men should think any female handsome but herself: finding that he was absent from his usual abode of Olympus, she suspected that beauty was the cause of his wandering: she looked down through the transparent sky of a summer's day, and saw a thick cloud over-hanging a meadow near Argos: Jupiter was under-

¹ p Apollod. ii. 1.

² Ov. Met. i. 583 et seqq.

neath the cloud, paying compliments to the bright eyes of Io: Juno hastened to the spot, and Jupiter had just time to change his mistress into a beautiful heifer: "Whose heifer is that?" said the queen of Heaven: "I know not," answered Jupiter: "Give it to me," replied Juno: Jupiter could not refuse her a gift apparently of so little value.

Juno knew well enough the nature of the present she had obtained, and determined to prevent any future private conversations between Io and her husband: she accordingly committed the care of her beautiful heifer to Argus, a very extraordinary sort of person, who had no less than a hundred eyes; and as he never slept with more than two at a time, Juno thought she could not consign her prisoner to a more trust-worthy keeper: Argus chained her up every night, and fed her in sight along the banks of the Inachus by day, where her father, admiring the beauty of the heifer, would often pat her fair sides, and feed her with flowers out of his hand, without suspecting that it was his daughter: at length Jupiter, pitying her misfortune, sent Mercury to her relief: Mercury disguised himself like a shepherd, and first played Argus a tune, then laid him asleep with his wand, and at last cut off his head: Juno took the hundred eyes of Argus, and stuck them in the tail of her favourite bird, which is now called the peacock.

Yet not for this did Juno remit her vengeance against Io: she drove the heifer mad, and in her madness Io fled into Egypt: Jupiter at last interceded with Juno, and promised never to speak to Io again: she was then permitted to resume her

former shape: Epaphus was the son of Jupiter and Io: in Egypt Io and Epaphus assumed the names of Isis and Orus.

There was a famous dispute^r, or contention for superiority, between Epaphus, the son of Jupiter, and Phaeton, the son of Apollo; and the catastrophe that ensued on this dispute is of a very extraordinary nature.

The parentage of Phaeton is somewhat obscure: Ovid^s says that his mother was Clymene, one of the Oceanides: if Phaeton was a God both by father and mother, it does not seem quite regular that he should be subject to death, as we shall find that he was: his reputed father was Merops, king of the island of Cos.

Phaeton and Epaphus engaged together in the same sports: Phaeton did something Epaphus did not like: "That is not fair play," said Epaphus, "and I will have nothing more to do with you:" "I insist upon it, it is," replied Phaeton; "and I will not give it up: I would have you to know I am the son of Apollo, and as good as you at any time:" "You the son of Apollo!" cried Epaphus: "your mother may have told you so: but to my knowledge it is all a lie."

Phaeton went away in great dudgeon to hear his mother called a liar: "Tell me," said Phaeton to her, "the truth, and give me proof of my high birth:" "By this light," answered Clymene, "you are the son of Apollo; and, if I say an untruth, I wish I may die, and never see his beams again: but, if you do not believe me, go and ask your father; I will point out to you the road."

^r Ovid. Met. l. 747 et seqq.

^s Id. i. 756.

Phaeton set out, and soon arrived at the palace of the sun: Apollo saw him coming, advanced toward, and embraced him: "My dear son," said the God, "child of promise, son that I shall never need to be ashamed of!" "Alas," said Phaeton, fixing his eyes upon the ground, "I am insulted by my play-mates, and told that my relation to you is all an invention of my mother: now, oh, father, light of the world! if you are indeed my father, give me demonstration of it, and grant my request!" Apollo called Styx to witness that he would.

"All I ask," said Phaeton, "is that for a single day, I may drive the chariot of the sun, and thus make the circuit of the world:" "Alas," replied Apollo, extremely disturbed, "you know not what you ask: are your stripling powers equal to guiding the chariot up the steep ascent at break of day, and down prone into the ocean again in the evening?" the further to dissuade him, Apollo described the ungovernableness of his horses, whose breath was fire; and the monsters, the bull, the crab, the lion, and the scorpion (signs of the zodiac) that would beset his way: all was vain.

Phaeton leaped lightly into the chariot, and seized the reins: the chariot carried no weight; it no longer contained the great author of the day: it jolted from side to side: Phaeton could scarcely keep his seat.

At length the chariot climbed the highest heavens: it was noon: Phaeton saw the scorpion with claws extended, and black venom pouring from his mouth: he was frightened: he looked to the east and the west: he was equally remote from the place he had set out from, and the goal to which he was travelling: he looked to the

earth: it was at a frightful distance beneath his feet: the reins dropt from his hand.

The horses felt they had no master, and they ran away: they approached the earth: they set fire to the mountains, with the forests upon them: they dried up the rivers: they almost dried up the sea: Earth, the eldest of the Gods, complained to Jupiter of the universal destruction that was at hand: Jupiter seized a thunderbolt, and struck Phaeton from the chariot: he fell to the ground, and was drowned in the river Po^t.

Phaeton had three sisters, Lampetie, Phaethusa, and Lampethusa: these grieved so incessantly for his tragical fate, that Jupiter at length in pity turned them into poplars by the river-side, and their tears into amber, a beautiful, transparent and fragrant gum, exuding from the trees, and dropping into the stream^v.

Ogyges was a Demigod who is supposed to have lived 1764 years before Christ: he was the son of Tellus, or according to others of Neptune, and reigned in Bœotia: in his time happened a deluge, which so overflowed the neighbouring country of Attica, that it remained under water two hundred years^w.

After a lapse of two hundred years Cecrops came from Egypt, and settled in Attica: he was the founder of the immortal city of Athens: we have no particular account who were his parents, but in his form he is said to have been half a man and half a serpent^x.

Cecrops had only three daughters, Aglauros, Pandrosos and Herse, and was succeeded in the throne of Athens, after two short and troublesome

^t Ov. Met. ii. 1 et seqq.

^w Paus. ix. 5.

^v Id. ii. 340 et seqq.

^x Apollodorus, iii. 14.

usurpations, by Ericthonius the son of Vulcan: Ericthonius had in other respects the form of a man, but his feet were the claws of a dragon: to hide this defect he is said first to have invented the use of chariots: when he was born, he was shut up in a basket by Minerva, and delivered in charge to the daughters of Cecrops, with a special injunction that they were on no account to examine the contents of the basket: Pandrosos and Herse faithfully obeyed the Goddess; but Aglauros laughed at their timidity, and impiously uncovered the secrets of Minerva^y.

Herse was beloved by the God Mercury, and Aglauros was the confident of their amour: but Minerva to punish her disobedience, inspired her with envy of her happy sister's fortune; and Mercury, for her envy and ill behaviour turned her into a stone^z: Cephalus was the son of Mercury and Herse: he was beloved by Aurora, and taken up into heaven^a: his history has been confounded with that of another Cephalus, the son of Deioneus king of Thessaly, of whom I shall speak presently.

The son and successor of Ericthonius was Pandion, the father of Progne and Philomela: Progne became the wife of Tereus, son of Mars, and king of Thrace: after five years' marriage, Progne said one day to her husband, "I am very happy, a happy wife, a happy mother: yet one thing is wanting to complete my satisfaction: I have an only sister: we lived together from childhood: not a word of unkindness ever passed between us: I have not seen her these five years:

^y Ov. Met. ii. 552 et seqq.

^z Id. ii. 722 et seqq.

^a Apollodorus, iii. 14.

either send me on a visit to Philomela, or fetch Philomela that she may spend a few months with me.

Tereus, who wished nothing more earnestly than to give pleasure to his wife, set out for the court of Pandion, to solicit him to spare his remaining daughter for a short time on a visit to her married sister: this was an unfortunate expedition: Tereus no sooner saw Philomela, than struck with her beauty, he preferred her a thousand times to his wife: he made a resolution that he would put away Progne, and marry her sister.

As Philomela travelled with Tereus from Athens to Thrace, thinking no harm, her brother-in-law, when they came under the shadow of a thick wood, judged that a fit opportunity to open all his wicked thoughts to his fair fellow-traveller: Philomela was filled with astonishment and anger at every word he uttered: she told him he was her abhorrence and aversion: she made a solemn oath that she would discover the whole to her sister and her father: Tereus humbled himself to her, but in vain: if he promised to desist from his project, Philomela thought he only designed to take a more secret and dangerous way to accomplish it: Tereus in despair cut out the poor maiden's tongue, and shut her up in a tower, that she might not betray him: he came home to his wife, and told her a dismal story how her sister had died on the road.

Despair is often fertile in resources: Philomela endeavoured to amuse her sad and solitary hours with curious works in embroidery: at length she made an embroidery of her own story (this she could do, though she could not speak), and bribed one of her jailors to deliver it to the queen

of Thrace: Progne became acquainted with the horrible tale, how Tereus had at once abused her poor sister, and deceived her with abominable lies: she loved Philomela so much, she thought she could not live without seeing her: you may think then what a shock this story gave her: she killed her only son with her own hand, because he was the son of Tereus: she did a thousand mad things: at length Progne was changed by the Gods into a swallow, Philomela into a nightingale, and Tereus into a lapwing: in this form each of them still sings of their past woes, and repeats a pathetic or melancholy note^b.

Erectheus was the son and successor of Pandion in the throne of Athens: he had a daughter named Procris, married to Cephalus king of Thessaly: they loved each other much, and might have been very happy, had they not been subject to the mutual vice of jealousy: Cephalus, that he might try his wife's fidelity, came to her in disguise, and obtained from the Gods that he might pass upon her for a stranger: as a foreign merchant he tried upon his wife every allurement and art he could invent, to persuade her to leave her husband, and go and live with him: all was fruitless; till at last he proffered to her acceptance a casket of jewels of the most dazzling brilliancy: the courage of Procris was shaken, and she began to yield: Cephalus then threw off his disguise, and told her who he was.

Procris, ashamed, would no longer live with a husband, who had discovered her weakness: she went to the woods, and professed herself a follower of Diana: Diana took pity upon her, as her

^b Ov. Met. vi. 424 et seqq.

offence had proceeded no further than thoughts, and contrived a scheme for Procris to make herself even with her husband: the Goddess presented her with a dog that was always sure of his prey, and an arrow that was never known to miss its aim: with these she sent her in the disguise of a stranger to Cephalus: Cephalus was very fond of hunting: he was exceedingly sorry for the loss of his wife, but he did not believe she would ever come back again: he was tempted with these extraordinary gifts, and at length consented to divorce Procris, and live with the stranger.

Cephalus and Procris, having seen and forgiven their mutual frailty, now dwelt for some time in harmony together: by and by somebody brought Procris word that Cephalus had a mistress: they were sure of it, they said, for they could tell her name, which was Aura, and where their daily meetings were held: the truth was that Cephalus, fatigued with hunting, went every day to a particular shady walk, and called Aura (which is Greek for the refreshing breeze) to come and cool him.

Procris went where she was directed, and waited, eager and motionless, for her husband's coming: sure enough she saw him at the appointed time, though she could not see his mistress: he approached the spot: Procris was all expectation: at length he cried in a soft and languishing voice, "Come, gentle Aura, how I pine to meet you!" Procris could bear this no longer: she made a rustling behind the bushes that concealed her: Cephalus thought it was a stag: he caught up his arrow that never missed its aim, and struck his wife to the heart: thus

Procris paid a very severe penalty for her curiosity^c.

Deucalion was a prince who reigned in Thessaly, about fifty years later than the reign of Cecrops in Athens: both he and his wife Pyrrha owed their birth immediately to the Gods, he being the son of Prometheus, and she the daughter of Epimetheus, first cousins to Jupiter: the mother of Pyrrha was Pandora: in the time of Deucalion, Jupiter, exasperated with the crimes and enormities of mankind, sent a flood which destroyed the whole world: Deucalion and Pyrrha, the only pious and innocent persons then living, embarked in a small vessel, and alone survived the destruction of the human race: when the flood subsided, they landed upon mount Parnassus; and struck with their forlorn and desolate situation, they resorted to the oracle of Themis which happened to be near, humbly enquiring how the destruction that had taken place might be repaired, and the ungodly generation which had perished replaced by one more virtuous: the oracle commanded them to cast the bones of their "Great Mother" over their shoulders: they were at first puzzled with this direction, and shuddered at the thought of violating the remains of their earthly or imputed parents: at length they discovered that by their mother the oracle designed the earth, and that the bones of their mother were the pebbles scattered upon the surface: they obeyed the will of the Goddess; and the stones cast by Deucalion were turned into men; and those thrown by Pyrrha into women^d.

^c Ov. Met. vii. 690 et seqq.

^d Id. i. 240 et seqq.

CHAP. XVIII.

OF BACCHUS, GOD OF WINE.

Jupiter assumes the Form of a Bull, and carries off Europa.—Cadmus, the Founder of Thebes.—Semele consumed by Fire from Heaven.—Education of Bacchus.—Solemnity of his Worship.—His Figure.—His Adventure with Pirates.—Perplexity of the History of Bacchus.—He is the same with Osiris.—His Pacific Conquests in Ethiopia, India, and other Countries.—He is attended by Satyrs.—Silenus, a Rural God, his Preceptor.—Story of Midas, who turned every thing he touched into Gold.—Midas's Ears changed into those of an Ass.—Story of Triptolemus.—Punishment of Lycurgus, King of Thrace, for his Opposition to Bacchus.—Punishment of Pentheus.—Leucothoe and Palæmon.—Actæon turned into a Stag.

CADMUS is one of the most eminent personages in the early Grecian history: he passed over from Phœnicia into that part of Greece called Bœotia, ten years after Deucalion's flood: we are not to expect consistency in the fabulous history of the ancients: accordingly in this short space of time from the universal destruction of mankind, we read of Cadmus^c transporting himself from one civilised country, to teach the arts of life to the savage inhabitants of another: Cadmus is said to have first imported letters into Greece, which afterwards surpassed all countries of mankind in the use of letters.

^c Herod. ii. 49, et iv. 147.

We may well expect that the Greeks, who excelled so much in fable and the brilliancy of imagination, would adorn with a variety of fictions the history of so memorable a person as Cadmus: and in this expectation we are not disappointed.

The following is said to be the occasion of Cadmus's passing over from Phœnicia: Agenor king of Sidon, his father, had also a daughter, called Europa: Jupiter fell in love with this princess, and determined to run away with her: to effect this purpose he turned himself into a most beautiful milk-white bull, with horns of the finest pearl, and in this disguise mixed with the herds of king Agenor: Europa exceedingly admired the noble animal, who carried himself toward her with the utmost tameness, ate the flowers out of her hand, and kissed the fingers of the giver: Europa, charmed with his gentleness, patted his sides, and at length ventured to leap upon his back: Jupiter watched his opportunity: he stood upon the sea-shore; and he no sooner felt himself pressed with the desired burthen, than he plunged into the waves, and swam away with the affrighted maiden to the island of Crete^f.

Agenor, afflicted beyond measure by the loss of his daughter, ordered his son Cadmus to set out in search of her, and added to his commands this severe injunction, that his son should never venture to return till he had found her: Cadmus sought his sister through the world in vain; who can expect to find what Jupiter desires to conceal? at length, in Phocis, near the oracle of Delphi, he ceased from his wanderings; and, not

^f Ov. Met. ii. 847 et seqq.

daring to go back to his father, asked the direction of Apollo, where he should fix his abode: the oracle told him that, at going out of the temple, he would see a young heifer, and that he was to follow this animal till it lay down of its own accord; there he was to fix with his followers, and to call the country Bœotia, from *Bos*, the Greek name for an ox.

Cadmus accepted the omen, and on his arrival kissed the earth which he was henceforth to inhabit: the next thing he thought of was to make a sacrifice to Jupiter: he sent his followers to seek water for his sacrifice: he waited their return from morning till evening, but not one of them came back: he then hastened himself to search the cause: they had found a spring, but it was defended by an enormous dragon with a triple row of teeth in either jaw, which, the moment an urn was let down into the fountain, sprang forth and destroyed them: Cadmus killed the serpent: Minerva appeared to him, and directed him to repair the loss of his companions by sowing the earth with the teeth of the dragon: from this extraordinary seed immediately sprang up a crop of armed men, who, retaining the venomous character of the source of their existence, fell to instant blows, and were all, except five, killed on the spot: these five, warned by the fate of their fellows, struck up a league of amity, and became the coadjutors of Cadmus in building the city of Thebes.

The wife of Cadmus was Hermione, or Harmonia, who was according to some the daughter of Mars and Venus: and according to others sister

to Dardanus, the founder of Troy: by her he had one son Polydorus, and four daughters, Ino, Agave, Autonoe and Semele: Polydorus was the second king of Thebes^h.

Semele, the youngest of the daughters of Cadmus, was the mother of Bacchus: Jupiter, they said, became enamoured of the maiden: this was the usual fiction by which the Greeks sought to do honour to their favourite heroes: by an obvious consequence they represented Juno as irritated at the infidelities of her husband, full of rage against the favourite sultana of the day, and nourishing a furious animosity against the strippling Demigod.

Jupiter assumed the figure of a man, and in that disguise paid his visits to Semele: the better to secure her affections, he however confessed to her in private who he was: upon this circumstance Juno built her project of revenge: she appeared before the young lady in the form of Beroe, her nurse, and pretended to be her friend.

“How are you sure,” said this treacherous foe, “that the person who visits you is actually Jupiter? any audacious adventurer might say that he was a God; and tricks and delusions are abroad every where: were I in your place, I would require him to give me proof of his pretensions: nay, if he be Jupiter, the thing I am going to recommend will afford the most certain pledge that he really loves you: say to him the next time he comes, that you are tired of being always visited thus in masquerade, and beg that at least for once he would enter your chamber in the same majesty and state, with which he presents himself to Juno his wife.”

^h Paus. ix. 5.

Semele adopted the suggestion of her specious adviser: she said to Jupiter, "Grant me a boon: tell me that you will, before I inform you what it is:" the enamoured God felt that every thing that Semele said was a law to him: he swore by Styx that he would comply with her demand: she then disclosed her petition: Jupiter at hearing it was struck with despair: he would have stopped her mouth, but it was too late: he could not retract his oath.

Jupiter went away, and presently returned in his proper form: the whole apartment was illumined with the God: lightnings played around him, and the roofs roared with thunder: the countenance of Jupiter was too bright and terrible for any mortal to look upon: Semele was reduced to ashes in a moment.

Though Semele died, Bacchus was preserved: the infant was found unhurt amidst the ashes of his mother: he was first taken care of by Ino, his mother's sister, and afterward committed to the tuition of certain nymphs, called the nymphs of Nysa: the place of his education was Naxos, one of the islands of the *Ægean sea*ⁱ.

Bacchus, in the Grecian mythology, was the God of wine: and, though in strictness he was only a Demigod, one of his parents being a mortal, yet the importance of the province which was consigned to him, bread and wine being regarded as the two great sustainers of human life, gave him a high rank in the religious system of the ancients: persons employed in husbandry, and who depend for their all upon the mercy of the seasons, are usually found to be among the

ⁱ Ov. Met. iii. 259 et seqq.

most pious of mankind: every nation has its prayers for a plentiful harvest, and its thanksgivings when the fruits of the earth have been gathered in well: it was therefore impossible that the Greeks, amidst the cares of the vintage, should not often call upon Bacchus, or should not celebrate his praise in pompous festivals when those cares were concluded: the Dionysia, or festivals of Bacchus, as they were solemnised at Athens, have already been described in an early chapter of this book.

Bacchus was ordinarily represented under the naked figure of a beautiful young man, but considerably plump in his face and limbs, as might seem best to befit the generous living of the patron of the vine, and his countenance expressed the merry and jovial cast of thought which wine inspires: he was crowned with ivy and vine-leaves, and bore in his hand the thyrsus, a dart twined round with the leaves of the ivy and the vine^k.

There is a pleasing story related of the early youth of Bacchus: he had already spent several years in the island of Naxos, when certain Tyrrenian pirates happening to touch there, found him asleep on the sea-shore, and being struck with his extreme beauty, determined to carry him off, and sell him for a slave: they had already proceeded a considerable way in their ship, when Bacchus awoke.

Bacchus, who was now a blooming and lovely boy, was conscious, it seems, of his divine origin and power, and resolved to make himself

^k Ipse, racemiferis frontem circumdatus uvis,
Pampineis agitat velatam frondibus hastam.

Ov. Met. iii. 666.

sport of these audacious robbers: he asked them in great apparent terror, how he came there, and what they purposed to do with him? one of the most artful of the crew replied, "Be under no terror, sir: you shall suffer no harm from us: tell us where you wish to be, and thither we will conduct you." "Naxos," replied the God, "Naxos is my home, and there I wish to be:" Naxos lay to the right hand of the ship: the pirates pushed with all their might for the left, and at length made for shore.

