
Metamorphoses Book 2, translated by Brookes More

PHAETHON AND PHOEBUS

[1] Glowing with gold, flaming with carbuncles on stately columns raised, refulgent shone the palace of the Sun, with polished dome of ivory gleaming, and with portals twain of burnished silver. And the workmanship exceeded all the wealth of gems and gold; for there had Mulciber engraved the seas encircling middle earth; the round of earth, and heaven impending over the land. And there amid the waves were azure deities: melodious Triton and elusive Proteus; there Aegean pressing with his arms the backs. Of monstrous whales; and Doris in the sea and all her daughters; some amid the waves and others sitting on the bank to dry their sea-green hair, and others borne about by fishes. Each was made to show a fair resemblance to her sisters—yet not one appearance was assigned to all—they seemed as near alike as sisters should in truth. And men and cities, woods and savage beasts, and streams and nymphs, and sylvan deities were carved upon the land; and over these an image of the glittering sky was fixed;—six signs were on the right, six on the left.

[19] Here when audacious Phaethon arrived by steep ascending paths, without delay he entered in the shining palace-gates of his reputed parent, making haste to stand in his paternal presence. There, unable to endure the dazzling light, he waited at a distance. Phoebus sat, arrayed in royal purple, on a throne that glittered with the purest emeralds.—there to the left and right, Day, Month and Year, time and the Hours, at equal distance stood; and vernal Spring stood crowned with wreathed flowers; and naked Summer stood with sheaves of wheat; and Autumn stood besmeared with trodden grapes; and icy Winter rough with hoary hair.

[31] And from the midst, with orbs that view the world, Phoebus beheld the trembling youth, fear-struck, in mute amazement, and he said; “Declare the reason of thy journey. What wilt thou in this my palace, Phaethon my child beloved?” And to him replied the youth; “O universal light of all the world, my father Phoebus, if thy name be mine, if Clymene has not concealed her sin beneath some pretext, give to me, my sire, a token to declare thy fatherhood which may establish my assured descent, and leave no dark suspicions in our minds.”—Then Phoebus from his shining brows cast down his circling rays; called Phaethon to him, and as he held him to his breast replied; “O child most worthy of thy sire, the truth was told thee by thy mother; wherefore doubts to dissipate, consider thy desire, and ask of me that I may freely give: yea, let the Nether Lake, beyond our view, (which is the oath of Gods inviolate) be witness to my word.” When this was said

the happy youth at once began to plead command and guidance of his father's steeds, wing-footed, and his chariot for a day.

[49] But Phoebus much repented that he swore, and thrice and four times shook his radiant head; "Ah, would I might refuse my plighted word; and oh, that it were lawful to deny the promised boon.—For I confess, O son, this only I should keep from thee—and yet 'Tis lawful to dissuade. It is unsafe to satisfy thy will. It is a great request, O Phaethon, which neither suits thy utmost strength nor tender years; for thou art mortal, and thou hast aspired to things immortal. Ignorance has made thy thought transcend the province of the Gods. I vaunt no vain exploits; but only I can stand securely on the flame-fraught axle-tree: even the Ruler of Olympian Gods, who hurls fierce lightnings with his great right hand, may never dare to drive this chariot, and what art thou to equal mighty Jove?

[63] "The opening path is steep and difficult, for scarcely can the steeds, refreshed at dawn, climb up the steeps: and when is reached the height, extreme of midmost Heaven, and sea and earth are viewed below, my trembling breast is filled with fearful apprehensions: and requires the last precipitous descent a sure command. Then, also, Tethys, who receives me in her subject waves, is wont to fear lest I should fall disastrous. And around the hastening sky revolves in constant whirl, drawing the lofty stars with rapid twist. I struggle on. The force that overcomes the heavenly bodies overwhelms me not, and I am borne against that rapid globe. Suppose the chariot thine: what canst thou do? Canst thou drive straight against the twisted pole and not be carried from the lofty path by the swift car? Art thou deceived to think there may be groves and cities of the Gods, and costly temples wondrously endowed? The journey is beset with dreadful snares and shapes of savage animals. If thou shouldst hold upon thy way without mistake yet must thy journey be through Taurus' horns, and through the Bow Haemonian, and the jaws of the fierce Lion, and the cruel arms of Scorpion, bent throughout a vast expanse,—and Cancer's curving arms reversely bent. It is no easy task for thee to rule the mettled four-foot steeds, enflamed in fires that kindle in their breasts, forth issuing in breathings from their mouths and nostrils hot;—I scarce restrain them, as their struggling necks pull on the harness, when their heated fires are thus aroused.

[90] "And, O my son, lest I may be the author of a baneful gift, beware, and as the time permits recall thy rash request. Forsooth thou hast besought undoubted signs of thy descent from me? My fears for thee are certain signs that thou art of my race—by my paternal fears 'Tis manifest I am thy father. Lo! Behold my countenance! and oh, that thou couldst even pierce my bosom with thine eyes, and so discover my paternal cares! Look round thee on the treasured world's delights and ask the greatest blessing of the sky, or sea or land, and thou shalt suffer no repulse: but only this I must deplore, which rightly named would be a penalty and not an honour.—Thou hast made request of punishment and not a gift indeed. O witless boy! why dost thou hold my neck with thy

caressing arms? For, doubt it not, as I have sworn it by the Stygian Waves, whatever thou shalt wish, it shall be given—but thou shouldst wish more wisely.”

[103] So were all his admonitions said, availing naught; for Phaethon resisted his advice, and urged again his claim, and eagerly burned to use the chariot. Wherefore, Phoebus long delaying and reluctant, took the youth to view the spacious chariot, gift of Vulcan.—gold was the axle and the beam was gold, the great Wheel had a golden tire and spokes of silver; chrysolites and diamonds reflected from the spangled yoke the light of Phoebus.

[111] While aspiring Phaethon admired the glittering chariot and its workmanship, the vigilant Aurora opened forth her purple portals from the ruddy east, disclosing halls replete with roses. All the stars took flight, while Lucifer, the last to quit his vigil, gathered that great host and disappeared from his celestial watch.

[116] And when his father, Phoebus (Titan), saw the earth and the wide universe in glowing tints arrayed, as waned the Moon's diminished horns, far-distant, then he bade the nimble Hours to yoke the steeds. -- At once the Deities accomplished his commands, and led the steeds, ambrosia-fed and snorting flames, from out their spacious stalls; and fixed their sounding bits. Then with a hallowed drug the father touched the stripling's face, to make him proof against the rapid flame, and wrought around his hair the sun-rays. But, foreboding grief, he said, while many a sigh heaved from his anxious breast; “If thou canst only heed thy father's voice—be sparing of the whip and use with nerve the reins; for of their own accord the steeds will hasten. Difficult are they to check in full career. Thou must not drive the car directly through five circles, for the track takes a wide curve, obliquely, and is bound by the extreme edge of three zones.—It avoids the Southern Pole, and it avoids the Bear that roams around the north. The way is plain; the traces of the Wheel are manifest. Observe with care that both the earth and sky have their appropriate heat—Drive not too low, nor urge the chariot through the highest plane; for if thy course attain too great a height thou wilt consume the mansions of the sky, and if too low the land will scorch with heat. Take thou the middle plane, where all is safe; nor let the Wheel turn over to the right and bear thee to the twisted Snake! nor let it take thee to the Altar on the left—so close to earth—but steer the middle course.—to Fortune I commit thy fate, whose care for thee so reckless of thyself I pray. While I am speaking humid night has touched the margin of Hesperian shores. 'Tis not for us to idle; we are called away;—when bright Aurora shines the darkness flies. Take up the reins! But if thy stubborn breast be capable of change use not our car, but heed my counsel while the time permits, and while thy feet are on a solid base, but not, according to thy foolish wish, pressing the axle. Rather let me light the world beneath thy safe and wondering gaze.”

[150] But Phaethon with youthful vigor leaped, and in the light-made chariot lightly stood: and he rejoiced, and with the reins in hand thanked his reluctant parent.

[153] Instantly Eous, Aethon, Pyrois and Phlegon, the winged horses of the Sun, gave vent to flame-like neighs that filled the shaking air; they pawed the barriers with their shining hoofs. Then Tethys, witless of her grandson's fate let back the barriers,—and the universe was theirs to traverse. Taking the well-known road, and moving through the air with winged feet, they pierced resisting clouds, and spreading wide their pinions soared upon the eastern wind, far-wafted from that realm. But Phaethon, so easy of their yoke, lost all control, and the great car was tossed,—as tapered ships when lightened of their ballast toss and heave unsteady in the surging seas: the car leaped lightly in the air, and in the heights was tossed unsteady as an empty shell.

[167] Soon as the steeds perceived it, with a rush impetuous, they left the beaten track; regardless of all order and control; and Phaethon filled with fear, knew not to guide with trusted reins, nor where the way might be—nor, if he knew, could he control their flight. Warmed in the sunshine, never felt before, the gelid Triones attempted vain to bathe in seas forbid: the Serpent cold and torpid by the frozen Pole, too cold for contest, warmed, and rage assumed from heat bootes, troubled by the heat, took flight, impeded by his wain.

[178] And as from skies of utmost height unhappy Phaethon beheld the earth receding from his view, a pallor spread his cheeks with sudden fear; his knees began to quake; and through the flare of vast effulgence darkness closed his eyes. Now vainly he regrets he ever touched his father's steeds, and he is stunned with grief that so entreating he prevailed to know his true descent. He rather would be called the son of Merops. As a ship is tossed by raging Boreas, when the conquered helm has been abandoned, and the pilot leaves the vessel to his vows and to the Gods; so, helpless, he is borne along the sky. What can he? Much of heaven remains behind; a longer distance is in front of him—each way is measured in his anxious mind.—at first his gaze is fixed upon the west, which fate has destined he shall never reach, and then his eyes turn backward to the east.—So, stupefied and dazed he neither dares to loose the bits, nor tighten on the reins, and he is ignorant of the horses' names. He sees horrific wonders scattered round, and images of hideous animals.—and there's a spot where Scorpion bends his claws in double circles, and with tail and arms on either side, stretches his limbs throughout the space of two Celestial Signs; and when the lad beheld him, steeped in oozing slime of venom, swart, and threatening to strike grim wounds with jagged spear-points, he was lost; and, fixed in chills of horror, dropped the reins.

[201] When these they felt upon their rising backs, the startled steeds sprang forthwith; and, unchecked, through atmospheres of regions unexplored, thence goaded by their unchecked violence, broke through the lawful bounds, and rushed upon the high fixed stars. They dragged the chariot through devious ways, and soared amid the heights; dashed down deep pathways, far, precipitous, and gained a level near the scorching earth. Phoebe is wondering that her brother's steeds run lower than her own, and sees the smoke of scorching clouds. The highest altitudes are

caught in flames, and as their moistures dry they crack in chasms. The grass is blighted; trees are burnt up with their leaves; the ripe brown crops give fuel for self destruction—Oh what small complaints! Great cities perish with their walls, and peopled nations are consumed to dust – the forests and the mountains are destroyed. Cilician Taurus, Athos and Tmolus, and Oeta are burning; and the far-famed Ida and all her cooling rills are dry and burning, and virgin Helicon, and Hoemos—later Oeagrius called—and Aetna with tremendous, redoubled flames, and double-peaked Parnassus, Sicilian Eryx, Cynthus—Othrys, pine-clad, and Rhodope, deprived his snowy mantle, and Dindyma and Mycale and Mimas, and Mount Cithaeron, famed for sacred rites: and Scythia, though a land of frost, is burning, and Caucasus,—and Ossa burns with Pindus,—and greater than those two Olympus burns – the lofty Alps, the cloud-topped Apennines.