The seeming boy then burst into tears: "This is not my country," said he: "these woods and hills and towers are not the woods and hills and towers of Naxos!" the brutal sailors laughed at his distress, and only rowed the more eagerly for the bay: what was their surprise when they found their vessel as immoveable as if it had been on dry land! they plied their oars incessantly: suddenly vines which seemed to spring out of the sides of the ship, twined their branches round the oars, and they became immoveable too: the vines climbed the masts, and hung their luxuriant clusters over the sails: Bacchus waved a spear he held in his hand, and tigers, lynxes and panthers appeared to swim round the ship, and play with the waves: the pirates, seized with astonishment and frenzy at what they beheld, leaped overboard into the sea, and by the power of the God were changed into dolphins: this done, Bacchus caused the vessel once more to float upon the water, and presently arrived, accompanied with his train of tigers, panthers and dolphins, at the place of his residence¹.

¹ Ov. Met. iii. 597 et seqq.

There is no instance in the history of the heathen Gods, where the Greeks have more conspicuously done what I have formerly mentioned, transplanted the Gods of some foreign nation to their own soil, and mixed up his adventures with fictions of their own, than this of Bacchus.

Of the real history of the Grecian Bacchus, the son of Semele, we know nothing: it may even be doubted whether there ever was such a person: though it is perhaps more probable that he had an existence, and did patronise and encourage the cultivation of the vine: but the Greeks found the history of an Asiatic conqueror, who extended his triumphant progress over Egypt, Ethiopia, Arabia and many other countries, who planted a colony on the banks of the Indus, and who introduced civilisation and husbandry wherever he came; and this history they blended after their manner with the obscure tale of the son of Semele.

This conqueror is the most ancient in the records of mankind, and his real transactions are so disguised with marvellous narration, that we do not even know what countryman he was, and whence he set out: the Egyptians have done the same thing as the Greeks, claimed him for their own, and perhaps with as little reason: there is an intimate connection between this primitive conqueror and the geographical name of Nysa: wherever such a town as Nysa is found in ancient story, it is supposed that it owed its commencement to this mighty conqueror, the Asiatic Bacchus: he is said to have set out from Nysa, a town of Arabia nearly on the situation of the present Medina, and to have built Nysa on the Indus at the farthest extremity of his eastern conquests.

The Egyptians relate his history under the

name of Osiris^m: his conquests are said not to have been the fruit of arms and hostility, like the conquests of those who have trod in his steps, but of benefits: his army consisted, not of soldiers, but of men and women in great multitudes eminently accomplished in the arts of rural industry: wherever he came, he taught men the science of husbandry and the cultivation of the vine: wherever he came, he was received with festivity and rejoicings: when he entered Ethiopia, which was one of his first expeditions, he was joined by a band of Satyrs, who for ever after accompanied him with songs, with music and dancing: he rode in an open chariot drawn by lions: Pan and Silenus, two of the rural deities, were among his principal officers: Silenus was the guardian and preceptor of Bacchus, and, while the conqueror rode magnificently and in triumph, Silenus attended him mounted on an assⁿ.

The Greeks having adopted the history of this Eastern conqueror, have added to it several adventures supposed to have happened to him on or near their native soil: while Bacchus was on his march along the Grecian coast of Asia Minor, Silenus, they say, at one time wandered so far from the host that he could not find his way back: in this distress he was encountered by some peasants, who conducted him to the court of Midas, king of Phrygia: Midas received him with the utmost kindness and hospitality, and Bacchus was so grateful to the king for this courtesy to his preceptor, that he bade the Phrygian ask what he would as a boon, and it should be granted: Midas, in a grasping and foolish spirit, intreated

^m Herod. ii. 144.

ⁿ Ov. Met. iv. 17 et seqq.

the God that whatever he touched should be turned into gold: Bacchus granted his request: if Midas put a bit of meat to his mouth, it became gold: if he attempted to drink, the liquor was changed to solid gold: so that Midas was in danger of being starved to death: he prayed Bacchus to revoke his gift, who ordered him to bathe in the river Pactolus, and he should be immediately cured of the horrible ill he had desired: Midas did so, and from that time the Pactolus became distinguished from all other rivers by rolling over sands of gold^o.

King Midas has become celebrated for another adventure nearly connected with this: while Pan resided at the court of Midas, he frequently entertained the king with the music of his pipe: Midas was so ravished with the performance that he frankly told his guest, he was convinced that his skill in that art surpassed the skill of Apollo: this came to the ears of the God of music, who being not at all pleased with the comparison, condescended to come down from Heaven to convince Midas of his mistake: Pan played a voluntary before his majesty, and Apollo followed with another: the whole court were convinced of the incomparable superiority of Apollo; but Midas persisted in his opinion.

Apollo saw that it was to no purpose to exhibit the wonders of his art to one who would never acknowledge he had been in the wrong: to punish Midas for his obstinacy, he took his leave, but in parting caused two ass's ears to grow upon the sides of his majesty's head: Midas was ashamed of this ornament, and contrived to have his locks

^o Ov. Met. xi. 85 et seqq.

arranged, and his crown put on so, as to conceal his misfortune: he could not however conceal it from his barber, whom he enjoined under the most dreadful penalty to keep his secret: the barber was in the greatest distress: he did not like to be hanged, and he could not hold his tongue: he went out in the marshes, and when he saw that no mortal was near him, he stooped his head to the ground, and whispered to the reeds, "King Midas has the ears of an ass:" in this he thought he was safe; but strange to tell, the reeds ever after, when moved by the least wind, were found to repeat the intelligence of the barber, "King Midas has the ears of an ass."

By the story of the competition between Apollo and Pan, the Greeks may be supposed to express their ideas of the superiority of elegant and polished art, as it is to be found in the most cultivated state of society, over those rude beginnings and "incondite lays," which nevertheless derive a certain power of affording pleasure, from their wildness, and the artless simplicity with which they are conceived.

Another of the companions of Bacchus in his marches was Triptolemus, son of Celeus king of Eleusis near Athens: Triptolemus was a ward of the Goddess Ceres: in her travels in search of Proserpine, she was received with peculiar hospitality by Celeus, and she rewarded the virtue of the father by her kindness to the son: she saw, while she relieved her fatigue under the roof of Celeus, a fine boy, the only child of her host, laid in a cradle, and labouring under a fatal distemper: the Goddess resolved, first to restore him to health, and then to endow him with her

choicest gifts: she fed him with milk from her own breast, and at night covered him all over with coals of fire: under this extraordinary treatment he not only speedily recovered his strength, but shot up miraculously towards manhood, so that what in other men is the effect of years, was accomplished in Triptolemus as in many hours: Meganira, his mother, astonished at what she saw, could not subdue the curiosity she felt to know how all this was effected: she discovered a small chink, by applying her eye to which she could observe what passed in the apartment of the Goddess: she remained in breathless admiration, till the last part of the process came to be performed; but when she saw her darling son extended on the hearth, and the glowing embers heaped upon him, she screamed with terror: the operation was disturbed: it was no longer in the power of Ceres to make Triptolemus immortal: what she could, she performed: she enriched him with the knowledge of all the arts of husbandry, and sent him in her own chariot drawn by dragons through the world: it was to this affection borne by Ceres to the young prince of Eleusis, that the Greek referred the origin of the Eleusinian Mysteries.

Though Bacchus marked his passage from country to country by the benefits and instructions he bestowed, and was in almost all places received with eager welcome, this was not always the case: when he passed over from Asia into Europe, Lycurgus¹ king of Thrace distinguished himself by his opposition to the conqueror: the Thracians having planted vines agreeably to the methods communicated by Bacchus, Lycurgus seized a scythe for the purpose of destroying

¹ Apollodor. iii. 5. Schol. in Hom. Il. ζ. 130.

them: the God, offended at this instance of contempt, struck Lycurgus with madness: in his frenzy he could not distinguish objects, and with the scythe in his hand he wounded himself and destroyed his only son: an oracle had assured his subjects that they should not taste of the fruit of the vine as long as Lycurgus lived: they cast him into prison, and afterward caused him to be torn to pieces by wild horses.

It seems to have been on his return from his victorious expedition, that Bacchus found the government of Thebes in the hands of Pentheus, the son of his aunt Agave: Pentheus was viceroy of Bœotia under Polydorus his uncle: the young governor set himself in opposition to those improvements which Bacchus had been spreading all over the world: he even sent out his officers, and commanded them to lead the God to prison: Bacchus submitted; but he was no sooner lodged there, than his chains fell off, and the prison-doors burst open: Pentheus next hastened to the spot where the Bacchanalian ceremonies were to be celebrated, and determined to interrupt them; in reality it may be suspected that it was the extravagance of the Bacchanals that excited the virtuous displeasure both of Lycurgus and Pentheus: Bacchus, irritated at his cousin's obstinate resistance, struck his relatives with a sudden delusion: they no longer knew Pentheus: they thought they saw a wild boar which had broken into their vineyards, and was destroying their vines: under the influence of this infatuation, the mother and aunts of Pentheus made a furious assault upon him: they slew him, and tore him limb from limb^r.

Ino, the eldest of the aunts of Bacchus, and

^r Ov. Met. iii. 512 et seqq.



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who had also been his nurse, had by that means excited the displeasure of Juno: to wreak her vengeance upon this unfortunate female, Juno struck her husband Athamas with madness: Athamas met his wife and her two little sons, and thought them a lioness and her whelps: believing this, he caught up the eldest, and dashed out his brains: Ino, terrified with the shocking spectacle, fled with the youngest, and plunged into the sea, where they were turned into marine deities by the names of Leucothoe and Palæmon^s.

Another misfortune is related of the children of Cadmus: Autonoe, the youngest of Bacchus's aunts, had a son named Actæon, who was extremely fond of hunting: one day as he pursued the pleasures of the chase, he came to a beautiful fountain, environed with trees, and in the most solitary situation imaginable: this fountain was a peculiar favourite with Diana, the Goddess of hunting, who happened to be bathing in it naked, surrounded with her nymphs, just as Actæon came up: the youth imprudently gazed upon the Goddess: Diana felt all the indignation natural to the Goddess of Chastity: her quiver was not at hand, being left on the shore: she used such arms as were within her reach, and filling her joined hands with the waters of the fountain, cast them in the face of the hunter: they no sooner touched the face of Actæon than he was changed into a stag: his own hounds came up, and pursued him, and after a long chase, miserably tore him to pieces, while his companions made the woods resound with the name of Actæon, complaining that their leader was absent, and did not enjoy the glorious sport^t.

^s Ov. Met. iv. 416 et seqq.

^t Id. iii. 138 et seqq.

CHAP. XIX.

OF MINOS AND THE MINOTAUR.

Minos, the Son of Jupiter and Europa, is chosen King of Crete—marries Pasiphae, Daughter of the Sun.—Birth of the Minotaur.—Idæi Dactyli.—Dædalus, the Athenian Artificer—murders his Nephew—flies to Crete—builds the Labyrinth as a Prison for the Minotaur.—Athenians thrown to the Minotaur to be devoured.—Nisus and Scylla.—Dædalus shut up in the Labyrinth—flies away with Wings of Wax.—Icarus, his Son, falls into the Sea, and is Drowned.

I HAVE already spoken of the manner in which Europa was carried off by Jupiter, and conducted to the island of Crete: here she became the mother of Minos and Rhadamanthus, princes celebrated for their justice, and who were supposed after their deaths to be appointed judges of the spirits of the departed in the infernal regions: Asterius, king of Crete, afterward married Europa, and, as she brought him no children, he adopted the sons she had borne to Jupiter.

Minos^v, king of Crete, after the death of Asterius, married Pasiphae, daughter of the sun, or Apollo, and was the father of Androgeus, Ariadne and Phædra: Minos, among his other royal

^v Apollod. iii 1. It is supposed by many mythologists, that there were two kings of Crete, of the name of Minos, he of whom the following adventures are related, being in that case grandson to the Minos, who was the lawgiver of Crete and the son of Jupiter and Europa. The statement adopted in the text is according to the chronology of Sir Isaac Newton.

possessions, had a very beautiful white bull, and Pasiphae is said to have ridiculously taken it into her head to fall in love with this bull: she thought, I suppose, of the bull whose form Jupiter had assumed when he ran away with her husband's mother: but what is more extraordinary, the fabulous history goes on to relate, that in consequence of this absurd passion Pasiphae became mother to a strange monster, half man and half bull, called the Minotaur^w.

The age of Bacchus and Minos is beyond all others the age of the Demigods, and that for this reason: it was in this age principally that the refinements of civilisation were introduced into Greece: Bacchus taught the cultivation of the vine; the Idæ Dactyli, a colony which Minos introduced into Europe, and who are said to have taken their name from the Greek word *Dactylus*, a "finger," because, like the fingers of a man, they were exactly ten in number, invented the manufacture of iron and brass: Minos taught the arts of ploughing and sowing, and introduced a system of legislation into Crete, which has ever since been the wonder of the world: the Greeks, in gratitude to these admirable benefactors of the human species, represented them as descended immediately from the race of the Gods.

In the period which produced all these ingenious characters, lived a man called Dædalus^w: he was a native of Athens: to him we are said to be indebted for the use of the axe, the wedge, the plummet, and of glue: he first contrived masts and yards for ships: beside this he carved statues so admirably, that they not only looked

^w Apollod. iii. 15.

as if they were alive, but had actually the power of self-motion, and would even fly away from the custody of their possessor if they were not chained to the wall.

Admirable artists are accused of feeling keen jealousy against a rival; and accordingly it is said of Dædalus, that having a nephew called Talus, who invented the compasses, the saw, and other instruments of manufacture, and promised to be as excellent an artificer as his uncle, Dædalus conceived an ungenerous hatred against him, and privately murdered him: for this crime he was obliged to fly from Athens.

From Athens Dædalus passed into Crete, and was employed by Minos to build the famous labyrinth of Crete: Minos was ashamed, as well he might, of having such a monster as the Minotaur born into his family, and intended the labyrinth for his prison: the labyrinth was a wonderful structure: it covered several acres of ground: it contained a multitude of apartments, and the passages met and crossed each other with such intricacy, that a stranger who had once entered the building, would have been starved to death before he could find his way out.

Androgeus*, the son of Minos, being arrived at man's estate, determined to travel into foreign countries for his improvement: among other cities which he visited, he came to Athens; and there, either by accident, or the treachery of Ægeus king of Athens, met with his death: Minos, who was much more powerful than Ægeus, made war upon the Athenians, nor would he be prevailed on to consent to any treaty

* Apollod. iii. 15.

of peace, but upon condition that the Athenians should send every year seven noble youths and as many virgins to Crete, to be devoured by the Minotaur: we shall see by and by how this monster was destroyed by Theseus the son of Ægeus.

A memorable circumstance which occurred in Minos's invasion of Attica was this: Megara, one of the most considerable towns dependent on Athens, was held by Nisus, the brother of Ægeus, with the title of king: Minos thought it necessary to his success to take this town, and accordingly sat down with his army under the walls: Megara however held out for a long time: the hair of king Nisus was as white as snow, all but one lock which was of a bright purple colour: an oracle had predicted that Megara should never be taken, as long as the purple lock of the king remained inviolate; in its safety both that of Nisus and of his people were involved^γ.

Scylla, the daughter of Nisus, spent much of her time during the siege in an apartment near the top of a tower, which overlooked the walls: in this apartment Apollo, having visited it on some occasion, once laid down his lute; and from that time every sound uttered there acquired a tone of celestial melody: from the window, Scylla employed herself at intervals, in surveying the disposition of the field, the camp, the army, the sea that almost dashed up against the walls, and the Cretan fleet: the oftener she looked, the more was she struck with the person of Minos, more beautiful and noble than that of his captains: whether he appeared in complete armour, or laid aside his helmet, whether he drew the bow, or

^γ Ov. Met. viii. 7 et seqq.

hurled the javelin, he was still the object of Scylla's admiration: most of all, when slightly attired, he mounted his war-horse, splendid with caparisons of scarlet and gold, and subdued to his purposes the temper of his foaming steed, Scylla thought him the most lovely of mankind: Minos must be her husband, or she could not endure to live.

As she revolved these thoughts in her mind, she saw a thousand obstacles between her and the accomplishment of her wish: she gazed on Minos every day, but she had never been seen by him: how should she contrive to speak to him? to be loved by him? walls of stone, and watchful centinels barred the path between them: he was her country's enemy: at last she thought of one expedient; but from that, when it first suggested itself, she shrunk with horror: this was to cut off the purple lock of her father, and lay it at the invader's feet, thus purchasing his gratitude by a sacrifice of all the affections of nature: the more she reflected, the more she became divided in mind: on one side she saw despair, and on the other impiety and sacrilege: in evil hour, she did the horrid deed: she went to her father's chamber as he slept, and cut off the sacred hair.

With this pledge of the city's safety, she presented herself confidently before Minos: but he drove her from his presence with horror, as the disgrace of her sex and her species: he sacked Megara, and then sailed with his fleet for Athens: Scylla saw his departure with emotions of frenzy: she leaped into the sea, swam after the Cretan fleet, and seized the stern of the royal vessel: Nisus by the pity of the Gods was changed into a hawk; he pursued the flight of his daughter, and

with the hard blows of his beak forced her to leave hold of Minos's ship: Scylla became a lark; and the hawk, feeling for ever new the resentment of her crime, continues unceasingly to pursue her through the world.

Dædalus was so unfortunate as by some means to incur the displeasure of king Minos, who shut him up with his son Icarus, I suppose after the death of the Minotaur, a prisoner in his own labyrinth: Dædalus was however too skilful an artificer, for there to be any danger that he should be long confined any where: he got feathers and wax, and made a pair of wings for himself, and another for his son, and thus equipped, undertook to fly over the walls of the labyrinth, and escape into Italy: Dædalus, a prudent and experienced artificer, performed this very well: but Icarus was thoughtless and venturesome: he was proud of his wings, and made too many flourishes in his journey: in one of these flourishes he approached so near to the sun as to melt the wax, and poor Icarus was drowned in that part of the Ægean sea, which from his name is called *Mare Icarium*^z.

^z Ov. Met. viii. 183 et seqq. Virg. Æn. vi. 14 et seqq.

CHAP. XX.

OF BELLEROPHON AND CHIMÆRA.

Prætus, King of Argos.—Bellerophon takes Refuge at his Court.—Is Beloved by Stenobœa, the Queen.—She falsely Accuses him.—Prætus orders him to be put to Death.—Bellerophon goes, Mounted on Pegasus, to fight the Chimæra. —His Success.

THE story of Danaus king of Argos was formerly mentioned in my chapter of Hell; Danaus^a was a stranger from Egypt, who usurped the throne of Argos, and deprived the family in possession; Abas, his grandson, had two children that were twins, by name Prætus and Acrisius, who contended for the throne of Argos.

Prætus reigned first, and in his reign happened the famous story of Bellerophon: Bellerophon was a prince of Corinth, but was so unfortunate as in a scuffle to kill his brother Bellerus, for which fact he was obliged to fly his country, and came to Argos: here, as he was an exceedingly handsome young man, Stenobœa the wife of Prætus fell in love with him: but Bellerophon did not think he ought to pay his addresses to a lady who was already married, and slighted her overtures: Stenobœa felt extremely affronted at his neglect, and to be revenged upon him went and told her husband a story exactly opposite to the truth: she said that this stranger, in violation

^a Apollodor. ii. 1.

of the laws of hospitality, and in defiance of the peculiar propriety and reservedness of her behaviour, importuned her to leave Proetus, and go and live with him as her husband.

Proetus, angry with the supposed ingratitude of Bellerophon, did not wait to examine whether the story was true, but determined immediately to send him away from his court; and to make his revenge more complete, pretended that he wanted to employ him in an honourable mission, and gave him letters, which he said were letters of introduction and embassy to Jobates king of Lycia, father of Stenobœa: in these letters Proetus desired Jobates, as soon as he had read them to put the bearer to death.

Bellerophon accepted the employment without any suspicion, and was happy to be put in the way of rendering a service to a prince who had received him so honourably at his court as Proetus: Jobates felt some reluctance to murder a young prince, who without apprehending any danger, presented himself before him: and therefore thought it would be enough to send him, under pretence of honour, upon some dangerous expedition, from which it would be impossible for him to come off alive: it happened that the borders of Lycia were at that time infested with a horrible monster, which has already been described, of the race of the Gods, part lion, part dragon, and part goat, called Chimæra: Jobates resolved to commission Bellerophon to destroy this monster, and was satisfied that he could not send him to more certain death.

Jobates however was disappointed: Minerva, taking pity on the unmerited persecutions to which Bellerophon was exposed, furnished him

with the winged horse Pegasus: thus mounted, he had the advantage in the combat: he hovered in the air over the monster's den; he pounced down upon her suddenly, and inflicted a wound; then ascended into the air; and returning again and again to the attack, at length laid the terrible Chimæra breathless on the ground^b.

^b Hom. Il. ζ. 152. Schol. in Il. ζ. 156. Apollodorus, ii. 3. In Homer the wife of Proetus is called Antæa.

CHAP. XXI.