[227] And Phaethon, as he inhaled the air, burning and scorching as a furnace blast, and saw destruction on the flaming world, and his great chariot wreathed in quenchless fires, was suddenly unable to endure the heat, the smoke and cinders, and he swooned away.—if he had known the way, those winged steeds would rush as wild unguided.—

[235] Then the skin of Ethiopians took a swarthy hue, the hot blood tingling to the surface: then the heat dried up the land of Libya; dishevelled, the lorn Nymphs, lamenting, sought for all their emptied springs and lakes in vain; Boeotia wailed for Dirce's cooling wave, and Argos wailed for Aymone's stream—and even Corinth for the clear Pyrene. Not safer from the flames were distant streams;—the Tanais in middle stream was steaming and old Peneus and Teuthrantian Caicus, Ismenus, rapid and Arcadian Erymanthus; and even Xanthus destined for a second burning, and tawny-waved Lycormas, and Meander, turning and twisting, and Thracian Melas burns, and the Laconian Eurotas burns, the mighty Babylonian Euphrates, Orontes and the Ganges, swift Thermodon, Ister and Phasis and Alpheus boil. The banks of Spercheus burn, the gold of Tagus is melting in the flames. The swans whose songs enhanced the beauties of Maeonian banks are scalded in the Cayster's middle wave. The Nile affrighted fled to parts remote, and hid his head forever from the world: now empty are his seven mouths, and dry without or wave or stream; and also dry Ismenian Hebrus, Strymon and the streams of Hesper-Land, the rivers Rhine and Rhone, and Po, and Tiber, ruler of the world.

[260] And even as the ground asunder burst, the light amazed in gloomy Tartarus the King Infernal and his Spouse. The sea contracted and his level waste became a sandy desert. The huge mountain tops, once covered by the ocean's waves, reared up, by which the scattered Cyclades increased. Even the fishes sought for deeper pools;—the crooked dolphins dared not skip the waves; the lifeless sea-calves floated on the top; and it is even famed that Nereus hid with Doris and her daughters, deep below in seething caverns. With a dauntless mien thrice Neptune tried to thrust his arms above the waters;—thrice the heated air overcame his courage.

[272] Then the genial Earth, although surrounded by the waters of the sea, was parched and dry; for all her streams had hid deep in the darkness of her winding caves.—she lifted her productive countenance, up to her rounded neck, and held her palms on her sad brows; and as the mountains huge trembled and tottered, beneath her wonted plane declined she for a space—and thus began, with parched voice; “If this is thy decree, O, Highest of the Gods,—if I have sinned why do thy lightnings linger? For if doomed by fires consuming I to perish must, let me now die in thy celestial flames—hurled by thine arm—and thus alleviate, by thine omnipotence, this agony. “How difficult to open my parched mouth, and speak these words! (the vapours choking her), behold my scorching hair, and see the clouds of ashes falling on my blinded eyes, and on my features! What a recompense for my fertility! How often I have suffered from the wounds of crooked plows and rending harrows—tortured year by year! For this I give to cattle juicy leaves and fruits to man and frankincense to thee! Suppose destruction is my just award what have the waters and thy brother done? Why should thy brother's cooling waves decrease and thus recede so distant from the skies? If not thy brother's good nor mine may touch thy mercy, let the pity of thy Heaven, for Io, the smoking poles on either side attest, if flames consume them or destroy, the ruin of thy palace. Atlas, huge, with restive shoulders hardly can support the burning heavens. If the seas and lands together perish and thy palace fall, the universe confused will plunge once more to ancient Chaos. Save it from this wreck—if anything survive the fury of the flames.”

[301] So made the tortured Earth an end of speech; and she was fain to hide her countenance in caves that border on the nether night. But now the Almighty Father, having called to witness all the Gods of Heaven, and him who gave the car, that, else his power be shown, must perish all in dire confusion, high he mounted to the altitude from which he spreads the mantling clouds, and fulminates his dreadful thunders and swift lightning-bolts terrific.—Clouds were none to find on the earth, and the surrounding skies were void of rain.—Jove, having reached that summit, stood and poised in his almighty hand a flashing dart, and, hurling it, deprived of life and seat the youthful charioteer, and struck with fire the raging flames—and by the same great force those flames enveloping the earth were quenched, and he who caused their fury lost his life. Frantic in their affright the horses sprang across the bounded way and cast their yokes, and through the tangled harness lightly leaped. And here the scattered harness lay, and there the shattered axle, wrenched from off the pole, and various portions of the broken car; spokes of the broken Wheel were scattered round.

[319] And far fell Phaethon with flaming hair; as haply from the summer sky appears a falling star, although it never drops to startled earth.—Far distant from his home the deep Eridanus received the lad and bathed his foaming face. His body charred by triple flames Hesperian Naiads bore, still smoking, to a tomb, and this engraved upon the stone; “Here Phaethon's remains lie buried. He who drove his father's car and fell, although he made a great attempt.”

[329] Filled with consuming woe, his father hid his countenance which grief had overcast. And now, surpassing our belief, they say a day passed over with no glowing sun;—but light-affording flames appeared to change disaster to the cause of good. Amazed, the woeful Clymene, when she had moaned in grief, amid her lamentations tore her bosom, as across the world she roamed, at first to seek his lifeless corpse, and then his bones. She wandered to that distant land and found at last his bones ensepulchred. There, clinging to the grave she fell and bathed with many tears his name on marble carved, and with her bosom warmed the freezing stone.

[340] And all the daughters of the Sun went there giving their tears, alas a useless gift;—they wept and beat their breasts, and day and night called, “Phaethon,” who heard not any sound of their complaint:—and there they lay foredone, all scattered round the tomb. The silent moon had four times joined her horns and filled her disk, while they, according to an ancient rite, made lamentation. Prone upon the ground, the eldest, Phaethusa, would arise from there, but found her feet were growing stiff; and uttered moan. Lampetia wished to aid her sister but was hindered by new roots; a third when she would tear her hair, plucked forth but leaves: another wailed to find her legs were fastened in a tree; another moaned to find her arms to branches had been changed. And while they wondered, bark enclosed their thighs, and covered their smooth bellies, and their breasts, and shoulders and their hands, but left untouched their lips that called upon their mother's name. What can she do for them? Hither she runs and thither runs, wherever frenzy leads. She kisses them, alas, while yet she may! But not content with this, she tried to hale their bodies from the trees; and she would tear the tender branches with her hands, but lo! The blood oozed out as from a bleeding wound; and as she wounded them they shrieked aloud, “Spare me! O mother spare me; in the tree my flesh is torn! farewell! farewell! farewell!” And as they spoke the bark enclosed their lips. Their tears flow forth, and from the new-formed boughs amber distils and slowly hardens in the sun; and far from there upon the waves is borne to deck the Latin women.

[367] Cycnus, son of Sthenelus, by his maternal house akin to Phaethon, and thrice by love allied, beheld this wonderful event.—he left his kingdom of Liguria, and all its peopled cities, to lament where the sad sisters had increased the woods, beside the green banks of Eridanus. There, as he made complaint, his manly voice began to pipe a treble, shrill; and long gray plumes concealed his hair. A slender neck extended from his breast, and reddening toes were joined together by a membrane. Wings grew from his sides, and from his mouth was made a blunted beak. Now Cycnus is a swan, and yet he fears to trust the skies and Jove, for he remembers fires, unjustly sent, and therefore shuns the heat that he abhors, and haunts the spacious lakes and pools and streams that quench the fires.

[381] In squalid garb, meanwhile, and destitute of all his rays, the sire of Phaethon, as dark as when eclipse bedims his Wheel, abhors himself and hates the light, shuns the bright day, gives up his mind to grief, adds passion to his woe, denies the earth his countenance, and thus laments;

“My lot was ever restless from the dawn of time, and I am weary of this labour, void and endless. Therefore, let who will urge forth my car, light-bearing, and if none may dare, when all the Gods of Heaven acknowledge it, let Jove himself essay the task. Perchance, when he takes up the reins, he may forget his dreadful lightning that bereaves of child a father's love; and as he tries the strength of those flame-footed steeds will know, in truth, the lad who failed to guide my chariot deserved not death.”

[394] But all the Deities encircle Phoebus as he makes complaint, and with their supplications they entreat him not to plunge the world in darkness. Jove would find excuses for the lightning-bolt, hurled from his hand, and adds imperious threats to his entreaties. Phoebus calls his steeds, frenzied with their maddening fires, and breaks their fury, as he vents with stinging lash his rage upon them, and in passion lays on them the death of Phaethon his son.

CALISTO AND JUPITER

[401] Now after Phaethon had suffered death for the vast ruin wrought by scorching flames, all the great walls of Heaven's circumference, unmeasured, views the Father of the Gods, with searching care, that none impaired by heat may fall in ruins. Well assured they stand in self-sustaining strength, his view, at last, on all the mundane works of man is turned;—his loving gaze long resting on his own Arcadia. And he starts the streams and springs that long have feared to flow; paints the wide earth with verdant fields; covers the trees with leaves, and clothes the injured forests in their green. While wandering in the world, he stopped amazed, when he beheld the lovely Nymph, Calisto, and fires of love were kindled in his breast. Calisto was not clothed in sumptuous robes, nor did she deck her hair in artful coils; but with a buckle she would gird her robe, and bind her long hair with a fillet white. She bore a slender javelin in her hand, or held the curving bow; and thus in arms as chaste Diana, none of Maenalus was loved by that fair goddess more than she. But everything must change.

[417] When bright the sun rolled down the sky, beyond his middle course, she pierced a secret thicket, known to her, and having slipped the quiver from her arm, she loosed the bended bow, and softly down upon the velvet turf reclining, pressed her white neck on the quiver while she slept. When Jupiter beheld her, negligent and beautiful, he argued thus, “How can my consort, Juno, learn of this? And yet, if chance should give her knowledge, what care I? Let gain offset the scolding of her tongue!” This said, the god transformed himself and took Diana's form—assumed Diana's dress and imitating her awoke the maid, and spoke in gentle tones, “What mountain slope, O virgin of my train, hath been thy chase?” Which, having heard, Calisto, rose and said, “Hail, goddess! greater than celestial Jove! I would declare it though he heard the words.” Jove heard and smiled, well pleased to be preferred above himself, and kissed her many times, and strained her in his arms, while she began to tell the varied fortunes of her hunt.—But when his ardent love was known to her, she struggled to escape from his embrace: ah, how could she, a

tender maid, resist almighty Jove?—Be sure, Saturnia if thou hadst only witnessed her thy heart had shown more pity!—Jupiter on wings, transcendent, sought his glorious heights; but she, in haste departing from that grove, almost forgot her quiver and her bow.