OF PERSEUS AND MEDUSA.

Acrisius, Successor to Prœtus.—Jupiter comes to Danae in a Shower of Gold.—Danae and her Child Perseus sent to Sea in a Chest—arrive in the Dominions of Polydectes, who falls in Love with Danae.—Perseus sent to fetch the Head of Medusa, which turned every one who Looked upon it into Stone.—Atlas changed into a Mountain.—Perseus rescues Andromeda from a Sea-monster—turns Polydectes into Stone.—accidentally Kills his Grandfather—banishes himself to Mycenæ.

ON the death of Prœtus, Acrisius his twin-brother ascended the throne of Argos: he had one beautiful daughter, called Danae; and an oracle had predicted that Danae should have a son, by whose hands her father should be deprived of life: to prevent this, Acrisius built a tower of brass, inaccessible on every side, and shut up his daughter in it: thus guarded, she would perhaps have remained childless, had not Jupiter conceived a passion for her; and by a very extraordinary metamorphosis having changed himself into a shower of gold, found his way through the roof: Danae bore to Jupiter a son, named Perseus; and, this prince having afterward laid the foundation of the celebrated Mycenæ, his history has been adorned with many extraordinary and fabulous adventures: the Grecian Perseus, like the Grecian Bacchus, has no

doubt been confounded with some Oriental prototype; and the feats of two or of several heroes have thus become imputed to one.

No sooner was Perseus born, than he and his mother by the order of his grandfather were put in a chest, and cast into the sea: the chest drifted upon the island of Seriphos, where Dictys, the brother of the king of the country, who happened to be a-fishing, took them to land, treated them with the greatest attention, and committed them to the care of the priests of the temple of Minerva, by whom Perseus was educated.

The young prince was now grown up to the stature of a man, when Polydectes king of Seriphos happening to see Danae his mother in the temple, fell in love with her, and determined to marry her: Danae did not approve of the match, and Perseus told the king he was resolved never to see his mother married without her own consent: it was the fashion of these times, when a crabbed old tyrant conceived a dislike to a hero, just arrived at the bloom of manhood, that he packed off the object of his jealousy upon some dangerous adventure, from which the tyrant hoped that he would never return alive: Polydectes ordered Perseus to go and bring him the head of Medusa, one of the Gorgons, from a certain district of Asiatic Tartary where she lived: Perseus felt no aversion to the commission, but was uneasy at the thought of leaving his mother all the while in the power of her brutal admirer: he dared nor however disobey the king in whose country he dwelt.

I have already told you the principal particulars of Perseus's expedition against the Gorgons: it was lucky for the young hero, that, bred in

the temple of Minerva, he had that Goddess for his faithful protector: she lent him her shield, to which Mercury added his wings, and away the hero flew; nor did he quit his undertaking, till he had got the head of Medusa safely pursed up in a bag: on his return he stopped one night in the dominions of the famous king Atlas, whose office it was to support the heavens upon his shoulders; Perseus thought to obtain the hospitality of this monarch, by telling him that he was the son of Jupiter: but Atlas had always been the enemy of Jupiter, and therefore bad Perseus go about his business, for he should have neither rest nor refreshment there: provoked at this insult, Perseus took the head of Medusa, which had the power of turning every one that looked upon it into stone, and shewed it to Atlas: Atlas felt the effects, and was immediately changed from the human figure into that of mount Atlas: in this shape he was quite as well fitted for supporting the heavens as he had been before.

From the country of king Atlas, Perseus passed over into Ethiopia: there the first object that caught his eye as he skimmed along through the air, was Andromeda, daughter of the king of Ethiopia, chained naked to a rock on the shore; she was a beautiful and admirable creature: Perseus looked a little longer, and saw a most horrible sea-monster, cutting his way rapidly through the waves, and hastening toward the princess that he might devour her.

The meaning of what Perseus saw was this: Cassiope, the mother of Andromeda, was of a most dazzling fairness; fair women were probably scarce in Ethiopia, where the majority of the inhabitants are blacks: in the pride of her heart

Cassiope boasted that she was fairer than the Nereids, the nymphs of the sea: these Goddesses, offended at her boast, applied to Neptune to give them their revenge: Neptune accordingly overflowed the kingdom with his waves, and sent this monster to devour its inhabitants: the Ethiopians applied to the oracle of Jupiter Ammon in their distress, and received for answer, that the wrath of Neptune would never be appeased, till Andromeda, the thing in the world that Cassiope loved best, was given up as a prey to the monster: the king and queen refused; but the people insisted: they would not consent to be all devoured in turns, to save the most beautiful princess in the world.

It was fortunate for Andromeda, that Perseus came by just in time: he did not hesitate to attack the monster, and after a long battle, killed it in sight of the king, queen and all the court: he then carried away Andromeda, and made her his wife.

When he came back to Seriphos, the first thing he saw, was Polydectes leading Danae to the altar where they were to be married: Danae had begged off the evil day for a long while, and intreated that the king would spare her, at least till her son returned from the expedition upon which he had sent him: Polydectes was satisfied he never would return, and at last would be put off no more: in the midst of the ceremony Perseus arrived: "If," said the hero, "I have happily accomplished my adventure, then, O king, consent to grant me a boon in return:" "You have not accomplished it," said Polydectes: "but, though you had, I will still marry your mother:" and so saying, he rudely seized

her hand : Perseus produced the head of Medusa ; and, Polydectes and his wicked favourites looking at the head to see that all was right, they were immediately turned into stones : Perseus having finished his expedition, returned to Minerva, Mercury, and the other Gods, the weapons they had supplied to him, and gave to his patroness besides, the head of Medusa as an oblation, which she ever after wore upon her shield, or according to others upon her breast-plate.

Perseus was now eager to return home to Peloponnesus, the country of his mother : he landed at Larissa near Argos, where the principal persons of the city were just then celebrating certain splendid games : Perseus joined in the games, and won many prizes : at length he took up a disk, or quoit, to throw at a mark : Acrisius, his grandfather, was present, though both he and Perseus were unknown to each other : the quoit struck the foot of Acrisius, and occasioned a mortification, and the old king died : thus was the prediction of the oracle fulfilled : Perseus, though he had been cruelly used by his grandfather when born, could not bear to think that he was the occasion of his death : he resigned the crown of Argos which now fell to him, to one of his relations, and became the founder of the kingdom of Mycenæ^c.

^c Apollodor. ii. 4 et seqq. Ov. Met. iv. 606, et v. 1 et seqq. Hor. Carm. lib. iii. Od. 16.

CHAP. XXII.

OF THE FAMILY OF TANTALUS.

Pelops arrives in Greece.—Wins Hippodamia by Fraud in a Chariot-race.—Atreus kills the Son of his Brother Thyestes, and serves up the Flesh to him for a Banquet.—Arrogance of Queen Niobe.—She loses all her Children at once.—Is turned into Marble.—Arachne becomes a Spider.

AT the same time that Perseus lived, came into Greece another famous hero, Pelops the son of Tantalus: from this hero the peninsula of Peloponnesus, now called the Morea, is supposed to have taken its name: I have already spoken of the early youth of Pelops, how he was murdered by his father, and restored to life by the Gods.

Pelops succeeded his father in the throne of Phrygia, and was a near neighbour to Tros king of Troy: Tros had a son called Ganymed, so beautiful a boy that Jupiter took him up into Heaven, and made him his cupbearer^d: Dardanus thought Pelops had kidnapped him: he went to war against Pelops, and drove him out of his dominions: this was the cause of Pelops's coming into Greece.

When the exiled prince reached the shore, the first news he heard was of the great beauty of Hippodamia, daughter of Œnomaus king of Elis: an oracle had predicted that Œnomaus

^d Apollod. iii. 12. Hom. Il. v. 232.

should perish by the hands of his son-in-law: he determined therefore that he would have no son-in-law: but, as all the world was in love with Hippodamia, CEnomaus was driven to contrive some means to baffle the importunity of her lovers: he issued a proclamation that whoever aspired to the hand of his daughter, should first engage in a chariot-race with him: if they conquered in the race, the hand of Hippodamia was to be their reward: if they were vanquished, the bargain was they were to be put to death: CEnomaus was the best chariot-driver, and his horses the best horses, in the world: yet, so irresistible were the charms of Hippodamia, that thirteen illustrious lovers had already accepted the terms, and lost their lives: Pelops offered himself the fourteenth: he however went cunningly about the business: he offered a large bribe to Myrtilus, the groom of king CEnomaus, who, seduced from his fidelity, privately took out the pin which confined one of the wheels of his master's chariot: the wheel came off in the course, and CEnomaus was killed by his fall: before he expired however, he called Pelops to him, and freely crowned his marriage with his consent; but at the same time intreated him to punish the false Myrtilus, and not suffer the example of a king destroyed by the perfidy of his servant to pass with impunity: Pelops listened to the request of the dying king, and with his own hand threw Myrtilus into the sea*.

Atreus, the son, or as I should rather think the grandson, of Pelops and Hippodamia, married Ærope, the daughter of Eurystheus the

* Pind. Ol. α. 95. Schol. in Hom. Il. β. 104.

grandson of Perseus, and as Eurystheus had no male issue, succeeded him in the throne of Mycenæ: the quarrel of Atreus and his brother Thyestes has been rendered famous by the Greek poets: Thyestes was fond of his brother's wife, and Atreus became jealous: the queen brought him a son, and Atreus believed it to be the son of Thyestes: rage rankled in the breast of the husband, but he took no notice to his brother: he invited him to a feast, and pretended that they were the best friends in the world: in the mean time the cruel Atreus killed the child that was just born, and caused him to be served up in a dish to Thyestes, whom he believed to be the father: it is said that the sun went backward, and the day suddenly became as dark as night, because Apollo could not endure to witness so infamous a spectacle^f.

Pelops had also a sister called Niobe, who is famous in the Grecian mythology: Niobe was married to Amphion, the son of Iasus king of Orchomenus, to whom she bore seven sons and seven daughters, the most promising youths, and the handsomest maidens ever seen: who so happy as queen Niobe? she loved her children, as a mother ought to do; but, she was, as perhaps the mother of promising children is apt to be, a little too proud of them: prosperity made her haughty and vain: her children loved her; but few other people could bear the insolence of her manners.

Among other things, she thought proper to insult Latona, the mother of Apollo and Diana: "Latona," said Niobe, "we are always told

^f Lucian. Saturn. Ov. Trist. ii. 391.

is the happiest of mothers: what is her happiness compared with mine? she is the mother of only two children: I might lose twelve of mine, and yet boast myself the equal of Latona: by the numerousness of my progeny I am secured against the attacks of fate."

A superior does not love to be insulted by an inferior: the Gods of the Greeks, as they were in some things but a little higher than mortals, were supposed to be particularly jealous of the honours due to them: Latona was offended with the senseless speeches of queen Niobe, and complained of them to her children: Apollo and Diana came down from heaven to the plains of Orchomenus, and slew with their arrows all the children of Niobe: the unhappy queen saw herself bereft of her whole family at once.

This means nothing more than that queen Niobe lost all her children by a contagious disease: Apollo, as I have before told you, was the God of pestilences: the Grecian genius has dressed up the story in all the magnificence of poetry and religion: strip it of this, and it is nothing more than a striking illustration of the uncertainty of human possessions, and the folly of the pride of man.

What can be more different, says Ovid, than the same Niobe before and after this event? before it, she turned up her eyes to heaven, she shook her beautiful tresses on her shoulders in disdain, and defied the Gods: before it, she was disagreeable to her own subjects and servants: now she might have been an object of pity even to an enemy: one son did not die, ere another sickened, and the daughters, while they tended their languishing brothers, or put on mourning

for their funerals, were seized with the same distemper: Niobe mourned for ever, and refused to be comforted: she moved neither limb nor feature: her eyes were fixed; her cheeks became white and colourless: gradually and insensibly she changed into marble, a perpetual monument of human vanity and impiety^g.

Arachne, the countrywoman of Niobe, fell a victim to a similar folly: she was a most curious artificer in needlework: she wrought figures in tapestry: her pictures perhaps were as exquisite as those which have lately been exhibited in wool or in velvet: she was proud of her proficiency; and as Minerva is the Goddess of needlework, she challenged Minerva to surpass her: the Goddess condescended to the trial, and having evinced her superior skill, Arachne became so mortified, that she hanged herself: Minerva changed her into a spider: in this degraded condition the unhappy artist still pursues a similar occupation; but her works are universally despised, and every housewife sweeps them away with her besom^h.

^g Ov. Met. vi. 150 et seqq.

^h Id. vi. 1 et seqq.

CHAP. XXIII.

LOVES OF THE GODS.

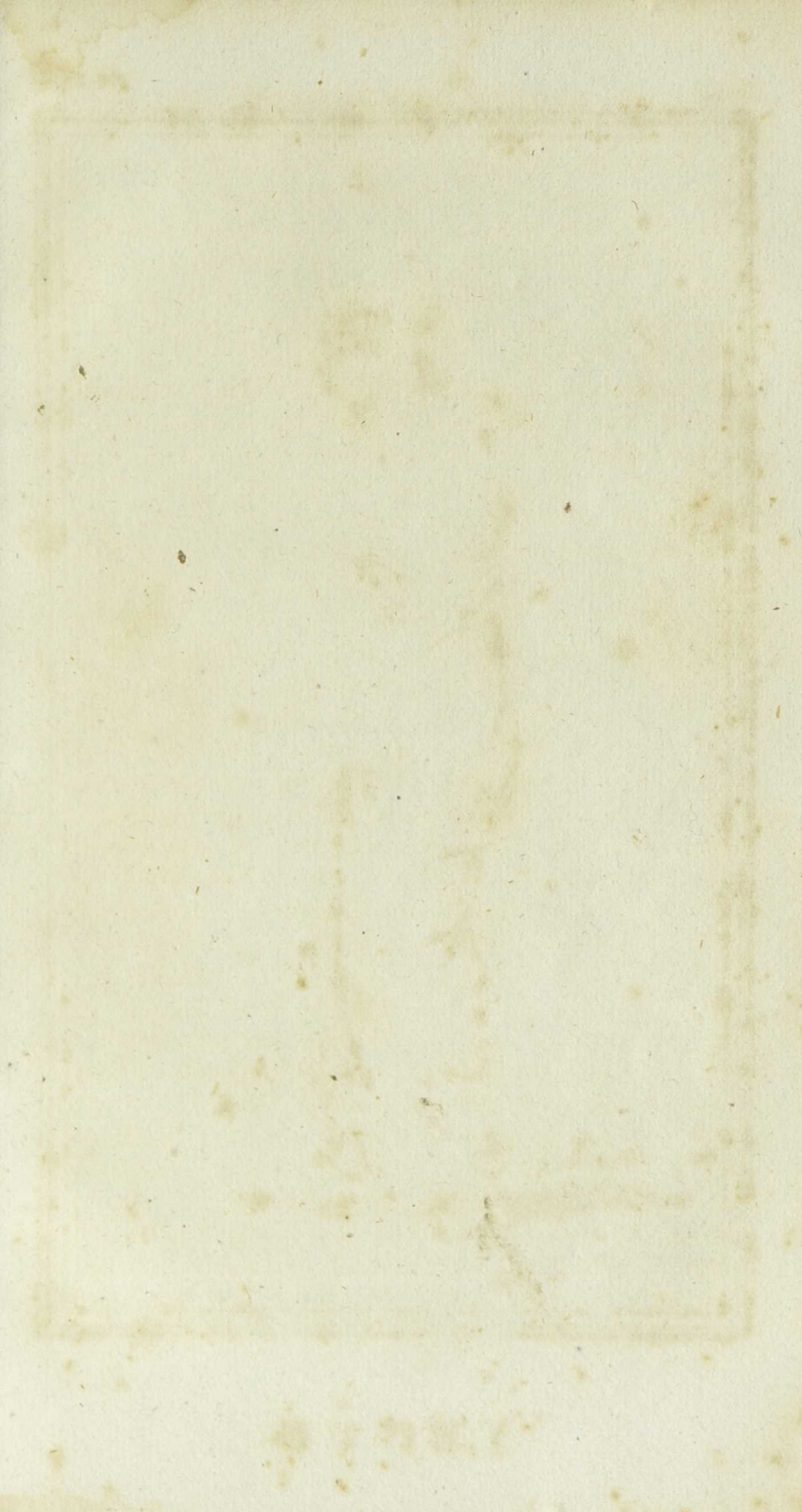
Apollo and Daphne.—Daphne turned into a Laurel.—
 Diana and Endymion.—Diana kisses Endymion in his
 Sleep.—Venus and Adonis.—Adonis killed by a Boar
 —restored to Life for Six Months in every Year.—
 Cupid and Psyche.—Psyche carried away to an En-
 charned Palace.—Envied by her Sisters.—Psyche re-
 solves to see her Husband.—Dismal Effects of her
 Curiosity.—She is taken up to Heaven.—Baucis and
 Philemon.—They give an Entertainment to Jupiter—
 and are rewarded.—Pyramus and Thisbe— forbidden
 to meet, make Love through a chink in the Wall.—
 Their disastrous Fate.

BESIDE the loves of the Gods, which were feigned by the Greeks for the purpose of doing honour to their favourite heroes, there were others which seem to have been invented by them purely for the beauty and ingenuity of the tale: when they had once formed the habit of describing the Gods in love, they felt a pleasure in multiplying such stories: they produced them, not only when they wanted to compose a courtly compliment, but sometimes out of the mere wantonness and sport of their wit: a few of them, to which no particular mark of the time when they occurred is assigned, I will speak of here.

Apollo, the God of poetry, is crowned with leaves of laurel: Apollo, the charioteer of the sun, is upon ill terms with the laurel, for the laurel flourishes best in the shade: out of these

two thoughts the Greeks contrived a pretty tale : the Greek name for the laurel is Daphne.

Daphne was the daughter of the river Peneus, Peneus that flows through the delightful and far-famed vale of Tempe, and the banks of which are fringed with laurels : Apollo, just after he had killed the Python, met with Cupid : “ Idle and effeminate boy,” said Apollo in a jeering manner, “ what have you to do with the bow and the quiver ? the quiver is only fit for shoulders such as mine : ” “ Your arrows,” replied Cupid, “ are proper enough for the conquest of beasts, but mine can conquer you : unless then you are willing to own yourself a beast, you must confess my superior glories : ” and saying this, he let fly a bolt, and wounded the great Apollo : the object of Apollo’s love thus produced, was Daphne : but Daphne entertained more respect for Diana than for her brother : she loved hunting, but shrunk from men : Apollo found her unawares, and poured out his passion to her : “ Daphne,” said he, “ you surely mistake me, or you would feel gratified by my love : I am no shepherd, as perhaps you think : I am the son of Jupiter : I am the God of poetry : I spread light over the whole world : accept then my offer, and be my wife : ” Daphne did not stay to hear the end of this fine speech : she slyly got further and further from the God, and at last took to her heels : never was nymph more nimble-footed than Daphne : Apollo was in love, and would not give her up : she ran, and he ran : he came so near her, that his breath drove aside the curls of her hair : frightened to the utmost, she called upon Jupiter for pity, who turned her into a laurel : Apollo from that time, since he could not have the beautiful





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Daphne for a wife, vowed that her tree should at least be his; and so the laurel became sacred to Apolloⁱ.

Diana is said to have fallen in love like her brother, though she were the Goddess of Chastity: the object of her flame was Endymion^k, a shepherd of Caria: she saw him naked on the top of mount Latmos, and thought she had never beheld so beautiful a creature: as she was the most bashful and modest of existing beings, she cast him into a deep sleep, that she might kiss him unseen and undiscovered even by him she loved: every night she visited the beautiful shepherd, whom Jupiter endowed with perpetual youth, and every night she loved him better than the night before: the meaning of the fable is, that Endymion was a great astronomer; that he passed whole nights upon mount Latmos, contemplating the heavenly bodies, and therefore I suppose not asleep; and that he is said first to have explained the phenomena of Diana, that is, the moon, and to have given a just account of their causes.

The loves of Venus and Adonis are singularly famous: he was the son of Cinyras king of Cyprus: his name is constantly used to this day, to express the perfection of smooth and polished beauty in the male sex: he was exceedingly fond of hunting, and as Venus could not leave the side of her charmer, she hunted with him: she intreated him however, if he had the least value for her, to confine himself to hunting the hare, the fox or the deer, and to abstain from the chase of wild beasts: Adonis, though delicate of appearance, had somewhat of a manly disposition: he

ⁱ Ov. Met. i. 452 et seqq.

^k Apollodorus, i. 7. Apollon. Rhod. iv. 57.

did not find in his heart always to comply with the timid counsels of the Goddess: once hunting a wild boar, he wounded the ferocious animal; but the boar turned upon him, and tore him so that he died: from his blood sprang the beautiful flower, called anemone: Venus was inconsolable for his loss, and at length obtained from Jupiter that he should return to life for six months in every year; so that Adonis revives and dies in incessant succession: there were festivals in his honour in Phœnicia, Greece, and other countries, expressive of this circumstance: the solemnity continued several days; the first part being spent in lamentations for his loss, and the second in joy for his restoration¹.