[441] Behold, Diana, with her virgin train, when hunting on the slopes of Maenalus, amidst the pleasures of exciting sport, espied the Nymph and called her, who, afraid that Jove apparelled in disguise deceived, drew backward for a moment, till appeared to her the lovely Nymphs that followed: thus, assured deceit was none, she ventured near. Alas, how difficult to hide disgrace! She could not raise her vision from the ground, nor as the leader of the hunting Nymphs, as was her wont, walk by the goddess' side. Her silence and her blushes were the signs of injured honour. Ah Diana, thou, if thou wert not a virgin, wouldst perceive and pity her unfortunate distress. The Moon's bent horns were rising from their ninth sojourn, when, fainting from Apollo's flames, the goddess of the Chase observed a cool umbrageous grove, from which a murmuring stream ran babbling gently over golden sands. When she approved the spot, lightly she struck her foot against the ripples of the stream, and praising it began; "Far from the gaze of all the curious we may bathe our limbs, and sport in this clear water." Quickly they undid their garments,—but Calisto hid behind the others, till they knew her state.—Diana in a rage exclaimed, "Away! Thou must not desecrate our sacred springs!" And she was driven thence.

[466] Ere this transpired, observed the consort of the Thunder-God her altered mien; but she for ripening time withheld severe resentment. Now delay was needless for distracted Juno heard Calisto of the god of Heaven had borne a boy called Arcas. Full of jealous rage, her eyes and thoughts enkindled as she cried; "And only this was wanting to complete your wickedness, that you should bear a son and flaunt abroad the infamy of Jove! Unpunished you shall not escape, for I will spoil the beauty that has made you proud and dazzled Jupiter with wanton art." So saying, by her forehead's tresses seized the goddess on her rival; and she dragged her roughly to the ground. Pleading she raised her suppliant arms and begged for mercy.—While she pled, black hair spread over her white limbs; her hands were lengthened into feet, and claws long-curving tipped them; snarling jaws deformed the mouth that Jove had kissed. And lest her prayers and piteous words might move some listening God, and give remembrance, speech was so denied, that only from her throat came angry growls, now uttered hoarse and threatening. Still remains her understanding, though her body, thus transformed, makes her appear a savage bear.—her sorrows are expressed in many a groan, repeated as she lifts her hands—if we may call them so — repeated as she lifts them towards the stars and skies, ungrateful Jove regarding; but her voice accuses not. Afraid to rest in unfrequented woods, she wandered in the fields that once were hers, around her well-known dwelling. Over crags, in terror, she was driven by the cries of hounds; and many a time she fled in fear, a huntress from the hunters, or she hid from savage animals; forgetting her transformed condition. Changed into a bear, she fled affrighted from the

bears that haunt the rugged mountains; and she feared and fled the wolves,—although her father was a wolf.

[496] When thrice five birthdays rounded out the youth of Arcas, offspring of Lycaon's child, he hunted in the forest of his choice; where, hanging with his platted nets the trees of Erymanthian forest, he espied his transformed mother,—but he knew her not; no one had told him of his parentage. Knowing her child, she stood with levelled gaze, amazed and mute as he began approach; but Arcas, frightened at the sight drew back to pierce his mother's breast with wounding spear.—but not permitting it the god of Heaven averted, and removed them from that crime. He, in a mighty wind—through vacant space, upbore them to the dome of starry heaven, and fixed them, Constellations, bright amid the starry host.

[508] Juno on high beheld Calisto crowned with glory—great with rage her bosom heaved. She flew across the sea, to hoary Tethys and to old Oceanus, whom all the Gods revere, and thus to them in answer to their words she made address; “And is it wondered that the Queen of Gods comes hither from ethereal abodes? My rival sits upon the Throne of Heaven: yea, when the wing of Night has darkened let my fair word be deemed of no repute, if you behold not in the height of Heaven those new made stars, now honoured to my shame, conspicuous; fixed in the highest dome of space that circles the utmost axis of the world. Who, then, should hesitate to put affront on Juno? matchless goddess! each offense redounds in benefit! Who dreads her rage? Oh boundless powers! Oh unimagined deeds! My enemy assumes a goddess' form when my decree deprives her human shape;—and thus the guilty rue their chastisement! Now let high Jove to human shape transform this hideous beast, as once before he changed his Io from a heifer.—Let him now divorce his Juno and consort with her, and lead Calisto to his couch, and take that wolf, Lycaon, for a father-in-law! Oh, if an injury to me, your child, may move your pity! drive the Seven Stars from waters crystalline and azure-tint, and your domain debar from those that shine in Heaven, rewarded for Jove's wickedness.—bathe not a concubine in waters pure.”—the Gods of Ocean granted her request.

CORONIS AND PHOEBUS

[532] High in her graceful chariot through the air, translucent, wends the goddess, glorious child of Saturn, with her peacocks many-hued: her peacocks, by the death of Argus limped, so gay were made when black as midnight turned thy wings, O chattering raven! white of yore. For, long ago the ravens were not black—their plumage then was white as any dove—white-feathered, snow-white as the geese that guard with watchful cries the Capitol: as white as swans that haunt the streams. Disgrace reversed the raven's hue from white to black, because offense was given by his chattering tongue. O glorious Phoebus! dutiful to thee, Coronis of Larissa, fairest maid of all Aemonia, was a grateful charm, a joy to thee whilst faithful to thy love,—while none defamed her chastity. But when the Raven, bird of Phoebus, learned the Nymph had been unfaithful, mischief-

bent that bird, spreading his white wings, hastened to impart the sad news to his master. After him the prattling Crow followed with flapping wings, eager to learn what caused the Raven's haste.

[542] Concealing nothing, with his busy tongue the Raven gave the scandal to that bird: and unto him the prattling Crow replied; "A fruitless errand has befooled thy wits! Take timely warning of my fateful cries: consider what I was and what I am: was justice done? 'Twas my fidelity that caused my downfall. For, it came to pass, within a basket, fashioned of small twigs, Minerva had enclosed that spawn; begot without a mother, Erichthonius; which to the wardship of three virgins, born of double-natured Cecrops, she consigned with this injunction, 'Look ye not therein, nor learn the secret.'—But I saw their deeds while hidden in the leaves of a great tree two of the sisters, Herse and Pandrosos, observed the charge, but scoffing at their fears, the third, Aglauros, with her nimble hands untied the knotted cords, and there disclosed a serpent and an infant. This I told Minerva; but in turn, she took away her long protection, and degraded me beneath the boding Owl.—My punishment should warn the birds how many dangers they incur from chattering tongues. Not my desire impelled me to report to her, nor did I crave protection; which, if thou wilt ask Minerva, though enraged she must confirm. And when is told to thee what lately fame established, thou wilt not despise the Crow.

[568] "Begot by Coronaeus, who was lord of all the land of Phocis, I was once a royal virgin, sought by suitors rich and powerful. But beauty proved the cause of my misfortune; for it came to pass, as I was slowly walking on the sands that skirt the merge of ocean, where was oft my wont to roam, the god of Ocean gazed impassioned, and with honied words implored my love—but finding that I paid no heed, and all his words despised, he fumed with rage and followed me. I fled from that sea-shore, to fields of shifting sands that all my steps delayed: and in despair upon the Gods and all mankind I called for aid, but I was quite alone and helpless. Presently the chaste Minerva, me, a virgin, heard and me assistance gave: for as my arms implored the Heavens, downy feathers grew from out the flesh; and as I tried to cast my mantle from my shoulders, wings appeared upon my tender sides; and as I strove to beat my naked bosom with my hands, nor hands remained nor naked breast to beat. I ran, and as I sped the sands no more delayed me; I was soaring from the ground; and as I winged the air, Minerva chose me for a life-companion.

[589] "But alas, although my life was blameless, fate or chance deprived me of Minerva's loving aid; for soon Nictimene succeeded me to her protection and deserved esteem.—it happened in this way,—Nictimene committed the most wicked crimes, for which Minerva changed her to the bird of night—and ever since has claimed her as her own instead of me; and this despite the deed for which she shuns the glorious light of day, and conscious of her crime conceals her shame in the dark night—Minerva's Owl now called. All the glad birds of day, indignant shun, and chase her from the skies."

[596] But now replied the Raven to the Crow, that talked so much, "A mischief fall upon your prating head for this detention of my flight. Your words and warnings I despise." With which retort he winged upon his journey, swiftly thence in haste, despite the warning to inform his patron, Phoebus, how he saw the fair Coronis with a lad of Thessaly. And when Apollo, Phoebus, heard the tale the busy Raven made such haste to tell, he dropped his plectrum and his laurel wreath, and his bright countenance went white with rage. He seized his trusted arms, and having bent his certain bow, pierced with a deadly shaft that bosom which so often he had pressed against his own. Coronis moaned in pain,—and as she drew the keen shaft from the wound, her snow-white limbs were bathed in purple blood: and thus she wailed, "Ah, Phoebus! punishment is justly mine! but wherefore didst thou not await the hour of birth? for by my death an innocent is slain." This said, her soul expired with her life-blood, and death congealed her drooping form.

[612] Sadly the love-love God repents his jealous deed; regrets too late his ready credence to the Raven's tale. Mourning his thoughtless deed, blaming himself, he vents his rage upon the talking bird; he hates his bow, the string, his own right hand, the fateful arrow. As a last resource, and thus to overcome her destiny, he strove to cherish her beloved form; for vain were all his medicinal arts. But when he saw upraised the funeral pyre, where wreathed in flames her body should be burnt, the sorrow of his heart welled forth in sighs; but tearless orbed, for no celestial face may tide of woe bedew. So grieves the poor dam, when, swinging from his right the flashing ax, the butcher with a sounding blow divides the hollow temples of her sucking calf. Yet, after Phoebus poured the fragrant myrrh, sweet perfumes on her breast, that now once more against his own he pressed, and after all the prematurely hastened rites were done, he would not suffer the offspring of his loins to mingle with her ashes, but he plucked from out the flames, forth from the mother's thighs his child, unborn, and carried to the cave of double-natured Chiron. Then to him he called the silly raven, high in hopes of large requital due for all his words; but, angry with his meddling ways, the God turned the white feathers of that bird to black and then forbade forever more to perch among the favoured birds whose plumes are white.

OCYROE AND AESCULAPIUS

[633] Chiron, the Centaur, taught his pupil; proud that he was honoured by that God-like charge. Behold, his lovely daughter, who was born beside the margin of a rapid stream, came forward, with her yellow hair as gold adown her shoulders.—She was known by name Ocyroe. The hidden things that Fate conceals, she had the power to tell; for not content was she to learn her father's arts, but rather pondered on mysterious things. So, when the god of Frenzy warmed her breast, gazing on Aesculapius,—the child of Phoebus and Coronis, while her soul was gifted, with prophetic voice she said; "O thou who wilt bestow on all the world the blessed boon of health, increase in strength! To thee shall mortals often owe their lives: to thee is given the power to raise the dead. But when against the power of Deities thou shalt presume to dare thy mortal skill, the

bolts of Jove will shatter thy great might, and health no more be thine from thence to grant. And from a god thou shalt return to dust, and once again from dust become a God; and thou shalt thus renew thy destiny.—“And thou, dear father Chiron, brought to birth with pledge of an immortal life, informed with ever-during strength, when biting flames of torment from the baneful serpent's blood are coursing in thy veins, thou shalt implore a welcome death; and thy immortal life the Gods shall suffer to the power of death.—and the three Destinies shall cut thy thread.”