The story of Cupid and Psyche is more modern than any of these, having been written since the birth of Christ: it is too beautiful however to be omitted: Psyche, the daughter of a king of I know not what country, was so wonderfully handsome, that the people mistook her for Venus, and almost adored her: the Goddess of Beauty was exceedingly offended with the mistake, and determined to punish Psyche: she spoke to Cupid her son, and commanded him to make the princess fall in love with the most stupid, deformed and base-looking clown in her father's dominions: Cupid set out on his commission; but he no sooner saw Psyche, than instead of punishing, he fell in love with her: afraid however of his mother's displeasure, he resolved to carry on the affair secretly: he caused the West Wind to take her from her father's house, and convey her to an enchanted palace: here, as soon as it was night, Cupid came

¹ Ov. Met. x. 515 et seqq. Bion. Epitaph. Adon.

to her in the dark, and with all the ceremonies compatible with the situation, made her his bride.

Psyche was the youngest of three sisters: the eldest was married to an-ill tempered tyrant, and the second to a driveller: they envied exceedingly what their younger sister told them of the wonders of her marriage: though she had never seen her husband, nor heard his name, yet she could tell of the beauties of his enchanted palace (for if Cupid left her before the dawn, she staid as long as she pleased), of the silver voice of the bridegroom, and the million passionate and charming things he said to her.

To be revenged upon Psyche, the sisters determined one way or other to put an end to her happiness: they had no doubt that the husband had reasons for his concealment, and believed that he would desert Psyche, if he found himself thwarted in this respect: they reminded her of an oracle which had said that she should marry a clown or a monster: "for their parts they had no doubt that this new husband, though his lips were soft, had the fins of a fish, and the tail of a dragon:" the poor young princess could not bear this thought, and could not get it out of her head: she cried all day long: the sisters provided her with a dark lanthorn that she might make the discovery, and a dagger that she might stab him if he proved a fiend-like monster.

The next night Cupid was no sooner asleep, than Psyche got out of bed, and fetched her lanthorn and dagger: what was her surprize, and what was her joy, when instead of a monster, she saw a young creature beaming in every part with celestial beauty! she could never make an end of admiring: in her transport she carelessly let fall

a drop of burning wax upon his polished shoulder: Cupid awoke.

The palace now vanished, and Psyche was left alone on a desolate rock: Venus discovered the secret of Cupid, and was beyond measure exasperated: she directed all her vengeance against Psyche, who had first passed for the Goddess of Beauty, and now had seduced her child from his obedience: she imposed upon her impossible tasks: she subjected her to unheard-of torments: Jupiter at length was moved to pity: he took up Psyche to Heaven, made her immortal, and gave her as a wife to Cupid in the face of the celestial inhabitants^m.

A story of another kind respecting the intercourse of Gods and men, not well knowing to what place to assign, I will mention here: Jupiter had heard of the pride, the insolence and licentiousness of a certain district in Phrygia, and determined to observe the fact with his own eyes: he disguised himself as a traveller, and took with him Mercury, his confidential servant: alone, and unrecommended by any pompous appearance, they visited the house of many a rich man, and knocked at many a portal: at all they were refused refreshment and shelter: neither the rich nor those who enjoyed a moderate competence, would afford them any civility: at length they came to a hut, the poorest in all the province, and knocked there.

This cottage contained two inhabitants, Philemon and Baucis, an old labourer and his wife, who had married young, and were now sinking into decrepitude: the good couple saluted the strangers kindly, and invited them in: you could

^m Apuleii Met. iv. et v.

not enter the cottage-door without stooping : the old rustics stirred the fire, and drew a bench : the table had only three legs, and one of them was too short ; but Baucis mended that by putting a shard underneath : they prepared for the Gods a rasher of bacon and a sallad, and roasted them some eggs : they added a plate of olives, and a small pitcher of new-made wine : they gave the best that they had : the Gods ate, and were pleased with their hosts : the good man and his wife were however surprised to find that, however often the pitcher was resorted to, the quantity of wine continued the same, while the quality evidently improved.

Baucis and Philemon could no longer doubt that their guests were more than mortal : sacrifices were the mode of the Grecian religion, and they hastened to fetch one poor solitary goose they had in their back-court, to make a sacrifice of her : the goose ran fast for her life ; the feeble old couple could not overtake her : at length the poor animal took refuge in the bosom of Jupiter, who forbid her to be killed : he added, that he and Mercury had come from Heaven to witness the guilt of the district, and were now resolved to sweep the whole race from the earth : the two Gods invited their hosts to climb the neighbouring mountain, and aided their faltering steps : Baucis and Philemon had no sooner reached the top, than looking round, they saw that a miraculous torrent had swept away all the houses and their inhabitants to the sea, while their cottage only remained.

“ Now,” said Jupiter, “ that I have inflicted justice on your wicked countrymen, tell me, my good old delver and dame, what favour I can bestow on you, and it shall be granted :” “ Please your Godships,” answered they, “ we desire no-

thing more, than that we may spend the small remainder of our lives in your worship, and in gratitude for this signal preservation; and that, as we have lived so long together, and are of the same age, you would bestow upon us the mercy, that at last we may die in the same hour."

Jupiter immediately turned the cottage in which he had been so hospitably received into a magnificent temple, in an apartment of which Philemon and Baucis lived in quality of priest and priestess: some years afterward as this good old couple stood on each side of the door of the temple talking over old times, they became rooted to the spot, and were both at once turned into trees, an oak and a lime, a durable monument that hospitality and a liberal treatment toward the stranger and the wanderer, is one of those virtues by which we may best earn the approbation of Heaven^a.

There is a story of two merely human lovers which has commonly found a place in books of the Grecian Gods, and as it is an interesting tale, I will not leave it out: Pyramus and Thisbe were inhabitants of the city of Babylon: their parents lived next door to each other, and they had been accustomed, while boy and girl, to see each other every day: at that early age they were very fond of each other's company: when they grew up, they asked leave to marry: the parents, either because they thought them too young, or for some other reason, forbade it: for more caution they would not let the lovers see one another: Pyra-

^a Ov. Met. vi. 626 et seqq.

mus and Thisbe were never permitted to go out of the house but in company with their friends.

There is a proverb that says, "Love will find out the way:" almost from the time that the houses were built that Pyramus and Thisbe lived in, there was a little chink in the wall between, hardly wide enough to let the light pass, but quite large enough to speak through: nobody had ever discovered this chink; but the lovers found it out: at night, and at all convenient times, they would get to the chink, one on one side, and the other on the other, and talk for hours together: not a day passed that Pyramus did not swear here that he would have no other wife than Thisbe, and Thisbe that she would have no other husband than Pyramus.

In time however they grew discontented with this slender indulgence: they thought it hard that they could not see each other, nor so much as shake hands: then they could not talk in security, without one or the other saying every minute, "Hush, I think I hear somebody coming:" they agreed that at least they would have one evening of more undisturbed conversation: they fixed that as soon as it was dark, each should steal out of the house, and so they would meet: the tomb of Ninus the Great, king of Assyria, stood a little way out of the walls: near the tomb was a fountain; and the fountain was shaded by a fine mulberry-tree: they agreed that they would sit and have their talk under the mulberry-tree.

It so happened that Thisbe got to the place first: in the neighbourhood was a forest of lions: Thisbe had scarcely seated herself under the tree

to wait for Pyramus, before by the light of the moon she saw a great lion: the lion had just been devouring a bull, and came to the fountain to drink: Thisbe jumped up, and ran as hard as she could: in her hurry she dropped her veil: the lion drank, and when he had done, he saw the veil, and in mere wantonness towzled and tore it in a terrible manner: he then went away.

A minute after, Pyramus arrived: he saw the print of the lion's foot in the sand, and was frightened: he saw the veil: what was worse, the lion's lips were smeared with the blood of the bull, and he saw blood upon the veil: he no longer doubted that Thisbe was devoured: in the utmost anguish he said, "It was I that sent you to this terrible place: It is I that suffered you to get here first; I have been the author of your death; but I will not survive you:" he kissed the veil a thousand times: he drew his sword, and thrust it to his heart.

Pyramus was scarcely stretched a corpse upon the ground, before Thisbe returned: she was afraid of the lion, but she could not disappoint her lover: she saw him dying, with her veil in his hand: he could not speak, but the veil told the story sufficiently: she killed herself with the same sword that had killed her lover: "Cruel parents," said she with her last breath, "you could not join us in life, at least bury us in one tomb:" Ovid says, that the fruit of the mulberry-tree had before been white, but as its roots were watered with the blood of these faithful lovers, the fruit ever after became of the deepest blood-colour^o.

^o Ov. Met. iv. 55 et seqq.

CHAP. XXIV.

OF HERCULES.

Amphitryon and Alcmena.—Jupiter assumes the Form of Amphitryon, and is the Father of Hercules.—Amphitryon banished to Thebes.—Birth of Hercules.—He is the God of Strength—fated to be the Slave of Eurystheus, his Cousin.—Strangles two Serpents in his Cradle.—Education of Hercules.—His Twelve Labours, 1. The Nemæan Lion, 2. the Hydra, 3. the Hind of Œnoe, 4. the Erymanthian Boar, 5. the Stables of Augeas, 6. the Stymphalian Birds, 7. the Cretan Bull, 8. the Mares of Diomedes King of Thrace, 9. the Girdle of Hippolita Queen of the Amazons, 10. The Oxen of Geryon, 11. the Apples of the Hesperides, 12. Cerberus.—Hercules wrestles with Antæus.—Wars of the Pigmies and Cranes.—Hercules kills Busiris—and Cacus.—Pillars of Hercules.—He delivers Prometheus—sacks Troy—sails with the Argonauts—figures in the War of the Giants—loves Iole and Omphale—is employed in spinning—marries Dejanira.—She sends him a poisoned Shirt—Death of Hercules.—Taken up into Heaven, and marries Hebe.—Story of Philoctetes.—Various Heroes named Hercules.

PERSEUS had three sons by his wife Andromeda, Electryon the father of Alcmena, Alcaeus the father of Amphitryon, and Sthenelus: Electryon succeeded his father on the throne of Mycenæ: he engaged in war with the Teleboans, a people of Ætolia, and intrusted the command of his army to his sons, who were all killed: Elec-

tryon, broken-hearted at the news, offered his daughter Alcmena and the succession of the throne, to whoever would revenge him on his sanguinary enemies: Amphitryon, his nephew, accepted the commission: and previously to his march, was solemnly espoused to Alcmena, but on condition that she should never receive him as her husband, till he returned triumphant over his enemies: Alcmena was the mother of Hercules, who is next to Bacchus the greatest of the Grecian Demigods.

According to the practice of the ancient mythology, Jupiter^p became enamoured of Alcmena, and was the father of Hercules: the affair happened thus: Amphitryon gained a complete victory over the Teleboans, and prepared to return home rich with the spoils of the enemy: Jupiter however determined to be beforehand with him: for this purpose he assumed the form of Amphitryon, and caused Mercury to take the form of Sosia, Amphitryon's servant: he besides stole a magnificent cup from the spoils of Amphitryon, and presented it to Alcmena: he told a long story of the victory the true Amphitryon had gained over the Teleboans: Alcmena had no doubt the person she saw was her husband: as Jupiter thought he should never have such another opportunity, he caused the sun not to rise all the next day, that he might the longer enjoy Alcmena's conversation: the night was as long as three.

The next day the true Amphitryon came; and, as Alcmena and he were talking together, it came out that he had been at home (as Alcmena sup-

^p Apollodorus, ii. 4, 5, 6, et 7.

posed) one night sooner than he knew any thing about the matter: Alomena believed that her husband was mad; so soon to have forgotten every thing that had passed: she produced the cup, which Amphitryon immediately recognised: he searched among his spoils, and found it had been taken away: in his perplexity he applied to Tiresias the prophet, who told him that it was Jupiter, king of Gods and men, who had condescended to assume his shape.

The principal advantage which the Teleboans had gained over Electryon, was the taking from him some fine herds of remarkable cattle: these Amphitryon brought back to him: but, as he presented them to the king, Amphitryon threw a stick at one of them that strayed from the rest: the stick struck upon the bull's horn, and rebounded with such force, that lighting upon the breast of Electryon, it killed him on the spot: Sthenelus, the surviving brother of the king, would not allow that his murderer should succeed him in the throne: he drove Amphitryon into exile to Thebes, where Hercules was born in the same city which had been before the birth-place of Bacchus.

Hercules is usually considered as the God of Strength: he is the Samson of the Grecian mythology: and his muscles, as you may see them displayed in the Farnese statue, express a corporal power, such as never resided in any other man.

Jupiter foresaw what an extraordinary personage Hercules would prove, and, with the fondness of a father, boasted in the assembly of the Gods, that on that day a child should be born who should be paramount to all the Demigods

that inhabited the earth: Juno^a was always the enemy of the children of Jupiter of whom she was not the mother: she had a double advantage in this case, as Juno is the Goddess of child-bearing: "Swear by the Styx," said she, "that it shall be as you have said:" Jupiter swore: Juno immediately quitted the Heavens, and by her power put off the birth of Hercules for a day, at the same time forwarding by two months the birth of Eurystheus the son of Sthenelus, Amphitryon's brother: by this device Eurystheus, contrary to the intention of Jupiter, was made the master of Hercules his illustrious cousin.

When Alcmena became a mother, she had two children, twins, Hercules the son of Jupiter, and Iphiclus the son of Amphitryon: the children were only eight months old when Juno, still urged by her former hatred, sent two monstrous serpents to destroy Hercules in the cradle where they lay: Iphiclus, terrified at the sight, crept out of the cradle, and alarmed the whole household with his shrieks: but when they came in to see what was the matter, they found Hercules lying unmoved, holding with each hand the necks of the serpents in his grasp: when he let go, they were dead.

Hercules received a very liberal education, and this is among the first examples of refinement in Greece: we are told of six masters who instructed him, Castor in the art of defence, Eurystus in the use of the bow, Autolycus to drive a war-chariot, Eumolpus in singing, Linus the son of Apollo in poetry, music and history, and Chiron the Centaur in astronomy, medicine, and every other

^a Ov. Met. ix. 285 et seqq.

art which was then known: when he was only eighteen years of age, he killed a huge lion that preyed upon the flocks of his father, and distinguished himself by other extraordinary achievements.

Hercules was now become completely a man, when Eurystheus, instructed by Juno, summoned him to appear before him at Mycenæ, that he might perform those acts of subjection which fate had assigned him: Hercules at first refused; but Juno afflicted him with madness, and in his lucid intervals he consulted the oracle of Apollo how he was to be delivered from this calamity: the oracle told him there was no other remedy for him, than to be twelve years the slave of Eurystheus, and to perform twelve labours which Eurystheus should impose upon him: Hercules repaired to the court of Mycenæ, where he had a better right to the throne than the king that reigned, and told Eurystheus that he was come to perform whatever he might think fit to enjoin: he came crowned with the gifts of all the Gods; Minerva had given him a suit of armour, Apollo a bow and arrows, Mercury a sword, Neptune a horse, Vulcan a club of brass, and his father Jupiter a shield.

The first labour in which Eurystheus employed him, was the destruction of the Nemæan lion: this was a much more terrible creature than that he had killed when he was a stripling: the Nemæan lion, the offspring of Orthus and Chimæra, had by Juno's enchantment fallen from the circle of the moon, and was invulnerable by any weapon: Hercules tried his divine arrows in vain, and at last, having bruised the monster exceedingly with his club, he destroyed it by

bugging it in his arms: he from that time forward wore the skin of this lion: Eurystheus was so terrified at the sight of the skin, that he ever after forbad Hercules from entering the city of Mycenæ when he returned from his achievements, and spoke to him from a brazen bastion in the walls.

The second labour of Hercules was the destruction of the Hydra, the daughter of Echidna, which has already been mentioned: this creature inhabited the banks of the Lernæan lake: it was shaped like a dragon, and had a hundred heads: beside which, if any one of these heads were destroyed, it was the nature of the animal for two others immediately to spring up in its place: Hercules attacked the monster with his club of brass: but finding all his efforts ineffectual, he instructed his friend and charioteer, Iolas, to set fire to a neighbouring wood, and have always ready a brand, with which, as soon as Hercules had demolished one of the heads, Iolas was to sear the wound: by this contrivance Hercules killed the Hydra; and dipping his arrows in the blood, the wounds he gave ever after were mortal and incurable.

His third labour was to catch the hind of Ænoë, whose feet were brass, and whose horns were gold: this, like most of the labours of Hercules, cost him a year: the hind was sacred to Diana, and therefore Hercules was forbidden to wound her: at last he overtook the animal, and brought it on his shoulders to the presence of Eurystheus.

The fourth labour of Hercules was the conquest of the Erymanthian boar: this has sometimes been confounded with the Calydonian boar killed

by Meleager: Hercules took this furious animal alive.

His fifth labour was cleansing the stables of Augeas king of Elis, in which three thousand oxen were kept, and which had not been cleansed for thirty years: Hercules undertook to do this in a day: Augeas did not believe him, but promised him a tenth part of the oxen as his reward if he performed it: Hercules, with a truly grand conception, turned the river Alpheus through the mews of Augeas: Augeas said this was a cheat, and withheld the reward; and Hercules killed the tyrant.

His sixth labour was to kill the Stymphalian birds, whose pinions, beaks and talons were of iron, and who fed upon human flesh: these six labours were achieved within the limits of Peloponnesus.

The seventh labour of Hercules was to take alive a bull, which Neptune had sent against the island of Crete, to punish Minos for having neglected his sacrifices.

The eighth labour of Hercules was to bring away the mares of Diomedes king of Thrace, whose breath was fire, and who were fed with human flesh; Diomedes caused every stranger who came into his country to be thrown to these mares to be devoured: Hercules however resisted the officers of the king, and at length threw the tyrant himself to be eaten by his own cattle: I suppose he afterward tamed these wild creatures, and taught them to be content with vegetables and corn.

Eurystheus was astonished by the constant successes of Hercules, and was tired of the services of so powerful a subject: he seems to have been

almost at the end of his invention: he had heard that Hippolita queen of the Amazons in Asia, wore the most beautiful girdle in the world: he commanded Hercules to fetch this girdle, and make a present of it to Admeta, the hopeful daughter of Eurystheus: Hercules accomplished this task, and is said to have destroyed the whole nation before he could possess himself of the girdle.

The tenth labour of Hercules was one of the most terrible in which he ever engaged: it was to bring away the purple-coloured oxen of Geryon, a monster with three heads, the brother of Echidna, and the uncle of Orthus, Cerberus, Hydra and Chimæra: Geryon lived in the island of Gades in Spain, and he had Orthus, his nephew, who was a dog with two heads, beside a dragon with seven heads, to guard his cattle: Hercules killed Geryon and the dog and the dragon, and brought away the oxen: many attempts were made to rob Hercules of his prize, as he drove them along through Spain, Italy and Sicily: some robbers fell upon him in his sleep, and others endeavoured to overpower him with numbers; but he baffled and defeated them all.

The eleventh labour of Hercules was the gathering the golden apples in the garden of the Hesperides, and the killing of the dragon who was appointed to guard them: Hesiod says that the garden of the Hesperides was to the north beyond the limits of the ocean: a long journey for Hercules to perform: he first applied to the nymphs of the Eridanus in Italy to know where these apples were to be found: they referred him to Nereus, God of the sea, whom the hero caught in his chains, and in spite of a variety of forms

which Nereus successively assumed, Hercules compelled him to answer: Nereus told Hercules that if he applied to Prometheus, whom he would find chained to mount Caucasus, he would be informed of every particular: Prometheus, who was the most crafty, and if we may believe Hesiod^r, the most faultless of existing beings, sent Hercules to Atlas: the site of Atlas, which is now the name of a mountain in Africa, seems once to have been placed far to the north of mount Caucasus: Atlas informed Hercules, that if he would for a short time take the weight of the heavens from his shoulders, who was condemned to bear them, he would afford his visitor every assistance in his power: Atlas was the grandfather of the Hesperides, and his instructions were final: Hercules killed the dragon, and possessed himself of the apples.

Eurystheus had but one more command that he was permitted to impose upon this extraordinary mortal: the office he chose was that of bringing up to the face of the sun, Cerberus the triple-headed dog that guarded the entrance of Hell: Hercules descended by a cavern of mount Tænarus in Laconia: Cerberus no sooner saw him, than he took refuge beneath the steps of Pluto's throne: Hercules cast a threefold chain round his three necks, and dragged him, in spite of all the resistance he could make, to the gates of Mycenæ: Pluto at the same time permitted this illustrious son of Jupiter to bring away with him the two friends, Theseus and Pirithous, who had been condemned for their misdemeanour to sit for ever upon a stone at the entrance of Pluto's palace:

^r Ἀνάκρητα Προμηθεύς. Theog. 613.

several of the labours of Hercules remind us of Guy earl of Warwick and certain heroes in the Christian romances, and are strongly representative of an uncultivated age, when one of the greatest public services that could be achieved, consisted in the destruction of wild beasts.