[655] She would continue these prophetic words but tears unbidden trickled down her face; and, as it seemed her sighs would break her heart, she thus bewailed; “The Fates constrain my speech and I can say no more; my power has gone. Alas, my art, although of little force and doubtful worth, has brought upon my head the wrath of Heaven. “Oh wherefore did I know to cast the future? Now my human form puts on another shape, and the long grass affords me needed nourishment. I want to range the boundless plains and have become, in image of my father's kind, a mare: but gaining this, why lose my human shape? My father's form is one of twain combined.” And as she wailed the words became confused and scarcely understood; and soon her speech was only as the whinny of a mare. Down to the meadow's green her arms were stretched; her fingers joined together, and smooth hoofs made of five nails a single piece of horn. Her face and neck were lengthened, and her hair swept downward as a tail; the scattered locks that clung around her neck were made a mane, tossed over to the right. Her voice and shape were altogether changed, and since that day the change has given her a different name.

[676] In vain her hero father, Chiron, prayed the glorious God, Apollo, her to aid. He could not thwart the will of mighty Jove; and if the power were his, far from the spot, from thence afar his footsteps trod the fields of Elis and Messenia, far from thence.

BATTUS AND MERCURY

[679] Now while Apollo wandered on those plains,—his shoulders covered with a shepherd's skin, his left hand holding his long shepherd's staff, his right hand busied with the seven reeds of seven sizes, brooding over the death of Hymenaeus, lost from his delight; while mournful ditties on the reeds were tuned,—his kine, forgotten, strayed away to graze over the plains of Pylos. Mercury observed them, unattended, and from thence drove them away and hid them in the forest. So deftly did he steal them, no one knew or noticed save an ancient forester, well known to all the neighbor-folk, by them called Battus. He was keeper of that wood, and that green pasture where the blooded mares of rich Neleus grazed. As Mercury distrusted him, he led him to one side and said; “Good stranger, whosoever thou art, if any one should haply question thee, if thou hast seen these kine, deny it all; and for thy good will, ere the deed is done, I give as thy reward this handsome cow.” Now when the gift was his, old Battus said, “Go hence in safety, if it be thy will; and should my tongue betray thee, let that stone make mention of the theft.” And as he spoke, he pointed to a stone.

[697] The son of Jove pretended to depart, but quickly changed his voice and features, and retraced his steps, and thus again addressed that ancient man; "Kind sir, if thou wouldst earn a fair reward, a heifer and a bull, if thou hast seen some cattle pass, I pray thee give thy help, and tell me of the theft." So the reward was doubled; and the old man answered him, "Beyond those hills they be," and so they were 'Beyond those hills.' And, laughing, Mercury said, "Thou treacherous man to me dost thou betray myself? Dost thou bewray me to myself?" The god indignant turned his perjured breast into a stone which even now is called "The Spy of Pylos," a disgraceful name, derived from days of old, but undeserved.

GLAUROS AND MERCURY

[708] High in the dome of Heaven, behold the bright Caduceus-Bearer soared on balanced wings; and far below him through a fruitful grove, devoted to Minerva's hallowed reign, some virgins bearing on their lovely heads, in wicker baskets wreathed and decked with flowers, their sacred offerings to the citadel of that chaste goddess. And the winged God, while circling in the clear unbounded skies, beheld that train of virgins, beautiful, as they were thence returning on their way. Not forward on a level line he flew, but wheeled in circles round. Lo, the swift kite swoops round the smoking entrails, while the priests enclose in guarded ranks their sacrifice: wary with fear, that swiftest of all birds, dares not to venture from his vantage height, but greedily hovers on his waving wings around his keen desire. So, the bright God circled those towers, Actaeon, round and round, in mazy circles, greedy as the bird. As much as Lucifer outshines the stars that emulate the glory of his rays, as greatly as bright Phoebe pales thy light, O lustrous Lucifer! so far surpassed in beauty the fair maiden Herse, all those lovely virgins of that sacred train, departing joyous from Minerva's grove. The Son of Jove, astonished, while he wheeled on balanced pinions through the yielding air, burned hot; as oft from Balearic sling the leaden missile, hurled with sudden force, burns in a glowing heat beneath the clouds. Then sloped the god his course from airy height, and turned a different way; another way he went without disguise, in confidence of his celestial grace. But though he knew his face was beautiful, he combed his hair, and fixed his flowing raiment, that the fringe of radiant gold appeared. And in his hand he waved his long smooth wand, with which he gives the wakeful sleep or waketh ridded eyes. He proudly glanced upon his twinkling feet that sparkled with their scintillating wings.

[737] In a secluded part of that great fane, devoted to Minerva's hallowed rites, three chambers were adorned with tortoise shell and ivory and precious woods inlaid; and there, devoted to Minerva's praise, three well known sisters dwelt. Upon the right dwelt Pandrosos and over on the left Aglauros dwelt, and Herse occupied the room between those two. When Mercury drew near to them, Aglauros first espied the God, and ventured to enquire his name, and wherefore he was come. Then gracious spoke to her in answer the bright son of Jove; "Behold the god who carries through the air the mandates of almighty Jupiter! But I come hither not to waste my time in idle

words, but rather to beseech thy kindness and good aid, that I may win the love of thy devoted sister Herse." Aglauros, on the son of Jupiter, gazed with those eyes that only lately viewed the guarded secret of the yellow-haired Minerva, and demanded as her price gold of great weight; before he paid denied admittance of the house.

[752] Minerva turned, with orbs of stern displeasure, towards the maid Aglauros; and her bosom heaved with sighs so deeply laboured that her Aegis-shield was shaken on her valiant breast. For she remembered when Aglauros gave to view her charge, with impious hand, that monster form without a mother, maugre Nature's law, what time the god who dwells on Lemnos loved.—now to requite the god and sister; her to punish whose demand of gold was great; Minerva to the Cave of Envy sped. Dark, hideous with black gore, her dread abode is hidden in the deepest hollowed cave, in utmost limits where the genial sun may never shine, and where the breathing winds may never venture; dismal, bitter cold, untempered by the warmth of welcome fires, involved forever in abounding gloom. When the fair champion came to this abode she stood before its entrance, for she deemed it not a lawful thing to enter there: and she whose arm is mortal to her foes, struck the black door-posts with her pointed spear, and shook them to the center. Straight the doors flew open, and, behold, within was Envy ravening the flesh of vipers, self-begot, the nutriment of her depraved desires.—when the great goddess met her evil gaze she turned her eyes away. But Envy slow, in sluggish languor from the ground uprose, and left the scattered serpents half-devoured; then moving with a sullen pace approached.—and when she saw the gracious goddess, girt with beauty and resplendent in her arms, she groaned aloud and fetched up heavy sighs. Her face is pale, her body long and lean, her shifting eyes glance to the left and right, her snaggle teeth are covered with black rust, her hanging paps overflow with bitter gall, her slavered tongue drips venom to the ground; busy in schemes and watchful in dark snares sweet sleep is banished from her blood-shot eyes; her smiles are only seen when others weep; with sorrow she observes the fortunate, and pines away as she beholds their joy; her own existence is her punishment, and while tormenting she torments herself. Although Minerva held her in deep scorn she thus commanded her with winged words; "Instil thy poison in Aglauros, child of Cecrops; I command thee; do my will." She spake; and spurning with her spear the ground departed;

[787] And the sad and furtive-eyed Envy observed her in her glorious flight: she murmured at the goddess, great in arms: but waiting not she took in hand her staff, which bands of thorns encircled as a wreath, and veiled in midnight clouds departed thence. She blasted on her way the ripening fields; scorched the green meadows, starred with flowers, and breathed a pestilence throughout the land and the great cities. When her eyes beheld the glorious citadel of Athens, great in art and wealth, abode of joyful peace, she hardly could refrain from shedding tears, that nothing might be witnessed worthy tears. She sought the chamber where Aglauros slept, and hastened to obey the God's behest. She touched the maiden's bosom with her hands, foul with corrupting stains, and pierced her heart with jagged thorns, and breathed upon her face a noxious venom; and distilled

through all the marrow of her bones, and in her lungs, a poison blacker than the ooze of pitch. And lest the canker of her poisoned soul might spread unchecked throughout increasing space, she caused a vision of her sister's form to rise before her, happy with the God who shone in his celestial beauty. All appeared more beautiful than real life.—when the most wretched daughter of Cecrops had seen the vision secret torment seized on all her vitals; and she groaned aloud, tormented by her frenzy day and night. A slow consumption wasted her away, as ice is melted by the slant sunbeam, when the cool clouds are flitting in the sky. If she but thought of Herse's happiness she burned, as thorny bushes are consumed with smoldering embers under steaming stems. She could not bear to see her sister's joy, and longed for death, an end of misery; or schemed to end the torture of her mind by telling all she knew in shameful words, whispered to her austere and upright sire.

[815] But after many agonizing hours, she sat before the threshold of their home to intercept the God, who as he neared spoke softly in smooth blandishment. "Enough," she said, "I will not move from here until thou hast departed from my sight." "Let us adhere to that which was agreed." Rejoined the graceful-formed Cyllenian God, who as he spoke thrust open with a touch of his compelling wand the carved door. But when she made an effort to arise, her thighs felt heavy, rigid and benumbed; and as she struggled to arise her knees were stiffened? and her nails turned pale and cold; her veins grew pallid as the blood congealed. And even as the dreaded cancer spreads through all the body, adding to its taint the flesh uninjured; so, a deadly chill entered by slow degrees her breast, and stopped her breathing, and the passages of life. She did not try to speak, but had she made an effort to complain there was not left a passage for her voice. Her neck was changed to rigid stone, her countenance felt hard; she sat a bloodless statue, but of stone not marble-white—her mind had stained it black.

[833] So from the land of Pallas went the God, his great revenge accomplished on the head of impious Aglauros; and he soared on waving wings into the opened skies: and there his father called him to his side, and said,—with words to hide his passion;—Son,—thou faithful minister of my commands.—let naught delay thee—swiftly take the way, accustomed, to the land of Sidon (which adores thy mother's star upon the left) when there, drive over to the sounding shore that royal herd, which far away is fed on mountain grass.—he spoke, and instantly the herd was driven from the mountain side; then headed for the shore, as Jove desired,—to where the great king's daughter often went in play, attended by the maids of Tyre.—can love abide the majesty of kings? Love cannot always dwell upon a throne.—

EUROPA AND JUPITER, THE HOUSE OF CADMUS

[846] Jove laid aside his glorious dignity, for he assumed the semblance of a bull and mingled with the bullocks in the groves, his colour white as virgin snow, untrod, unmelted by the watery Southern Wind. His neck was thick with muscles, dewlaps hung between his shoulders; and his

polished horns, so small and beautifully set, appeared the artifice of man; fashioned as fair and more transparent than a lucent gem. His forehead was not lowered for attack, nor was there fury in his open eyes; the love of peace was in his countenance. When she beheld his beauty and mild eyes, the daughter of Agenor was amazed; but, daring not to touch him, stood apart until her virgin fears were quieted; then, near him, fragrant flowers in her hand she offered,—tempting, to his gentle mouth: and then the loving god in his great joy kissed her sweet hands, and could not wait her will. Jove then began to frisk upon the grass, or laid his snow-white side on the smooth sand, yellow and golden. As her courage grew he gave his breast one moment for caress, or bent his head for garlands newly made, wreathed for his polished horns. The royal maid, unwitting what she did, at length sat down upon the bull's broad back. Then by degrees the god moved from the land and from the shore, and placed his feet, that seemed but shining hoofs, in shallow water by the sandy merge; and not a moment resting bore her thence, across the surface of the Middle Sea, while she affrighted gazed upon the shore—so fast receding. And she held his horn with her right hand, and, steadied by the left, held on his ample back—and in the breeze her waving garments fluttered as they went.

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