Hercules had now completed his period of subjugation to Eurystheus, and became a free man : but the rest of his life was spent in feats of valour scarcely less desperate than the twelve labours I have described.

He vanquished Antæus, a giant of Lybia, sixty-four cubits high : Antæus was the son of the Sea and the Earth : he forced all travellers to wrestle with him, and then killed, and I suppose ate them : what chance had a moderate man with a giant sixty-four cubits high ? Hercules accepted his challenge : three times he threw Antæus to the ground with such force, that he thought he had killed him : Hercules however presently perceived that, as soon as Antæus fell upon his mother, the Earth, he derived new vigour from the contact, and returned to the struggle fresher than ever : finding therefore that it was necessary to change his mode of attack, Hercules caught the monster to his breast, and squeezed him to-death in his arms.

There is a pleasant story told by one of the ancient authors*, that when Hercules fell asleep on the sands after the conquest of Antæus, he was set upon by an army of pigmies : the pigmies† were a race of men three inches high : they built their houses of egg-shells, and when the corn they had sown was ripe for the harvest, they came

* Philostr. Icon. ii. 22.

† Schol. in Il. γ. 6.

with axes to hew it down, as men of ordinary stature fell trees : they had once a year a fierce and bloody war with the cranes, who coming in bodies at a certain season, and taking them for pismires or some such insignificant animal, thought to make a delicate meal of them : this gallant nation however presently taught the birds the difference between a pismire and a pigmy : how after these battles they ventured to meddle with Hercules I know not : they shot their arrows with great fury at his arms and legs : at length the hero awoke, and being highly pleased with their courage, wrapped a battalion of his assailants in the skin of the Nemaean lion, and carried them as a curiosity to Eurystheus.

When Hercules passed through Egypt, Busiris was king of the country : Busiris was an intolerable tyrant, and one instance of his cruelty was, that he sacrificed whatever stranger came into the country upon the altar of Neptune, who he said was his father : Busiris seized Hercules, regardless of the name of Jupiter whose son he was, and dragged him to the place of sacrifice : but Hercules burst his chains ; and by the law of retaliation of which the hero was fond, he slew the tyrant upon his own altar.

Virgil^v has left us a very fine description of a combat between Hercules and the robber Cacus, who is said to have been the son of Vulcan and Medusa : Cacus attempted to steal from Hercules some of the oxen of Geryon which the hero was conducting from Spain : that Hercules might not find his lost cattle by their footsteps, Cacus dragged them backwards by their tails to his den : but

^v Æn. viii. 185 et seqq. Ov. Fasti, i. 547.

they betrayed the thief by their howling for the loss of their companions.

When Hercules was in Spain, he is said to have torn asunder the promontories of Gibraltar and Ceuta, which were before joined, by the force of his arm: and to have erected there certain pillars, afterward called the pillars of Hercules, to mark what he considered as the western extremity of the world.

He shot the vulture which preyed upon the liver of Prometheus, after that illustrious personage had suffered this torment for thirty years: this was probably when he was seeking the apples of the Hesperides: the early Greeks troubled themselves but little about chronology; otherwise they would surely have interposed more than thirty years between the creation of man and the labours of Hercules.

He took and pillaged the city of Troy: of this more will be said when I come to speak of the kings of Troy.

Hercules was one of the heroes who embarked in the expedition of the Argonauts^w: he was left however by the rest of the crew on the Asiatic coast before they arrived at Colchis: his friend Hylas had been drowned, and while Hercules was in quest of him, the ship sailed^x.

It has already been seen that Hercules made a distinguished figure in defending Jupiter and the other Gods in the war of the Giants against Heaven: fate had decreed that the king of Gods and men could never succeed in this war, unless he called a mortal to his assistance: this idea prodigiously exalts our notion of Hercules; at the

^w Apoll. Rhod. α. 122.

^x Id. α. 1261 et seqq.

same time that it lowers our conception of the Grecian Gods, and shews that, in personal prowess at least, they were little superior to the strongest men.

After having considered Hercules as the indispensable ally of the greatest of the Gods, it is some descent from this elevation to relate the history of his wives.

One of the first persons for whom he conceived the passion of love was Iole, the daughter of Eurytus, the hero who had first instructed him in the use of the bow: Eurytus, confident in his superior skill, issued a declaration that, if any one could conquer him in this his favourite exercise, he would give to that person his daughter's hand in marriage: Hercules accepted the challenge, and vanquished his master: but Eurytus, vexed to see himself thus defeated, refused to abide by his engagement.

One of the ladies that won the heart of the mighty Hercules was Omphale queen of Lydia: he was so desperately enamoured of this princess that she made him do what she pleased: she commanded him to dress himself in female garb, and spin among her women: she took pleasure in seeming angry with him, and giving him a blow whenever he handled the distaff awkwardly: Hercules forgot for a time all his wondrous exploits, and whoever saw him in this degraded situation would have taken him for the most effeminate of mankind.

Lastly, the lady who makes the principal figure in the history of Hercules, and who was actually his bride, was Dejanira the sister of Meleager: one memorable adventure that happened to him with Dejanira, was that, endeavouring to

cross a river in a flood, the centaur Nessus, half man and half horse, came up, and offered to carry Dejanira across on his back: Hercules consented, but as soon as they had got over, observed Nessus behaving rudely to his wife: he let fly at him one of his arrows dipped in the blood of the Hydra, and Nessus was killed: but before the centaur died, being bent on revenge, he made Dejanira carefully preserve the shirt he wore, assuring the foolish princess that it was gifted with such virtue, that if her husband ever abated in his affections to her, he had but to put on that shirt, and they would return as forcibly as ever: Nessus knew in his heart that the shirt was impregnated with the blood of the Lernæan Hydra from the arrow that slew him, a poison which could never be washed out, and which would prove fatal to whoever attempted to put it on.

Sometime after this Hercules met with Iole, the object of his first affections: her father was now dead, and she was completely her own mistress: Hercules was going to perform a sacrifice on mount *Œta* on the borders of Thessaly, and begged her to go along with him: before he began the sacrifice, he recollected that he had not the sacred garments proper for the occasion: he sent his servant Lichas to fetch them from Dejanira: Dejanira asked who Hercules had got along with him: Lichas named Iole: inflamed at the mention of a rival she had always feared, Dejanira went to her wardrobe, and fetching out the shirt of Nessus, folded it up with the rest of the things which Hercules had sent for.

Hercules put on the fatal shirt, and presently felt the effects of it: it clung to his flesh, and occasioned him indescribable torments: he endea-

voured to tear it off; he tore away the flesh, but still the venom remained: in the first transport of his anguish he caught up Lichas, the bearer of the present, and who had been the cause that it was sent, and hurled him into the sea, where by the power of the Gods he was turned into a rock^y.

Seeing however that his death was now inevitable, Hercules recovered all his magnanimity and presence of mind: he had with him Philoctetes, one of the Argonauts^z: he ordered this hero and his other servants to prepare for him a funeral pile: he ascended it with no marks of fear and astonishment: he delivered to Philoctetes as his last legacy his quiver and his arrows, and ordered him to set fire to the pile: his last act was to require an oath from his attendants that they should discover to no one the place where the closing scene of his life was transacted: Homer^a says that the εἰδωλον or shade of Hercules wanders in the infernal regions: but his immortal part was taken up to Heaven by Jupiter, who gave him Hebe to wife, the Goddess of perpetual youth.

There is an interesting story of the adventures of Philoctetes with the arrows of Hercules: an oracle had assured the chiefs leagued against Troy, that they would never take the town, unless they carried with them the arrows of Hercules: Hercules had disappeared from the face of the earth, but no one knew what was become of him: some believed that he was gone on a distant expedition to the extremities of the earth: Ulysses, the most crafty of the chiefs, went in search of Philoctetes, the dearest friend of Hercules: he

^y Ov. Met. ix. 1 et seqq. ^z Philoctetes is not in the list of the Argonauts given by Apollonius Rhodius. He is however mentioned by Valerius Flaccus and Hyginus. ^a Od. λ. 601.

found him in a cavern of mount Cæta: from his silence and his sorrow Ulysses became convinced that Hercules was dead: he demanded of Philoctetes where his ashes had been deposited: by his artful manners and his insinuation he wrung this secret from Philoctetes, notwithstanding his oath: Philoctetes led him to the spot, and though he would not speak what he had promised to conceal, he pointed out the place by striking upon it with his foot.

Philoctetes then embarked with the other chiefs against Troy, carrying with him the arrows of Hercules: they touched at the island of Lemnos, and there Philoctetes, attempting to shoot at a bird, let fall an arrow on his guilty foot: it only rased the skin, but the consequence was such agonies, that the cries of Philoctetes frightened the whole camp of the Greeks, and the stench of his wound was intolerable: they left him for nine years on this uninhabited shore: at length, finding that his presence was still necessary to them, they returned: they brought along with them Machaon and Podalirius, physicians, who healed Philoctetes of his wound, and Troy surrendered^b.

Hercules, like Bacchus, was not originally a native of Greece: in other words, there was a Hercules, before the existence of the Theban Hercules: it has been remarked, that even the name is not a native of the Greek language, but has been transplanted from some foreign source: the original Hercules was probably a conqueror and a legislator, and his name was given to persons born in a subsequent age, as we call our children Alexander, and Augustus, and Arthur, and Alfred:

^b Hom. Il. β. 718. Pind. Pyth. i. 92. Soph. in Philoct.

the Greek story leads him through many parts of the world, to Spain, to Lybia, to mount Caucasus, and probably far north of that mountain: the Egyptian historians speak of a Hercules, the lieutenant of Osiris, that is, of Bacchus (of what ever part of the world the true Bacchus was a native): the Greeks seem to have joined together all the exploits ascribed to any man who ever bore the name of Hercules, that they might do the greater honour to the hero of Thebes^c.

^c Hesiod Theog. et Scut. Herc. pass. Apollodorus, ii. 4, 5, 6 et 7. Ov. Ep. ix. Deiaa. ad Herc.

CHAP. XXV.

OF THE ARGONAUTIC EXPEDITION.

Pelias and Æson, Kings of Thessaly.—Jason, Son of Æson, appears in his Father's Capital with one Shoe.—Demands Justice of the Usurper.—Story of Phryxus and Helle.—Jason undertakes the Voyage in Search of the Golden Fleece.—Is accompanied by all the Heroes of Greece.—Visits Hypsipyle, Queen of Lemnos.—Delivers Phineus, the Blind Prophet, from the Persecution of the Harpies.—Passes the Cyanean Rocks.—Assisted by Medea, a Sorceress, he overcomes the Guardians of the Golden Fleece.—Medea goes off with him.—Tears her Brother Absyrtus to Pieces.—Makes old Æson young again.—Her Kettle for restoring Youth.—Murders her own Children.—Escapes through the Air in a Chariot drawn by Fiery Dragons.—History of Circe.

FOUR great historical events form the conclusion of the fabulous history of Greece: the expedition of the Argonauts, the first and second sieges of Thebes, and the destruction of Troy: these stories long occupied the pens of the ancient poets who sought for fame in the composition of the epic, that is, of a species of poetry treating at large of some memorable event in history, and usually consisting of twelve or twenty-four parts, or books, and perhaps of twenty thousand verses: we have remaining the Argonautics of Apollonius Rhodius in Greek, and of Valerius Flaccus in Latin; the Thebais of Statius, a Latin poet,

on the first siege of Thebes; and the Iliad, or siege of Troy, by Homer.

The story of the Argonautic expedition is as follows: Cretheus^d, king of Iolchos a town in Thessaly, had a son named Æson, who when Cretheus died ought to have succeeded to the throne: but the mother of Æson had a son by Neptune, called Pelias, before her marriage with Cretheus: and at the decease of Cretheus, Pelias usurped the crown, and drove Æson into banishment: Æson had one son, called Jason, a youth of the greatest hopes, whom he privately committed to the care of Chiron, the centaur, the preceptor of so many heroes: when Jason grew to man's estate, filled with the story of his father's wrongs, he left Chiron, and hastened to visit Iolchos, having formed a resolution boldly to demand from the usurper the restoration of his kingdom: he expected that his appearance, and the justice of his claim, would interest the citizens of Iolchos in his favour, and he was not disappointed: as the gallant stripling, on foot and alone, approached his patrimonial dominion, he was stopped by the course of the river Enipeus: Juno saw his difficulty, and in the shape of an old woman transported him over the river through the air: in the passage one of his sandals dropped from his foot, and was carried away by the stream: the mind of Jason was full of great things, and suffered no disturbance from so trivial a circumstance: he entered the market-place of Iolchos, and related to the multitude he found there, who he was, and wherefore he came: his story, his noble appearance, and the courage of

^d Apollodorus, i. 9.

his undertaking interested all that heard him in his favour: they began to murmur a demand that the lawful race of their sovereigns should be restored: Pelias in his palace, heard of the tumult, and came down to the spot: the moment he saw Jason, he was dismayed: an oracle had assured him that he had nothing to fear, but from a stranger who should enter the gates of his capital with one foot shod, and one foot bare: Pelias was a politician full of stratagems and art: to divert Jason from his purpose, he told him the following story.

“ Athamas, the brother of your grandfather Cretheus, before he married Ino the daughter of Cadmus, had by a former wife two children, Phryxus and Helle: Ino was a barbarous step-mother, and these children were obliged to fly from her court: in this distress they were advised by their guardian to have recourse to Æetes king of Colchis, their mother's brother: Colchis was at a vast distance on the furthest shore of the Euxine sea: to enable them to accomplish the voyage, Neptune taking pity on their case gave them a ram with a golden fleece to carry them through the air: their voyage however was unfortunate: Helle slipped from behind her brother into the sea, and was drowned in a place which from her is now called the Hellespont: Phryxus arrived safe, but was barbarously murdered immediately after by his uncle Æetes, for the sake of his ram with the golden fleece.

“ I now come to the reason why I have told you this story: far from my heart is the wish to usurp another's rights: but how shall I know that you a stranger, an adventurer, with not a single companion, and with but one shoe, are,

as you say you are, the son of Æson, and the grandson of Cretheus? if you feel any royal blood in your veins, go and revenge the murder of your cousin Phryxus: slay the inhospitable Æetes, and return hither with the ram that wears the golden fleece: then both I and the citizens of Iolchos shall be convinced of the justice of your claims; and I swear that I will then resign to you undisputed possession of the throne."

Pelias rummaged up this old story, that he might the more securely baffle the ardent courage of Jason: he believed that, if Jason once set out on this romantic expedition, he would never return alive: Jason however saw the matter in a different light: the spirit of adventure was upon him, and he freely assented to Pelias's proposition.

It is supposed by the ancient writers, that the expedition of Jason in search of the golden fleece is the first sea-voyage that ever was made: it was therefore a voyage of discovery, and is to be classed with the voyage of Columbus in search of the New World, or with the more recent expeditions of sir Francis Drake, commodore Anson, and captain Cook.

Jason caused proclamation to be made through all Greece of the adventure he had undertaken, and he was joined by all the most gallant spirits then existing in the country; among others, by Hercules, by Amphion, by Orpheus, by Meleager, by Admetus, by Castor and Pollux, by Theseus and his friend Pirithous, by Atalanta, who for this purpose disguised herself in man's apparel, and by Æsculapius the son of Apollo, who was afterward regarded as the God of medicine: various particulars of these persons shall

be related hereafter : the name of the ship in which they sailed was *Argo*, and from her the adventurers have received the name of the *Argonauts*.

The first considerable place at which they touched was the island of *Lemnos* : here *Hypsipyle* queen of the country, conceived a passion for *Jason*, and he and his companions made an abode of two years in the island, after which he deserted her : the story of *Jason* and *Hypsipyle* bears a considerable resemblance to the story of *Æneas* and *Dido*, which has been immortalised in the verses of *Virgil*^c.

The next considerable adventure of the *Argonauts* was the delivery of *Phineus* king of *Bithynia* from the persecution of the *Harpies* : *Phineus* the son of *Neptune* had married *Cleopatra*, daughter of the *North Wind* : *Cleopatra* died, and the children she left behind were persecuted by their step-mother, the second wife of *Phineus* : she pretended that they had formed a plot against his life, and influenced by her accusation, *Phineus* ordered that they should have their eyes put out : to punish him for this cruelty, the *Gods* struck him with blindness, and sent the *Harpies* to torment him : the *Harpies* were monsters with the face of a woman, the body of a vulture, and the claws of a dragon : they were in nature filthy and voracious : they devoured the food of the king of *Bithynia* as soon as it was spread upon the table, and they defiled what they did not devour : *Zethus* and *Calais*, two of the *Argonauts*, had the *North Wind* for their father, and were therefore brothers of the dead queen *Cleopatra* : they how-

^c *Æn.* iv.

ever thought that Phineus had suffered enough, and took compassion upon him: as you might expect from the children of the Wind, they were furnished with wings: they hunted and pursued the Harpies, till they drove them to the Strophades, two islands on the further side of Peloponnesus, where Æneas afterward found them.

Phineus, in gratitude to the Argonauts who had done him this essential service, instructed them how to avoid the Cyanean rocks at the entrance of the Euxine sea: these rocks floated loose in the sea, and if any vessel attempted to make its way between them, immediately met together, and crushed the vessel to pieces: the mode of avoiding the danger was to send a dove before, and if he passed unhurt through the opening, the mariner might safely follow: Phineus is one of the most celebrated prophets of antiquity.

Æetes, king of Colchis, whither the Argonauts were bound, was a child of the Sun, and was brother to Circe and Pasiphae: when the Argonauts arrived in Colchis, the first object of Jason was to obtain the golden fleece, and he remitted the intention, if he had ever entertained it, of putting Æetes to death: the enterprise of the golden fleece however would have been too hard for him, if it had not been for Medea, daughter to Æetes, who no sooner saw the beautiful Jason, than by the contrivance of Juno his protector, she immediately fell in love with him: Medea was the most powerful sorceress in the history of the world: it was easy therefore for her to enable Jason to accomplish his errand.

The ram which had borne the golden fleece was dead, and having been taken up into heaven, was turned into one of the constellations: but his

fleece was carefully preserved, and was hanged up in a grove sacred to Mars; Jason addressed himself to king *Æetes*, told him his errand, and enquired in what manner it was to be accomplished: *Æetes* answered that the conditions upon which he was to obtain what he sought were very plain ones; that the sacred grove was guarded by bulls whose hoofs were brass, and whose breath was fire, and by a furious dragon, who always planted himself at the foot of the tree upon which the golden fleece was suspended, and who never slept: Jason therefore had nothing to do but to tame the bulls, to kill the dragon, and to conquer an army of soldiers that were to spring from the dragon's teeth: the fleece would then be his own.

Instructed by *Medea*, and armed by her with philtres, drugs and enchantments, Jason tamed the bulls with the breath of fire, put the yoke upon their necks, and caused them to plough two acres of the stiffest land: he then gave a sleeping draught to the never-sleeping dragon, and cut off his head: and lastly, to complete the adventure, he drew the monster's teeth, sowed them in the ground, and saw an army of soldiers rise up from the seed: the army hastened forward to attack him, but he knew the charm: he threw a large stone into the midst of their ranks, and they immediately turned from him, and falling on each other were all killed with their mutual weapons: *Æetes* and his people looked on at the actions of Jason with astonishment: they had no suspicion of any foul play between Jason and *Medea*: Jason took down the golden fleece from the magic tree, and was acknowledged to have won the prize.

What was the surprise of Æetes, when the next day he found that the Argonauts had taken the advantage of the night to depart, and had carried Medea his daughter along with them! he sent his only son Absyrtus in pursuit of the fugitives; but Medea was able to persuade her brother to join in her flight: the danger however did not end here: Æetes finding his son did not return, himself followed the pursuit: sorcerers are always cruel: Medea perceiving herself almost overtaken, made no scruple to tear her brother Absyrtus in pieces, and scatter his mangled limbs in the way: Æetes could not endure the agonizing spectacle: he stopped to gather up the limbs of Absyrtus, and the lovers escaped.

At length, through multiplied dangers, and after many years absence, the Argonauts returned to Thessaly whence they set out: both Æson and Pelias were now grown old and decrepid: Jason's first visit was to his father Æson, and observing his great infirmities, he applied to his consort and fellow-traveller Medea, and asked her whether she had no charms by which she could make an old man young again: she replied she had: she drew the wasted and watery blood from the body of Æson: she infused the juice of certain potent herbs into his veins; and Æson rose from the operation to the full as fresh and vigorous a man as his son.

They then went to court to demand the resignation of Pelias: they found the hoary usurper surrounded with his daughters: these ladies declared that they could not think of resisting so just a claim; but, while they retired into private life, they requested Medea to do the same kindness for their father which she had already done for Æson: she

said she would: she told them the method was to cut the old gentleman in pieces, and boil him in a kettle, with an infusion of certain herbs; and he would come out as smooth and active as a child.

The daughters of Pelias a little scrupled the operation: Medea, seeing this, begged they would not think she was deceiving them; if however they harboured any doubts, she desired they would bring her the oldest ram from their flocks, and they should see the experiment: they did so: Medea cut up the ram, cast in certain herbs, and the old bell-weather came out as beautiful and innocent a he-lamb as you ever beheld: the daughters of Pelias were now satisfied: they divided their old father in pieces: but he was never restored either to youth or life.

After this Medea and Jason, driven out by some rebellion of the people, who did not love their new queen, retired to Corinth: there they lived ten years: Jason however at last grew tired of her: he did not like to have a sorceress for his wife: he gave her notice that he would not live with her any longer; and Medea, to punish his infidelity, murdered the two children she had borne him, before his face: Jason ordered her to be taken into custody, that she might be brought to justice: but Medea laughed at his threats, and mounting a chariot drawn by fiery dragons, flew away to Athens: here she is said to have become the wife of Ægeus king of that place^f.

Circe was the sister of Æetes and Pasiphae, and was, like Medea her niece, skilful in magic:

^f Eur. Medea. Ov. Ep. xiii. Med. ad Jas.

she had besides the gift of immortality^g: she retired to *Ææa*, an island of the Tyrrhenian sea, and there lived like a queen: she was exquisitely beautiful, but she employed the charms of her person, and the seducing grace of her manners, to a bad purpose: she presented to every stranger who landed in her island, an enchanted cup which she intreated him to drink: he no sooner tasted it, than he was turned into a hog, and was driven by the Goddess to her sty^h: the unfortunate stranger retained under this filthy figure the perfect consciousness of what he was, and mourned for ever the easiness of temper by which he had been reduced to this melancholy pass: this is a lively representation of the mischievous effects of intemperance, by which a man makes a beast of himself.

^g Hom. Od. ε. 136.

^h Id. x. 232.

CHAP. XXVI.

OF THE ARGONAUTS.

Amphion raises the Walls of Thebes by the Music of his Lute.—Orpheus, King of Thrace.—The Wild Beasts and the Woods follow his Music.—Goes to Hell in Pursuit of Eurydice, his Wife.—Obtains her from Pluto.—Loses her again.—His Tragical Death.—Arion saved by a Dolphin.—Æsculapius—after his Death becomes a Serpent.—Apollo keeps the Flocks of Admetus, King of Thessaly.—Alcestis, Queen of Thessaly, consents to die for her Husband.—Foot-race of Hippomenes and Atalanta, won by means of the Golden Apples of the Hesperides.—Jupiter courts Leda in the Form of a Swan.—Pollux shares his Immortality with Castor his Brother.

SEVERAL of the Argonauts were famous for other exploits: it has indeed in some instances been doubted whether these exploits were performed by the Argonauts, or by other persons of the same name: this enquiry is not material; and where the persons achieving these adventures lived about the period of the Argonautic expedition, I shall not think it worth while to preserve a useless distinction.

The adventures of Hercules have already been related.

Amphion was the son of Jupiter and Antiope: Antiope was the niece of Lycus, viceroy of Thebes; and being cruelly treated by her uncle, Amphion, with his twin-brother Zethus, set upon him, put him to death, and delivered Antiope

from her dungeon: Amphion now usurped the crown of Thebes: he was a skilful musician, and played admirably on the lute, in which he had been instructed by Mercury: one extraordinary proof he gave of his skill was, that being desirous to surround his capital with a wall, the stones were moved by the sound of his instrument, and arranged themselves in the way he intended, without a human hand being once applied in the erection of this miraculous bulwarkⁱ: Thebes was inclosed by Amphion with a wall, and in the wall there were seven famous gates.

Orpheus was the son of Apollo by one of the Muses: he was a native of Thrace, and one of the sovereigns of that country: he was the most accomplished musician that ever existed: when he played upon his lyre, the savage beasts forgot their nature, and assembled round him, the woods came down from the mountains and followed his steps, and the most rapid rivers ceased to flow.

Orpheus married Eurydice, one of the wood-nymphs; but Aristæus, another son of Apollo, and who is the God supposed to preside over the cultivation of olives and of the bee, fell in love with her at the same time, and endeavoured to persuade her to give him her company: Eurydice disdained his overtures, and one day running away from Aristæus that she might escape his importunities, she was stung by a serpent so that she died.

Never did husband doat upon a wife as Orpheus doated upon Eurydice: confident in the music of his lyre, he set out for the realms of Pluto in pursuit of her: when he began his celestial strains, all Hell was suspended at the sound:

ⁱ Hom. λ. 259. Paus. ix. 17. Horat. iii. Od. 11.

the wheel of Ixion stopped, the stone of Sisyphus lay still, and Tantalus forgot his raging thirst: Pluto and Proserpine relented and permitted Eurydice to return to earth, upon condition that Orpheus should walk before her, and not once look back till they were beyond the limits of the infernal regions: Orpheus persisted for a considerable time to observe the injunctions he had received: he was now in the last circle of Hell: at length he stood still; he listened for the steps of Eurydice, but could hear nothing; Eurydice had stopped as well as her husband: she was close behind him, but they were forbidden to speak: how could he help looking round? he had no sooner done so, than she became again a ghost: she flitted along from field to field, and from circle to circle: Orpheus hastened to follow her: but now the stern centinels of Hell would not suffer him to proceed^k.

Orpheus returned to earth alone, and more disconsolate than ever: he avoided all human society as much as he could: he particularly refused to speak to, or so much as to look upon a woman: the Thracian women, his subjects, resented this contempt: one day when they were celebrating the mysteries of Bacchus, inflamed with the wild ceremonies of this festival, they worked themselves up into a fury, and fell upon the unfortunate Orpheus: they tore his body into a thousand pieces, and cast it with the head into the river Hebrus: to the last Orpheus retained his unconquerable passion for Eurydice, and it is said that as his head floated down the river, his tongue still repeated her beloved name, till it

^k Virg. Georg. iv. 454 et seqq.

was lost among the waves of the ocean, and could be heard no more¹.

In the expedition of the Argonauts, Orpheus rendered eminent service to his fellow-voyagers as they passed the caves of Sirens: he not only had fortitude enough to resist the blandishments of these deities: he also exerted his eloquence to that end with his companions: and the persuasions of Orpheus were more seducing, than the magical incantations of these dangerous deceivers^m.

Arion may fitly be mentioned for his skill in music with Amphion and Orpheus, though he was no Demigod, but a poet of Greece contemporary with Sappho and Anacreon: he was a native of the island of Lesbos, but settled at Corinth, under the patronage of Periander king, or tyrant as he is called, of that place: having accumulated considerable wealth, he was desirous of returning to his own country, and hired a Corinthian vessel for that purpose: the mariners resolved to destroy him for the sake of his riches: having informed him of their determination, Arion requested to be permitted to play one more piece of music on his lyre before he quitted the world: the mariners were desirous of hearing so exquisite a performer, and readily consented: having finished a heavenly air, Arion leaped from the poop of the vessel into the sea, where a dolphin, attracted by his music, and unseen by the mariners, waited for him: the dolphin took Arion on his back, and carried him safe to Greece, so that the poet returned on foot to the court of Periander: Periander kept him secretly: after some time the vessel came back, and Periander, having

¹ Ov. Met. x. 1 et seqq.

^m Apoll. Rhod. δ . 885 et seqq.

sent for the mariners, demanded of them what they had done with Arion? they had left him safe, they said, in Lesbos, where he had been received with great joy by his relations and countrymen: as they said this, Arion to their utter confusion came in from an adjoining apartment: and being thus convicted of conspiracy and forgery, Periander ordered them all to be put to death^r.

Æsculapius was one of the Argonauts: he was the son of Apollo by one of the nymphs, and was given, like many other heroes of that time, to the celebrated Chiron to be educated: for his skill in medicine he may be considered as the most eminent of the pupils of Chiron: no disease could resist the efforts of his art, and he was even said to restore the dead to life: at length Pluto complained, that if this man was suffered to go on unmolested, his realm would be quite depopulated; and Jupiter, to please his brother, struck Æsculapius dead^o with a thunderbolt; a strange treatment from the father of the Gods toward an eminent benefactor of his creatures.

Æsculapius was principally worshipped at Epidaurus, which appears to have been his birth-place: the Romans about three hundred years before Christ, being visited by a plague, were directed by the Sibylline books to fetch Æsculapius from this place: they sent an embassy for that purpose: and while the vessel lay in the harbour, a huge serpent came on board the sacred ship: the serpent, which is the most long-lived of animals, and which by casting its slough renews its youth annually, is the emblem of Æscu-

^r Herod. i. 24. Ov. Fasti, ii. 83 et seqq.

^o Pind. Pyth. iii. 42 et seqq. Virg. Æn. vii. 770. Diod. iv. 71.

lapius: the ambassadors therefore rejoiced at the appearance of this serpent, and tended it carefully, believing it to be no other than Æsculapius himself: they conveyed it to Rome, built a temple for its habitation, and Æsculapius was ever after worshipped there under the form of a serpent^r.

Admetus, king of Pheræ in Thessaly, was another of the Argonauts, and his history is connected with that of Æsculapius: Apollo was exceedingly afflicted at the death of his son, and to avenge himself, attacked the Cyclops, the forgers of Jupiter's thunderbolts, and killed some of them: this was an offence against the majesty of Heaven: to punish so audacious a proceeding, Jupiter condemned Apollo to nine years' banishment; and the God was reduced to such necessity as to be obliged to keep the flocks of Admetus for his subsistence: here he taught to the shepherds of Admetus the use of the pipe and other instruments of music; and these pastoral people, who had before led a savage life, became so happy, that the Gods, fearful lest mortals should become happier than themselves, suddenly recalled Apollo to Heaven.

During the residence of Apollo in the dominions of Admetus, pleased with the kind treatment he received, the God promised his master that he should never die, if, whenever the Fates called for him, another person could be found who would lay down his life for his sake: Admetus married Alcestis, one of those daughters of Pelias whose zeal for the restoration of their father's youth had turned out so unfortunately: the same character

^r Epitome Liv. ii.

led her with more enlightened affection to offer her life for her husband: Hercules in his expedition to the infernal regions, is said once more to have brought her back to mortal existence¹.

Atalanta was a female who, from a love of enterprise, disguised herself in man's attire, and engaged in the Argonautic expedition: as she was extremely beautiful, many princes desired to marry her, but she determined to lead a life of celibacy: to get rid of their importunities, she proposed a foot-race to them, with the same condition as the chariot-race of *Œnomaus* king of *Elis*, that if they won the race they should obtain her hand, and if they were baffled they should suffer death: Atalanta was unequalled in swiftness, and many suitors lost their lives in this hard competition: last of all came *Hippomenes*, the son of *Macareus*: *Venus* bestowed upon him previously to the race three golden apples from the gardens of the *Hesperides*: these he threw on the ground as he ran; and Atalanta struck with their beauty, could not refrain from stooping to pick them up: thus *Hippomenes* won the race and the lady².

Castor and *Pollux*, also Argonauts, were the twin-sons of *Leda*, wife of *Tyndarus* king of *Sparta*: *Jupiter* became enamoured of *Leda* as he saw her bathing: he took the form of a beautiful swan, and soon won the fair lady's heart: they had frequent conversations, and after a time *Leda* became a mother of twins, of whom *Pollux* was the son of *Jupiter*, and *Castor* of *Tyndarus*: as *Jupiter* when he was the father of *Pollux* took the shape of a swan, *Pollux* is said to have come

¹ Eurip. *Alcestis*.

² *Ov. Mett. x. 560.*

into the world inclosed in an egg: the common story is that Leda had two eggs, one inclosing Pollux and Helen, the children of Jupiter, and the other Castor and Clytemnestra, of whom Tyn-darus was the father: Pollux became exceedingly expert in wrestling and the use of the cestus, and Castor in horsemanship.

It is related of Pollux that he received from his father the gift of immortality, though most of the Demigods were subject to death like mere men: Castor was killed in battle, and Pollux loved him so tenderly that he continually importuned Jupiter to restore him to life: Jupiter at length consented that they should live and die by turns, and thus divide the gift of immortality between them: accordingly they live and die alternately every day, or as other accounts say, every six months^s: they seem however to have vanished from the earth before the disastrous adventures of their sister Helen and the siege of Troy^t, and their life is therefore probably as signs in heaven under the name of Gemini: in the belt of the zodiac they are delineated side by side, mounted on horseback: and under this figure they are represented by the Romans as sometimes appearing in their armies, turning the tide of battle in favour of the republic^v.

^s Hom. Od. λ. 229. Schol. in Od. λ. 297. Apollodorus, iii. 10. Pind. Nem. x. 113 et seqq.

^t Hom. Il. γ. 243.

^v Plut. in Coriolan.

CHAP. XXVII.

OF THESEUS.

Ægeus, King of Athens.—The Pallantides, his Nephews.—Ægeus consults Pittheus.—Birth of Theseus.—Bred at Trœzene.—His Adventures with Corynetes, Sinnis, and other Robbers.—The Bed of Procrustes.—Medea attempts to poison Theseus.—Theseus kills the Minotaur, and Delivers his Country.—Ægeus casts himself into the Sea.—Rivalship of Ariadne and Phædra for the Love of Theseus.—Ariadne becomes the Wife of Bacchus.—Friendship of Theseus and Pirithous.—Marriage of Pirithous.—Battle of the Centaurs and Lapithæ.—Theseus and Pirithous descend into Hell.—Phædra causes Theseus to murder Hippolitus, his Son.

THE most eminent of the Demigods of Greece after Bacchus and Hercules, is Theseus^w: he was king of Athens, and was the first governor of that city who divided the people into tribes, and gave a regular and civilised form to the state: the gratitude of his countrymen exalted him into a Demigod, and their refinement and genius have conferred uncommon lustre upon the events of his story: I have before observed that the temple of Theseus was one of the richest and most magnificent that Athens contained: he is also understood to have been one of the Argonauts, though some particulars of his life seem to be inconsistent with that supposition.

^w Plut. in Thes. Diodor. iv. 59.

Ægeus, king of Athens, had a brother named Pallas, the father of fifty sons: Ægeus had himself no children: the children of Pallas, as they grew up, had the folly and wickedness to insult Ægeus upon his misfortune in not being a father, and to hint to him that they set no great value on his favour, since, let him think of it as he would, Athens and its throne would infallibly be theirs, whenever he died.

Ægeus could ill digest the rudeness of these striplings, who did every thing but shove him from his throne; and was very desirous to have a son by whose means to quash their fond expectations: he consulted the oracle on the subject, which returned him a very obscure answer; and in his way back he visited the court of Pittheus king of Trœzene, the brother of Atreus and Thyestes: Pittheus was supposed to be the deepest politician of his time: he privately married his daughter Æthra to Ægeus, but would not send her to Athens, lest the impious sons of Pallas might find secret means of destroying the mother and her child when born: Ægeus, when he took leave of his bride, led her into a neighbouring field, and placing a sword and a pair of sandals in a hole he had dug for that purpose, covered them with a stone so huge that no common man could move it: he bade her, if she had a son, to send him to Athens with that sword and those sandals, as soon as he should be strong enough to remove the stone that covered them, but in the mean time carefully to conceal his parentage: this was a project suggested by Pittheus.

As the parentage of Theseus (such was the name of the son that was born), was not to be divulged, his mother gave out that Neptune was

his father: but, contrary to the custom of the Grecian heroes, Theseus, when he came home to Athens, laid aside this pretence, and was careful for the most part to call himself the son of *Ægeus*.

When Theseus was sixteen years of age, *Æthra* led him into the field before mentioned, revealed to him the secret of his birth, and caused him to remove the stone, and to set out with the sword and sandals for Athens.

Before he went, *Pittheus* gave him his last advice: like a careful grandfather, he recommended to him to take the safest road, which he said was by sea: *Hercules*, he added, had for a time cleared Greece of robbers, monsters, and wild beasts: but now *Hercules* was absent, the roads were as much infested as ever: at the name of *Hercules* the youthful courage of Theseus took fire: he intreated his grandfather to let him go by land: "Consider, sir," said he, "I go to claim a crown: my birth is unknown; my rights are disputed: what figure shall I make, an untried stripling, before the insolent sons of my uncle *Pallas*? no; my desire is, to enter my father's capital, with trophies in my hand more expressive of my birth, and affirmative of my pretensions, than even the sword and sandals which my mother *Æthra* has given me:" *Pittheus* yielded to the ardent spirit of the hero.

Many and critical were the adventures to which Theseus was exposed between *Trœzene* and Athens, but he came out victorious from them all: he killed *Corynetes*, a robber, the son of *Vulcan*, famous for the terrible club he bore, not far from *Trœzene*: his next encounter was with *Sinnis*, a cruel outlaw, who tied all strangers he could

catch to the heads of two tall pines, which he bent together for that purpose and then let go, by means of which the unfortunate victims were torn in pieces: Theseus tied him to his own pines, and put him to the death he had inflicted on so many others: his third exploit was the killing Phæa, the sow of Crommyon near Corinth, mother to the wild boar of Calydon: according to other accounts Phæa was a female robber, who first enticed travellers by courtship into her den, and then murdered them: the fourth adventure of Theseus was the destruction of Sciron, a giant, who first compelled his captives to wash his feet, and then hurled them from a high rock into the sea: his fifth adventure was the death of Cercyon, the son of Vulcan, and king of Eleusis, who compelled all strangers to wrestle with him, and had hitherto conquered and killed all he encountered: Theseus defeated him in wrestling, and then put him to death: the last and most celebrated exploit of the Athenian hero in this journey, was against Procrustes, a cruel tyrant, who with mock hospitality invited every stranger to sleep under his roof, and then placing them upon his own bed, if it proved too long, stretched them with pullies, and dislocated their joints, till he had drawn them out to the requisite stature, and if it was too short, chopped off their feet, and part of their legs, till he had brought them to his own size: Theseus destroyed this monster.

With the club of Corynetes, the bed of Procrustes, and the other trophies of his valour, Theseus entered the city of Athens: it is said that Medea had by this time married Ægeus: this is inconsistent with Theseus's being one of the Argonauts: both cannot be true.

Theseus had no sooner arrived at the end of his journey, than Medea, by her skill in sorcery, or by some other means, knew who he was: step-mothers are said seldom to be fond of the children of their husband which are not also their own: Medea, who had less of human feelings than almost any body in the records of mankind, immediately determined to poison Theseus.

The young hero, as the gallant destroyer of robbers and monsters, was invited to feast with king Ægeus: Medea put a poisoned goblet into the hands of the king to deliver to his guest: Theseus rose to receive it: Ægeus observed the sword by his side, and begged to be favored with a nearer inspection: he recognised the stranger for his son: what became of the poisoned goblet, or of the animosity of Medea, we are not told: perhaps, though she was willing to poison Theseus as a stranger, she dared not make such an attempt upon him as Ægeus's only son.

The most famous of all the adventures of Theseus is the destruction of the Minotaur: this monster was described when I gave an account of the family of Minos: he was shut up in the famous labyrinth of Crete: Androgeus, the son of Minos, having been killed in a riot at Athens, this powerful monarch imposed as a fine upon the Athenians, that they should send every year seven noble youths, and as many virgins, to be devoured by the Minotaur.

This tribute had already been exacted three years, when Theseus arrived at Athens: hungry and thirsting as the gallant champion did for arduous adventures, he intreated his father that, superseding the ordinary course of lot, he might be admitted as one of the seven noble youths:

Ægeus unwillingly consented: Theseus took with him two flags, a black and a white one, the first under which to sail in his voyage out, the second to be unfurled, if he returned victorious, as his heart told him he should do, in his voyage home.

Minos had a favourite daughter Ariadne^x: Theseus, soon after his arrival in Crete, was shut up with his companions in the fatal labyrinth; but not so soon as not to allow time to Ariadne to fall in love with the gallant presence of the youth, and to communicate to him the necessary instructions for destroying the Minotaur, as well as to present him with a clue of thread, by which to find his way out of the labyrinth when he had accomplished the adventure.

The Minotaur being killed, Theseus returned home in triumph to Athens with the youths and virgins his companions: Ægeus his father, who had but just felt the pleasure of having such a son and being delivered from the tyranny of his graceless nephews, watched day and night for the arrival of the vessel in which Theseus had embarked: for this purpose he remained perpetually on the top of a high turret, which overlooked the waves of the sea: he at length discovered the approach of the ship: he watched for the white or black flag, which was to announce his good fortune or disaster: unhappily in the hurry and tumult of their joy, every one on board had forgotten to take down the black flag, and rear the white: Ægeus saw the fatal signal, and threw himself from the top of his turret into the sea, which from him was named the Ægean sea.

Theseus brought away Ariadne from Crete, as

x Ov. Ep. x. Ariadne ad Thes.

Jason had brought away Medea from Colchis : but Ariadne had a sister Phædra, who had conceived a passion for Theseus not less ardent than that of Ariadne : Phædra prevailed upon her sister to take her with her as the companion of her flight : during the voyage Phædra treacherously employed all the arts in which she abounded, to supplant the unsuspecting Ariadne in the affections of the hero : the vessel of Theseus touched at the island of Naxos, and here Phædra persuaded him to leave Ariadne asleep and alone on the shore : Naxos was the favourite residence of Bacchus : he met Ariadne in the midst of her desperation, first pitied, and then loved her : Ariadne became the wife of Bacchus, and after death was turned by him into a constellation^γ.

The fame of Theseus by this time spread itself over all Greece, and Pirithous, son of Ixion, king of the Lapithæ in Thessaly, a spirited and enterprising young prince, was desirous like many others to behold the vanquisher of Sinnis, Procrustes, and the Minotaur : he conceived an extraordinary manner of gratifying this inclination, but he held no other manner to be worthy of himself and of the man he wished to call his friend : he collected a military force, and invaded the territories of Athens : Theseus marched out against him : the two heroes advanced in the front of their respective armies : they were mutually struck with the open and bold port and carriage of each other : they rushed into each other's embrace, and struck up a league of endless friendship ; and from that time never was attach-

^γ Ov. Art. Am. i. 527.

ment more sincere, generous and unalterable, than that of Theseus and Pirithous.

Pirithous married Hippodamia, the daughter of Adrastus king of Argos: his nuptials were celebrated with great pomp, and among others the Centaurs were invited to be there: I have already frequently mentioned the Centaurs: they were in their form half-man and half-horse! they were among the most learned and accomplished persons of their times: the Centaurs are said to have been the children of Ixion, and of the cloud which Jupiter sent to Ixion in likeness of Juno: so that they were half-brothers to Pirithous^z.

In the sacrifices to the Gods with which the nuptials of Pirithous were solemnised, the hero we are told forgot the sacrifice to Mars: the God of war resented the neglect, and urged Eurytion the Centaur in the midst of his wine to offer a gross affront to the bride: Hercules, Theseus, and the other friends of Pirithous became exasperated at this behaviour, and killed Eurytion on the spot: a general contention ensued, and all or nearly all the Centaurs were slain^a.

After some time Pirithous lost his wife Hippodamia, and Theseus lost Phædra: flushed with their exploits and their fame, they came to a mutual resolution that they would not marry again but to the daughters of the Gods: Theseus accordingly seized Helen, the sister of Pollux, who was only nine years of age, but the valour of her brothers soon rescued her out of his hands: it is to be observed, that if Helen were only nine years of age, Pollux must have been the same:

^z Pindar. Pyth. ii. 78 et seqq. Diodorus, iv. 70.

^a Schol. in Pind. Pyth. ii. 85. Hom. Od. φ. 295. Ov. Met. xii. 210 et seqq.

Pirithous, finding no female on the face of the earth whom he deemed worthy of his hand, formed the impious resolution of going down to Hell, and taking away Proserpine queen of the infernal regions from her husband: Theseus would not let his friend go alone on this dangerous expedition: their success was such as might be expected: Pluto defeated their conspiracy, and sentenced them both to sit for ever upon a stone at the entrance of his palace: at length when Hercules came down into Hell, sent thither by his task-master Eurystheus, he prevailed upon Pluto to forgive their temerity, and suffer him to conduct Theseus back to earth^b.

The other adventures of Theseus are less splendid than those which have been mentioned: he is said to have accompanied Hercules when he went to fetch the girdle of Hippolita queen of the Amazons: and as Hercules only wanted the girdle, he gave Theseus the queen who wore it, and Theseus made her his wife: by her he had a son, named Hippolitus.

It is not easy to settle the order of the wives and love-adventures of Theseus: there is a famous story^c, that as Hippolitus grew up, Phædra became jealous of him: and she who had acted so basely to her sister, had no scruple to form a plan to destroy him: she wrongfully accused him to his father of disrespectful and undutiful behaviour; and Theseus, without making a proper examination into the charge, caused his son to be put to death.

^b Apollodorus, ii. 5. Schol. in Ap. Rh. α . 101.

^c Eurip. Hippol.

CHAP. XXVIII.

OF ŒDIPUS KING OF THEBES, AND HIS
POSTERITY.

Birth of Œdipus.—He is Exposed on the Mountains.—Adopted by the King of Corinth.—Kills his Father in a Broil.—Explains the Riddle of the Sphinx.—Marries his Mother.—Tiresias, the Blind Prophet.—Œdipus tears out his own Eyes.—Eteocles succeeds.—War, Seven Chiefs against Thebes.—Single Combat of Eteocles and Polynices: both are killed.—The Flames of their Funeral Pile Divide.—Second Siege of Thebes by the Epigoni.—Thebes is Taken.

THE story of the Argonautic expedition, whatever may be the true meaning of so mysterious a riddle, may be supposed to be the story of some beneficent adventure: the remaining stories of the heroic ages, the sieges of Thebes and Troy, are undoubtedly stories of calamity.

Laius king of Thebes was the great-grandson of Cadmus: he married Jocasta, the daughter of Creon an eminent Theban, and was assured by an oracle that he should lose his life by a son who was to be born of that marriage: to prevent this he gave Œdipus, his child, as soon as he was born, to one of his domestics, to be exposed on the mountains to perish: the domestic bored a hole in each foot of the infant, and passing a string through, hanged him up on a tree, and left him: from this circumstance he afterward obtained the name of Œdipus, “swelled feet^d.”

^d Eur. Phœn. 1 et seqq. Soph. Œd. Tyr. civ. 6.

In this terrible situation the poor child was found by one of the shepherds of Polybus king of Corinth, who carried it home to his master: Polybus had no children: the infant was exceedingly beautiful: and Polybus bred the little Œdipus as his own son: one day, Œdipus being now grown to a young man, one of his youthful companions brutally insulted him, told him that he was no son of the king and queen of Corinth, and that no true Corinthian would bear to be dictated to by a base-born brat.

Œdipus closely questioned king Polybus on the subject, but could obtain no satisfactory reply: afflicted with this uncertainty, he repaired to the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, but received no other answer than the advice never to go home, if he did not wish to kill his father: a cruel advice, since Œdipus knew not how to make the right use of it: his mind revolted from all immorality, but most from that with which he was threatened: he resolved never again to set foot in Corinth: he turned the direction of his chariot toward Thebes: he met Laius travelling privately in an obscure road: Laius or his companions called out in a rude manner to him to make way, and retire: the pride of Œdipus was roused: a scuffle ensued: and thus Œdipus slew his father in the very attempt to avoid that crime*.

I believe the reason Œdipus had bent his steps toward Thebes, was that he had heard of Sphinx, a monster who infested the border of Bœotia, sprung from the marriage of Orthus and Echidna, with the head and breasts of a woman, the body of a dog, the claws of a lion, the wings of a bird, and a human voice: this monster had stationed her-

* Soph. Œd. Tyr. 784 et seqq.

self by the road-side, where she stopped all travellers, and proposed a riddle to them, which if they did not solve they were devoured: the oracle on the other hand had declared, that if any one explained her riddle, the Sphinx would immediately kill herself for vexation: Ædipus, who lived in an age when the destruction of monsters was the most admired of human achievements, was anxious to put an end to the Sphinx: and the Thebans, understanding that Laius was no more, offered their queen and the vacant throne to whoever should rid them of this monster.

Ædipus presented himself fearlessly before the den of the Sphinx, and demanded to hear her riddle: "What creature is that," said the monster, "which goes in the morning upon four legs, at noon upon two, and at night upon three?" "It is a man," replied Ædipus: "by morning, noon and night you mean the three great changes to which human nature is subject: the imbecility of infancy, when we crawl on all fours; the vigour of manhood, when we require no support but the two natural pillars with which our maker has furnished us; and the decrepitude of age, when we are fain to call in the assistance of a walking-stick: the Sphinx had no sooner heard the answer of the wise Ædipus, than she threw herself from a rock, on which she had sat listening to him, and from which she meditated to dart upon him in case of his failure, and was dashed to pieces^f.

Ædipus now ascended the Theban throne, married Jocasta, and had by her two sons, Eteocles and Polynices: some years after, Thebes was in-

^f Argument. ad Phœniss.

fested with a terrible plague, and an oracle having been consulted on the subject, gave for answer, that it would never be well with Thebes, till the murderer of king Laius was banished from his territories: the death of Laius had happened at a time of so great calamity that the particulars had never been enquired into: after a long search it was proved to the astonishment of all, that Œdipus was the murderer of Laius, and that in so doing he had killed his father: the person by whom he was exposed when an infant, and the person by whom he had been found, concurred in proving his identity: and at length the whole was confirmed by the venerable Tiresias, whom the Gods had deprived of sight, but had made up this calamity to him by endowing him with the gift of prophecy, and the knowledge of all hidden things: the tender and honest heart of Œdipus was struck with despair at this discovery: he tore out his eyes, and, retiring to Colone on the borders of Athens, was indebted for his existence ever after to the kind care of his daughter Antigone.

Eteocles and Polynices, the sons of Œdipus, succeeded to the vacant authority: and, as they were both ambitious and impatient of a superior, they agreed to reign in turns, each his year; a strange engagement, which they could scarcely expect to have fulfilled: Eteocles, as the elder, reigned first; but at the end of the year refused to give up the kingdom.

Polynices fled to Adrastus king of Argos, one of the most powerful monarchs of his time: and such were the prepossessing manners of the youth, that he easily prevailed upon Adrastus to embrace his

cause: a marriage first took place between the exiled prince and the daughter of Adrastus, and they then marched together against Thebes.

This is the first siege of Thebes, memorable for the obstinacy with which it was carried on and the calamities that attended it: Adrastus divided his army into seven bodies, and planted them with seven approved commanders at their head before the seven gates of Thebes: he himself commanded one; Polynices another: the names of the other chiefs were Tydeus, Capaneus, Amphiarus, Parthenopœus and Hippomedon: after a great deal of fighting it was agreed that Eteocles and Polynices should meet together in single combat^h.

Never did two human beings hate each other more mortally than Eteocles and Polynices: they fought with such deadly resolution, that the combat did not end till both were killed: the fashion of these times was for the dead body of a person of rank to be burned on the funeral pile: as Eteocles and Polynices were brothers, and died in the same hour, both parties agreed to place their bodies upon the same funeral pile: when, lo, a miracle ensued! the flames which proceeded from these bitter foes divided in two, and even the sparkles and ashes which flew up from one of their bodies refused to have communication with those of the otherⁱ.

The death of these rival candidates did not put an end to the siege: Eteocles left a son named Laodamas, and Polynices another named Thersander; and the besieged and the besiegers set up the op-

^h Æschyli Sept. ap. Theb. Eur. Phœn.

ⁱ Stat. Thebais. 429. Ov. Trist. lib. v. 35.

posite pretensions of these children to the throne: Creon, the brother of Jocasta, became the guardian of Laodamas: after infinite bloodshed the besieged got the better: not one of the Seven Chiefs against Thebes returned alive, except Adrastus: Creon, who was of a brutal and insolent disposition, having routed the besiegers, would not even grant them permission to bury their dead: a circumstance held to be of great importance in those days: Adrastus fled to Theseus at Athens, who joined his forces with the remains of the besieging army, and compelled Creon to suffer these unfortunate men to pay the last duties to the bodies of their deceased friends.

Ten years after the first siege of Thebes, the sons of the Seven Chiefs who had then commanded, being grown up, began to ponder upon the calamities and untimely fate of their fathers, and resolved to avenge their misfortunes: they marched against this unhappy city: this is the second siege of Thebes, frequently called by ancient writers the war of the Epigoni, "after-born:" a bloody battle was fought, but the Epigoni were completely victorious, and finally placed their leader Thersander upon the throne*.

* Diod. Sic. iv. 66.

CHAP. XXIX.

OF THE CITY OF TROY.

Kings of Troy.—Teucer.—Succeeded by Dardanus, Prince of the Sacred Island of Samothrace.—Erichthonius.—Tros, the Father of Ganymed.—Ilus.—Laomedon.—Apollo and Neptune build the Walls of Troy.—Hesione exposed to a Sea-monster.—Hercules Delivers her, and Sacks Troy.—Tithonus, beloved by Aurora, is turned into a Grasshopper.—Wonderful Statue of Memnon.—Priam and his Fifty Sons.—Paris Exposed on Mount Ida.—Judgment of Paris.—Marriage of Menelaus and Helen.—Helen goes off with Paris.—Greeks Confederate against Troy.—Iphigenia in Aulis.—Achilles in Petticoats.—Death of Patroclus.—Achilles drags the Body of Hector three times round the Walls of Troy.—Contention of Ajax and Ulysses for the Arms of Achilles.—Stratagem of the Wooden Horse.—Pyrrhus the Son of Achilles.—Troy is Burned.—Agamemnon, Generalissimo of the Greeks, Murdered by his Wife Clytemnestra.—Orestes, his Son, kills her, and is haunted by Furies.—Penelope's Web.—Ulysses puts to Death the Suitors of Penelope.—Æneas, the Son of Venus.

THE last great event of the heroic age is the destruction of Troy: and it is not the least singular circumstance attending this subject, after the infinite details which have been handed down to us respecting it, and the incomparable poems which Homer and Virgil have founded upon this basis, added to the claims that the Romans and other nations have set up to be descended

from the ancient Trojans, that volumes have been written of late years to prove that no such city ever existed.

With critical enquiries of this sort, the Pantheon or history of the Gods and Demigods, has little to do: it is our business to recollect, and give an account of, the ancient history of Troy.

One of the remotest sovereigns of this part of the world upon record is Teucer: he was the son of the river Scamander and the neighbouring mountain of Ida: from him the Trojans are frequently called Teucris¹.

Teucer having no male issue, married his only daughter to Dardanus, prince of the little island of Samothrace, and named him his successor: Samothrace is represented by ancient historians as the first seat of the Grecian religion: for this reason it was held a sacred and inviolable asylum, or sanctuary, for fugitives: Dardanus taught his new subjects a multitude of religious ceremonies, and brought over with him from Samothrace the Palladium, a small statue of Minerva which was afterward placed in the citadel of Troy, and respecting which there was a prediction that, as long as it remained there, Troy could never be taken^m: from Dardanus his subjects received the name of Dardanians.

Erichthoniusⁿ was the son and successor of Dardanus: he is not to be confounded with the Athenian Erichthonius.

Tros, the third sovereign of the Dardanian race, founded the city of Troy, and from his own name called it *Troja*: (another name of Troy

¹ Virg. *Æ.* iii. 108.

^m Dionys. Hal. Ant. iv. 68.

ⁿ Hom. *Il.* v. 216 et seqq.

was Ilium, from Ilus the son of Tros): he accused Pelops, a neighbouring sovereign, or his father Tantalus, of having stolen from him his younger son Ganymed, a youth of inexpressible beauty, and on this pretence deprived Pelops of his dominions, and compelled him to take refuge in Greece: the fact was, that Jupiter, struck with the comeliness of Ganymed, had taken him up into Heaven to make him his cup-bearer.

Ilus, the elder brother of Ganymed, was fourth king of Troy: he distinguished himself by rescuing with his own hands the Palladium from the citadel of Troy, which had been set on fire with lightning: this was a service of so much danger, that Ilus lost his sight in the enterprise, which was soon after restored to him by Minerva: according to some accounts Minerva first deprived him of sight for having sacrilegiously touched her image on this occasion^o: Ilus had another brother beside Ganymed, whose name was Asaracus.

Laomedon, the son of Ilus, was fifth king of Troy, and his reign was rendered memorable by many calamities: he was anxious, like Amphion, to surround with walls the city which his grandfather had built: and Apollo and Neptune happening to be both of them in a state of banishment from Heaven, he engaged with them to complete the work he had at heart: the Gods performed their contract; but the narrow soul of Laomedon stimulated him to refuse them the hire to which their labours were entitled^p.

To punish this perfidy, Apollo sent a plague against the Trojans, and Neptune commissioned

^o Plut. in Parall.

^p Hom. Il. ϕ . 441.

a sea-monster to devour them : they consulted an oracle how they were to be delivered from their calamities : and were told that nothing would suffice, but the voluntarily exposing one noble Trojan virgin every year to be devoured by the monster : after this tribute had been repeatedly paid, the lot fell in the sixth or seventh year upon Hesione, Laomedon's daughter : Hercules found Hesione in the same situation as Perseus had found Andromeda, and engaged to deliver her, on condition that Laomedon would present him with six beautiful horses of which he was possessor : Hercules killed the monster, but Laomedon refused him the horses : in resentment of this refusal Hercules, at the head of a band of Grecian heroes, took and pillaged the city of Troy, put Laomedon to death, and gave his daughter Hesione in marriage to Telamon, one of the friends of Hercules who had been the first to mount the breach in the walls, and who was father to the celebrated Ajax^q.

Laomedon had two sons by Strymo daughter of the river Scamander, Priam and Tithonus : Tithonus, for his youthful and vigorous beauty, became the object of the affections of Aurora, Goddess of the morning : the Goddess in the warmth of her attachment bade Tithonus ask whatever gift he pleased, and it should be granted him : Tithonus requested that he might never die : but, as he forgot to ask for perpetual youth and strength, this prince, once so much admired for the delicate hue and smoothness of his person, gradually became all over wrinkles, and sunk in

^q Hom. Il. ε. 565. 638. Il. υ. 145. Schol. in Il. υ. 145, who mentions the story as from Hellanicus. Apollodor. ii. 5. Ov. Met. xi. 199.

decrepitude: he lost his voice, his sight, his hearing, his smell, and his taste: he prayed to be released from that immortal life he had so earnestly coveted; and Aurora in pity turned him into a grasshopper^r.

Memnon was the son of Tithonus and Aurora: he is also said to have been king of Ethiopia: he came to the Trojan war, the events of which I shall presently relate, to the assistance of his uncle Priam, and was slain in single combat by Achilles: an exquisite statue was erected to his memory near the Egyptian Thebes; and, as he was the son of Aurora, this statue had the peculiar property of uttering a melodious sound every morning when touched by the first beams of the day, as if to salute his mother; and every night at sunset, it gave another sound, low and mournful, as lamenting the departure of the day^s.

Priam, the eldest son of Laomedon, was placed by Hercules upon the throne of which he had deprived his father: Priam was the last king of Troy: he had fifty sons, the most celebrated of whom were Hector and Paris, beside a great number of daughters: Hector was an accomplished soldier, and the valiant defender of his native country: Paris was of a debauched and effeminate character, and by his dissolute conduct proved the ruin of Troy: a short time before he was born, his mother Hecuba dreamed that she was brought to bed of a burning torch; which was explained by the sooth-sayers to signify that the child which should be born would be the occasion that Troy should be consumed with flames: alarmed at this

^r Hom. Hymn. in Ven. 219 et seqq. mentions the story as from Hellenicus.

Schol in Il. γ. 151, who
^s Ov. Met. xiii. 575.

prediction, Priam and Hecuba directed that the infant, as soon as born, should be cast naked upon one of the rocks of mount Ida: here he was found by certain shepherds, and educated as if he had been shepherd-born[†].

Paris was grown to man's estate in this humble condition, when an event happened of great note in the history of the heroic ages: this was the marriage of Peleus, son of Æacus and brother of Telamon, to Thetis one of the Nereids: all the Gods were invited, as was the custom on these occasions, to grace the nuptials with their presence: the Goddess of Discord[‡] alone was omitted: and, to revenge herself for this neglect, she caused a beautiful apple to be delivered in the midst of the festival, upon which was inscribed, "Let it be given to the Fairest:" Juno, Minerva and Venus, with the true female spirit of rivalry, immediately put in their respective claims: no one of the Gods had the courage to decide in such a contention: though perhaps every one felt the superior beauty of Venus, no one was willing to make Juno, the Queen of Heaven, or Minerva, the Goddess of wisdom, his enemy.

The three Goddesses at last agreed to be decided by the judgment of the shepherd Paris: as he was the most beautiful male then existing on the earth, they inferred that he must be the best judge of female beauty: when they came before him however, all Goddesses as they were, they trembled and shuddered at the thought of being rejected: each offered Paris a bribe: Juno privately told him that he should be the most powerful monarch of his time: Minerva that he should be victorious

[†] Schol. Il. γ. 325. Apollodorus, iii. 12.
Mar, Panopes et Galenes.

[‡] Lucian. Dial.

and invincible in war: and Venus that he should have the most beautiful woman in the world for his wife: Paris decided in favour of Venus: from that moment he had no chance to be blessed with empire, prudence, or courage: soon after this, Paris having appeared to advantage as a stranger at the court of his father Priam, was discovered by him, and admitted to all the privileges of a son.

About this time was consummated the marriage of Helen, the sister of Pollux, to Menelaus, the younger brother of Agamemnon, the son of Atreus king of Mycenæ: I have already spoken of the manner in which Helen was carried away, when nine years of age, by Theseus, and rescued by her brothers: when she grew to be a woman, it was universally confessed that nothing so beautiful in human shape had ever been seen: all the princes of Greece were rivals for her hand: and, as she could marry only one of them, they agreed to leave the selection to her free choice, and swore that, if any one attempted to molest in his rights the lover she accepted, they would all join as one man to avenge his cause: she accepted Menelaus: but the oath of the Grecian princes turned out in a different manner from what they intended: they had only thought of guarding against any violent proceedings of one of their own body: they were called upon to execute their oath^w against a stranger.

Menelaus and Helen had now been husband and wife three years, and Menelaus had succeeded in right of his wife to the throne of Sparta, when Paris came as a stranger to their court, and was most hospitably received: but Paris no sooner

^w Hor. Od. i. 15. 7.

saw Helen, than he fell in love with her, and like a perfidious villain, stole her away from the roof of her husband: this was the wife, with which Venus, Goddess of beauty, but of beauty only, had promised to crown his desires.

The theft of Helen was the occasion of the destruction of Troy, of a ten years' siege, and a thousand ships being fitted out by the Greeks to avenge such an affront: all the princes who had sworn to maintain Menelaus in his rights were faithful to their oath: the most eminent of the leaders in this expedition were Agamemnon, commander in chief, Achilles, the son of Peleus and Thetis, Ajax, the son of Telamon, and the wise Ulysses, king of Ithaca*.

The expedition was to sail from Aulis, a town in Bœotia: but, when every thing was ready, it was detained a long time by contrary winds: having enquired of the Gods, they were told that they should never have a prosperous voyage, till Agamemnon, their chief, who had offended Diana by unwittingly having killed one of her sacred hinds, sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia upon her altar: Iphigenia was accordingly brought from Mycenæ, and Calchas the priest had raised the knife against her bosom, when Diana relented, carried away the royal maiden in a cloud, and made her priestess of her temple in Tauris on the Euxine sea†.

The allied chiefs against Troy, though they finally discharged their engagements with the utmost honour, many of them at first expressed aversion to so distant an expedition, and which promised to be so tedious of execution: Ulysses

* Hom. Il. passim.

† Eur. Iphigenia in Aulide.

pretended to be mad^z; and Achilles, respecting whom his Goddess-mother knew that he was destined to perish in this war, was for some time hid in female attire in the palace of Lycomedes, king of the island of Scyros: here he was found out by Ulysses, by the trick of putting armour in his way, which he could not help handling, and exercising himself with, in a manner that was impossible to belong to a woman^a.

The siege of Troy was the fertile source of what has been styled an *Iliad of woes*: Patroclus, the intimate friend, and bosom-companion of Achilles, having been slain by Hector, the grief of Achilles could only be appeased by the death of the slayer^b: and when he was killed, the conqueror in his rage, forgetting all the refinements and princely accomplishments of music and science in which he had been instructed by Chiron the Centaur^c, savagely dragged the dead body at his chariot-wheels thrice round the walls of the city which Hector had so nobly defended^d: after this, Achilles conceived a passion for Polyxena the sister of Hector: by a stratagem of Paris he was invited to meet her in the temple of Apollo, and was there basely assassinated: Ulysses and Ajax, who on this occasion may be considered as the personifications of wisdom and valour, contended for the armour of Achilles: and the prize being awarded to Ulysses, Ajax slew himself in despair: from his blood sprang the flower we call the violet: Ulysses also distinguished himself by stealing away the Palladium from the citadel

^z Ov. Met. xiii. 308 et seqq. ^a Hom. Il. π. 786 ^b Id. σ. 22.

^c Pindar. Nem. iii. 75.

^d Hom. Il. χ. 395 et seqq.

of Troy^e: Paris himself, though late, was one of the victims of the war, being killed in the field.

After ten years' siege, and no decisive progress having been made, the Greeks bethought themselves of a stratagem: they built a wooden horse, of so enormous a size, that it could contain a band of armed men in its belly: they left this horse, concealing within it many of their most valiant leaders, with Neoptolemus or Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles, at their head, on the shore: the rest sailed away for the island of Tenedos, and pretended to give up the siege: Sinon, a spy whom they left behind, told the Trojans, that if this horse were once placed within their walls, Troy would one day reduce all Greece under her sovereignty: actuated by this false intelligence, the Trojans were themselves most active in introducing ruin into their city: the fleet returned in the silence of night: those who were inclosed in the wooden horse let themselves out, and admitted their companions at the gates: Troy was burned, Priam was killed, and his family and subjects sold to slavery: in the siege of Troy the Gods took opposite sides, as their resentments or partialities led them, and Neptune and Apollo had finally the satisfaction of demolishing the walls which they had been drawn in to rear^f.

Helen was now restored to her first husband Menelaus, who conducted her to Sparta in triumph.

Agamemnon, the brother of Menelaus, also returned home, but the event of his arrival proved tragical: Clytemnestra, the sister of Helen, his wife, had for some years lived in adultery with

* Soph. Ajax. Ov. Met. xii. 580 et seqq. Id. xiii. 1 et seqq.
f Virg. Æn. ii. 57 et seqq.

Ægisthus, the son of Thyestes: and this wicked pair contrived, under all the appearance of a welcome reception, to assassinate Agamemnon, and his most faithful friends in the midst of the banquet: Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, when he grew up to be a man, avenged his father by the death of Ægisthus and his mother: but though Clytemnestra was a bad woman, the Gods did not approve of a mother perishing by the hands of her son, and caused him to be haunted by the Furies^s.

Lastly, Ulysses experienced so many disasters at sea, that ten years elapsed between the burning of Troy and his arrival in Ithaca: he visited the caverns of the Cyclops, the island of Circe, and the infernal regions, and passed through dangers surpassing human belief: at last when he reached his native country, he found his palace and government in the possession of a set of dissolute suitors, who had agreed to urge his wife to marry one of them under pretence that Ulysses was certainly dead: the name of the wife of Ulysses was Penelope: she was the niece of Tyn-darus, and the cousin of Clytemnestra and Helen; but her conduct was very different from that of these infamous women: she remained faithful to Ulysses during the whole of his twenty years' absence: one expedient by which she baffled the importunity of her suitors, was telling them that she had vowed to weave a funeral web for Laertes the aged father of Ulysses, before she would marry a second husband: this web she unravelled by night, as fast as she worked upon it by day: at the end of ten years' wandering Ulysses came home, slew the suitors, and rewarded the fidelity

^s Æschyl. Agamemnon, Choephoræ, Eumenides, pass.

of the virtuous Penelope with uninterrupted happiness^b.

One other hero of the Trojan war remains to be mentioned: this was Æneas, the son of Anchises, descended from Assaracus the brother of Ilus: the mother of Æneas was Venus: one would think it was more natural to give out that a hero had a God for his father, than a Goddess for his mother; for in the latter case he must have been born in Heaven, or the Goddess must have come and resided for some length of time on earth: but every hero, who was desirous to pass for a Demigod, was not prepared to deny his father: perhaps, in both instances the pretence of a celestial origin is the cover for some blemish: when a God was said to be the father, the mother was unchaste; and when a Goddess was feigned to be the mother, the true mother was of obscure rank.

When Troy was burned, Æneas escaped from the flames, bearing his old and infirm father upon his shoulders: he is said to have passed into Italy: and the ancient Romans claimed Æneas as the founder of their state: Virgil has consecrated this claim in a splendid and incomparable poem, entitled the *Æneid*: Æneas was worshipped at Rome under the name Jupiter Indigetes.

^b Hom. Od. passim.

CHAP. XXX.

OF ROMULUS.

Amulius Usurps the Throne of Alba.—Birth of Romulus and Remus, Sons of Mars.—They are exposed on the Banks of the Tiber.—Suckled by a Wolf.—Educated among Shepherds.—They Discover themselves, and put to Death Amulius.—Numitor, their Grandfather, is King of Alba.—Building of Rome.—Remus Killed. The Asylum.—Rape of the Sabines.—They break off a Battle between their Fathers and their Husbands.—Romulus taken up into Heaven.—Worshipped by the name of Quirinus.—Final Greatness of the Roman State.

THE Romans, a more sober and plain-spoken race of men than the Greeks, added only one God of their own countrymen to the fabulous Pantheon, previously to the sad period, when despotism destroyed in them the pride of integrity, and every tyrant became a God: this one was Romulus the founder of that city, and in that respect having the same claim to their regard, as Cadmus to that of the Thebans, or Theseus of the Athenians.

Numitor, the grandfather of Romulus, was by paternal descent king of Alba: but Amulius his brother, more ambitious and daring than he, deprived him of the kingdom, and reduced him to a private station: at the same time he put to death the son of Numitor, and compelled his daughter, by name Rhea Sylvia, to take the vows

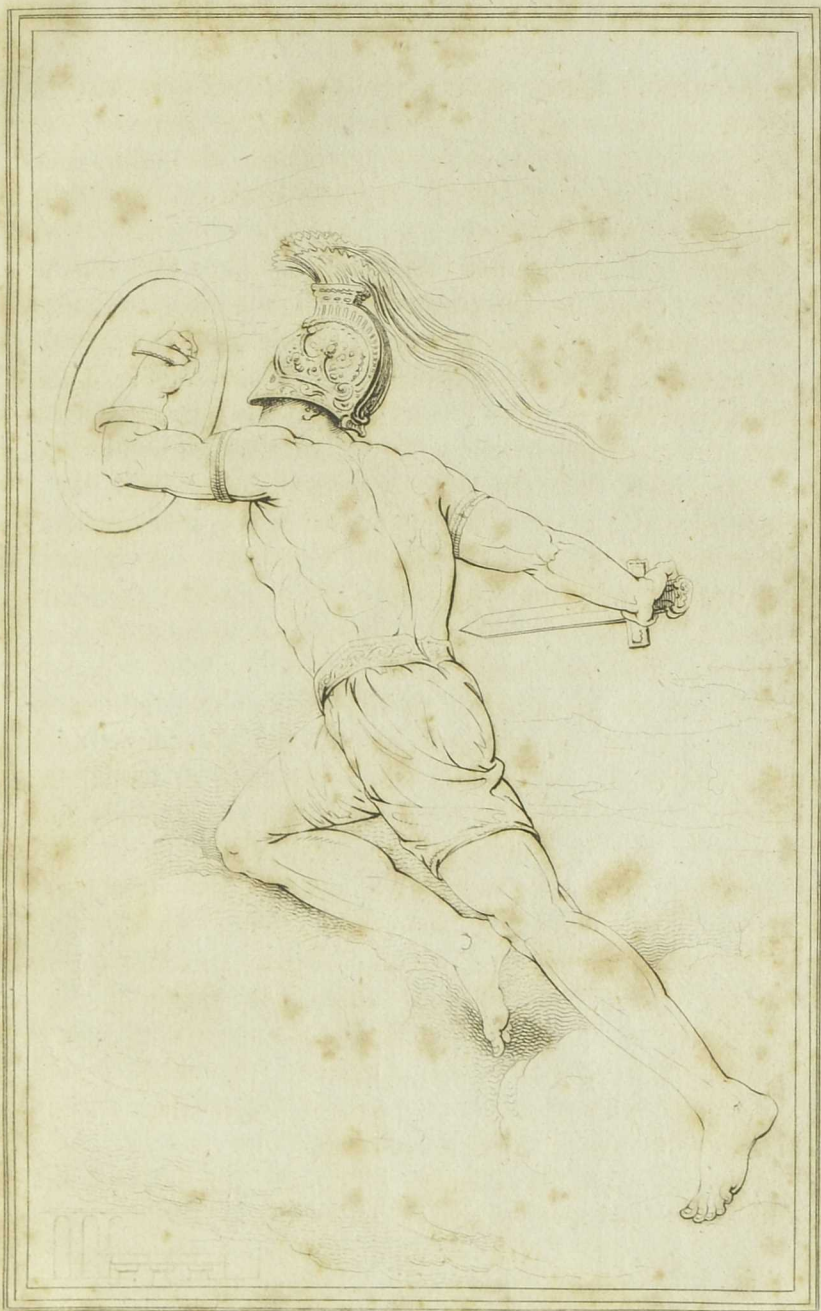
of virginity as a vestal: the sacred character of Rhea however was no obstacle to the love of the God Mars: he grew enamoured of her, and became the father of Romulus and Remus, the twin progeny of the vestal.

Amulius no sooner understood that she was a mother, than he condemned Rhea herself to perpetual imprisonment, and ordered the infants to be thrown into the Tiber: the Tiber had at that time overflowed its banks, and the servant who bore the children, not being able to reach the bed of the river, left them in the marshes: here they were found and suckled by a she-wolf, and in this situation were discovered by Faustulus the royal shepherd, who having some suspicion of the particulars of their birth, took them home, and bred them as his own children.

These royal youths, as they grew up, not only delighted in hunting wild beasts, but often with the bands of their companions made an onset on a gang of robbers: in one of these skirmishes Remus was taken prisoner, and by these bold outlaws accused of their own crime: he was given up to Numitor to be punished, who having tried him with various questions, began to suspect the secret of his birth: Faustulus at the same time divulged his thoughts to Romulus: and both brothers, having collected a party of armed men, beset the palace at once, killed Amulius, and restored Numitor to the crownⁱ.

Romulus and Remus were of too active and adventurous a disposition to sit down contented in their father's little kingdom: they expressed to him their wish to be permitted to build a town

ⁱ Ov. Fasti, ii. 382, et iii. 7 et seqq.



MARS

on the spot where they had first been exposed: they had not made much progress in this work, when they fell out with each other: Remus in a petulant and insulting disposition leaped over the beginning walls of Rome, and Romulus immediately smote him to the heart, saying, "May such be ever the fate of him who attempts to pass over these walls^k!

The walls of Rome being finished, though the circuit was small, Romulus found that his ambition had been greater than his strength: he therefore opened an Asylum in his town for criminals and slaves, who by his liberal policy were admitted to the rights of citizenship: his Asylum however brought only males: all the neighbouring states refused to contract marriage with so mixed and disreputable a concourse: at length Romulus invited the people of the neighbouring towns to a grand spectacle, and directed his citizens, in the midst of the show to seize and carry off the unmarried daughters of their guests: this is what is called "the rape of the Sabines:" the Sabines was the name of the foreign state nearest to Rome, and whose citizens most abounded at this spectacle: when the Romans and the Sabines met in battle, which was about a year after, the Romans to defend their prize, the Sabines to avenge the affront they had received, the Sabine women married to the Romans rushed in the midst between the combatants, with their infant children in their arms, intreating their fathers not to murder their husbands, and their husbands not to be the destroyers of their fathers: by this seasonable interposition a peace was produced^l.

^k Ov. Fasti, iv. 835 et seqq.

^l Id. v. 179 et seqq.

Romulus reigned thirty-nine years: and such was the soundness of his policy, and the wisdom of his measures, that even in this first reign from the building of Rome, the foundation seemed to be laid for all the future greatness of the Roman empire: at length Romulus sitting upon his throne in the open field, reviewing the military force of his newly-created state, a violent storm of thunder and lightning suddenly arose: it enveloped the throne, and when the storm subsided Romulus was no longer to be seen: the nobles who surrounded the throne affirmed that they had beheld their king taken up into Heaven: the people suspected that he had fallen a victim to the jealousy of the nobles: all doubt however was removed the next day, when Julius Proculus, the gravest and most respected nobleman of his time, publicly declared, that in the middle of the night Romulus had come to him in a vision, and bade him inform his Romans, that the Gods, into whose society he had just been admitted, had decreed, *that Rome should hereafter be the metropolis of the world, and that no sublunary force should ever be able to resist her prowess*^m.

Romulus, as I have said, was one of the principal Gods of the Romans: Quirinus was the name under which he was worshipped: *Quiris*ⁿ is an old Latin word signifying a *spear*: hence the ceremonial appellation of the Romans on solemn occasions was *Quirites*, or *spearmen*: and the name Quirinus was probably formed by analogy from these: to shew the dignity of Romulus in the Roman Pantheon, it is sufficient to mention, that the Romans had two orders of priest-

^m Ov. Fasti, ii. 480 et seqq.
Sabinis. Ov. Fasti, ii. 477.

ⁿ Hasta Curis priscis est dicta.

hood, the Pontifex and the Flamen, and that of Flamens there were originally only three, the Flamen of Jupiter, the Flamen of Mars, and the Flamen of Quirinus^o.

A moral lesson plainly inculcated on us by the beginnings of Rome, and which though often repeated, I will mention here, is how little mortals are qualified to judge by appearances, and dive into the secrets of futurity: Rome began from an indiscriminate concourse of robbers and runaway slaves: yet Rome is in certain respects the most memorable state in the history of the world: no country could ever boast of purer manners and more virtuous citizens than those of Rome in her best days: and their virtue and valour laid the foundation of that universal empire, which Rome afterward extended over almost the whole known world, and which endured for several centuries.

^o Ov. Fasti, iv. 910.

THE END.

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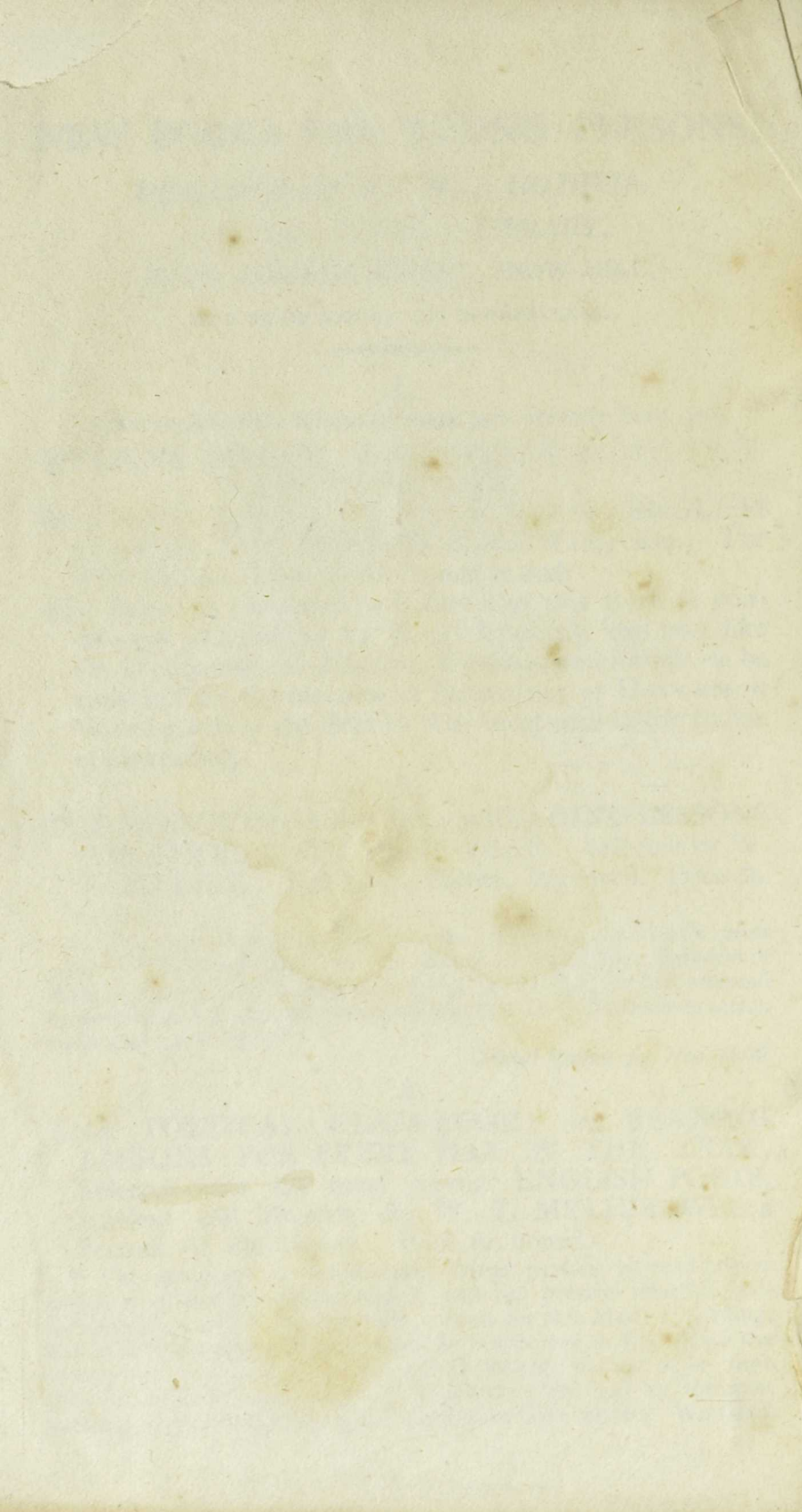
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